



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

CHARTER

COVID-19 HEALTH EQUITY TASK FORCE

Committee's Official Designation

COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force

Authority

Executive Order (E.O.) 13995, dated January 21, 2021. The COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force (Task Force) is governed by provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), P.L. 92-463, as amended (5 U.S.C. App. 2).

Objectives and Scope of Activities

The Task Force shall provide specific recommendations to the President, through the Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response and Counselor to the President (COVID-19 Response Coordinator), for mitigating the health inequities caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and for preventing such inequities in the future.

Description of Duties

In carrying out its mission, the Task Force shall advise and provide recommendations to the President, through the COVID-19 Response Coordinator. The recommendations shall include:

- (A) recommendations for how agencies and State, local, Tribal, and territorial officials can best allocate COVID-19 resources, in light of disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and mortality in certain communities and disparities in COVID-19 outcomes by race, ethnicity, and other factors, to the extent permitted by law;
- (B) recommendations for agencies with responsibility for disbursing COVID-19 relief funding regarding how to disburse funds in a manner that advances equity;
- (C) recommendations for agencies regarding effective, culturally aligned communication, messaging, and outreach to communities of color and other underserved populations; and
- (D) recommendations for advancing cultural competency, language access, and sensitivity towards Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the context of the Federal Government's COVID-19 response in accordance with the Presidential Memorandum Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States issued on January 26, 2021.

Data Collection

To address the data shortfalls identified in Section 1 of E.O. 13995, and consistent with applicable law, the Task Force shall:

- (1) collaborate with the heads of relevant agencies, consistent with the Executive Order entitled "Ensuring a Data-Driven Response to COVID-19 and Future High-Consequence Public Health Threats," to develop recommendations for expediting data collection for communities of color and other underserved populations and identifying data sources, proxies, or indices that would enable development of short-term targets for pandemic-related actions for such communities and populations;
- (2) develop, in collaboration with the heads of relevant agencies, a set of longer-term recommendations to address these data shortfalls and other foundational data challenges, including those relating to data intersectionality, that must be tackled in order to better prepare and respond to future pandemics; and
- (3) submit the recommendations described in this subsection to the President, through the COVID-19 Response Coordinator.

The Task Force shall submit a final report to the COVID-19 Response Coordinator addressing any ongoing health inequities faced by COVID-19 survivors that may merit a public health response, describing the factors that contributed to disparities in COVID-19 outcomes, and recommending actions to combat such disparities in future pandemic responses.

The function of the Task Force is solely advisory.

Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports

The Task Force shall report to the President, through the COVID-19 Response Coordinator. The President, or his delegate, shall be responsible for ensuring the reporting requirements of 6(b) of Act are appropriately fulfilled.

Support

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) shall provide funding and administrative support for the Task Force to the extent permitted by law and within existing appropriations.

Management and support services for the Task Force will be provided by the Office of Minority Health (OMH), which is organizationally located within the Office of the Secretary in HHS. OMH is administratively supported by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, which is a staff division in the Office of the Secretary, HHS.

The COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force Chair (Task Force Chair), who is designated by the HHS Secretary, shall designate an Executive Director, who shall be a full-time federal employee.

The Executive Director shall coordinate the work of the Task Force and head any staff assigned to the Task Force.

Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years

The estimated annual cost for operating the Task Force, including travel expenses for members, but excluding staff support, is \$51,000. The estimate for annual person years of staff support required is 2.1, at an estimated annual cost of \$303,548.

Members of the Task Force will serve without compensation. Travel expenses will be allowed, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701-5707), consistent with the availability of funds.

Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

HHS will designate either a full-time or permanent part-time, federal employee to serve as the DFO. The DFO will approve or call the advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings, prepare the meeting agendas, attend all the committee and subcommittee meetings, adjourning any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and chair a meeting when so directed by the agency head. An Alternate DFO may also be appointed in the same manner as the DFO.

Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings

The Task Force Chair, in consultation with the DFO, will determine when the Task Force will meet. It is anticipated that the Task Force will meet approximately four times a year.

Duration

Continuing.

Termination

Unless extended by the President, the Task Force shall terminate within 30 days of accomplishing the objectives set forth in E.O. 13995, including the delivery of the report and recommendations specified in Sec. 2 of E.O. 13995, or 2 years from January 21, 2021, whichever comes first.

Membership and Designation

The Task Force shall consist of the Secretary of HHS; an individual designated by the Secretary of HHS to Chair the Task Force (COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force Chair); the heads of such other executive departments, agencies, or offices (agencies) as the Chair may invite; and up to 20 members from sectors outside of the Federal Government appointed by the President. The Task Force Chair shall convene and preside at meetings of the Task Force, determine its agenda, and direct its work.

Federal members may designate, to perform the Task Force functions of the member, a senior-level official who is a part of the member's agency and a full-time officer or employee of the Federal Government.

Non-federal members shall include individuals with expertise and lived experience relevant to groups suffering disproportionate rates of illness and death in the United States; individuals with expertise and lived experience relevant to equity in public health, health care, education, housing, and community-based services; and any other individuals with expertise the President deems relevant. Appointments shall be made without regard to political affiliation and shall reflect a diverse set of perspectives.

Federal members shall serve as ex-officio members or Regular Government Employees and non-federal members shall serve as Special Government Employees. All members shall be appointed to serve for the duration of the time that the Task Force is authorized to operate. Any vacancy of a non-federal member shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. Any non-federal member who is appointed to fill the vacancy of an unexpired term shall be appointed to serve for the remainder of that term.

Subcommittees

At the direction of the Chair, the Task Force may establish subgroups consisting exclusively of Task Force members or their designees under this section, as appropriate. All such subcommittees must report directly to the Task Force and must not provide advice or work products directly to the President, or any other official or agency. Subcommittees of the Task Force will meet as determined by the Task Force Chair.

The Department Committee Management Officer will be notified upon establishment of each subcommittee and will be provided information regarding the name of the subcommittee, function, membership, and estimated frequency of meetings.

Recordkeeping

The records of the Task Force and subcommittees of the Task Force shall be handled in accordance with the General Records Schedule 6.2. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

Establishment Filing Date:

Approved:

February 4, 2021

Date

Norris Cochran, Acting Secretary