



## **Healthcare Equity Advisory Council CHARTER**

Approved April 19, 2022  
Amended October 15, 2024

### **MISSION**

The mission of the VCHCA is to provide comprehensive, cost-effective, compassionate healthcare for our diverse community, especially those facing barriers.

### **INTRODUCTION**

On November 10, 2020, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) of Ventura County adopted a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis, making a commitment to promote equity, inclusion, diversity in housing, employment, economic development, public safety, and health care in the County of Ventura. The Ventura County Health Care Agency (VCHCA) will honor the commitment by becoming a more racial equity and justice-oriented organization in service to our community. This charter introduces The Healthcare Equity and Advisory Council (HEAC) to expand efforts toward community and patient partnership engagement to advance equity in healthcare. Formalizing these partnerships will provide structure and support to already existing community-focused committees within VCHCA that will fall under the HEAC umbrella.

### **PURPOSE and SCOPE**

The Healthcare Equity Advisory Council (HEAC or "Council") is a working group of healthcare subject matter experts and community stakeholders who advocate for equity for historically underserved communities. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that health equity is the absence of unfair, avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically or by other dimensions of inequality (e.g. sex, gender, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation). The WHO further holds that health equity is achieved when everyone can attain their full potential for health and well-being. With that in consideration, the Council will convene to evaluate the delivery of healthcare services for underserved populations, including allocation of resources and personnel practices, and recommend strategies for improvement where gaps are identified.

The scope of this group will include:

- a. Provide input into the VCHCA Strategic Plan using a health equity lens.

- b. Initiate queries into healthcare system disparity data and consult the Ventura County Community Health Needs Assessment to inform discussion of this group.
- c. Invite leaders of working groups and departments to speak with the Council as needed.
- d. Provide input regarding potential measures of success for equity-related quality improvement projects.
- e. Provide input into VCHCA's public communications related to equity work.
- f. Provide input into new and ongoing initiatives directed at addressing healthcare disparities.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRATEGIES**

In collaboration with VCHCA, the Council shall:

1. Engage the communities we serve to identify and understand needs that address healthcare equity opportunities.

### ***Strategies***

- a. Establish meaningful conversations in HEAC meetings.
  - b. Collect and analyze data to understand where disparities exist.
  - c. Leverage community needs assessments and partner data.
  - d. Create action steps and timelines for identified opportunities.
2. Develop and implement strategies to promote healthcare equity for all patients regardless of age, race, ethnicity, language, religion, spiritual practice, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, mental status, disability, and medical condition.

### ***Strategies***

- a. Targeted quality improvement efforts with metrics for evaluation.
- b. Focus on equity and inclusivity in patient-centered healthcare services and programs.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

1. HEAC membership shall be comprised of 9 members representing HCA, up to 8 individuals representing the Ventura County community, and up to 6 seats representing community-based organizations, all of whom possess one vote when votes need to be taken and recorded.
  - a. County staff members shall be appointed by the HCA Director. Initial community members have been selected by a formation team consisting of County staff and community partners.
  - b. After the first term, community members and organizational members shall be nominated by the Council members, approved by the HCA Director, and confirmed by a 2/3 vote of the Council.
2. Community members and organizational members will represent the needs of, including but not limited to, the following populations: LGBTQ+, Hispanic, Latino and Latinx, Asian-American and Pacific Islander, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), individuals affected by mental health challenges, the aging population, the unhoused, the undocumented, the uninsured and underinsured, and people with disabilities.
3. The role of VCHCA membership will be to hear feedback, make recommendations, and bridge the HEAC work to internal efforts.

4. Community members will serve three-year terms.
  - a. Appointees will commit to and fulfill the entire term.
  - b. In the case that an organizational membership is created, and a vacancy arises, the HCA Director will work with the organization to nominate a new member and that person will be confirmed by 2/3 vote by the HEAC.
  - c. Community members can be nominated for a second term by the HCA Director and confirmed by a 2/3 vote by the HEAC. No community member shall serve more than two consecutive terms.
5. Repeated absences by a community member will be evaluated by the Chair and Co-Chair and the membership may be declared vacant by the Chair and Co-Chair. The vacancy will be filled through the standard nomination process.
6. At the HCA Director's discretion, any member may be nominated for removal from the HEAC, which would be approved by a 2/3 vote of the Council.

## **RULES OF ORDER**

### **1. Quorum**

- a. A majority of members constitutes a quorum. A quorum is required to convene a meeting.

### **2. Duties of Presiding Officers**

- a. The HCA Director or designee will be the Chair of HEAC, and a community Co-Chair will be elected annually from among the community members by a majority vote of the community members.
- b. One member of the HCA staff will be designated as Secretary and will be responsible for Agenda and Minutes as well as written communication that originates from the Committee.
- c. Additional invitees including community stakeholders and subject matter experts will be included on an as-needed basis upon agreement by the Chair and Co-Chair.

### **3. Voting**

- a. Actions of the committee will require a 2/3 majority vote.
  - i. Actions should include a timeline with a projected completion date (i.e. <2yrs).
  - ii. Electronic voting will be allowed when deemed necessary between meetings and will require voting from the full membership.

### **4. Rule of Discussion and Debate**

- a. HEAC members should know and understand the rules of parliamentary procedure. Every member will have ample opportunity to speak and address staff to the question or topic under consideration/debate. The member speaking will not be interrupted unless called to order by the Chair.
- b. The Chair and Co-Chair determine all points of order except that the HEAC membership may determine any point of order by majority vote.

### **5. Meeting Accessibility**

- a. In compliance with the Americans with Disability Act, persons who require accommodation for any audio or visual disability in order to participate in a community meeting, or require language interpretation services, may request assistance by

contacting the Ventura County Health Care Agency at [heaccouncil@ventura.org](mailto:heaccouncil@ventura.org). If interpretation is required, please provide as much notice as possible and every effort will be made to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

## **MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT**

The HEAC is committed to showing respect for our members and the communities we serve. We affirmatively acknowledge that each member individually and as a group, is responsible for our decisions and their consequences.

We are committed to:

- Act honestly, truthfully, and with integrity in all our transactions and undertakings.
- Avoid conflicts of interest. When conflicts exist, disclose and recuse from voting as appropriate.
- Appropriately handle actual or apparent conflicts of interest in our relationships.
- Value every individual with dignity, respect, fairness, and in good faith.
- Act responsibly, with cultural humility and cultural competency toward the people we work with and for the benefit of the communities we serve.
- Refrain from threatening or abusive language, or engage in any disorderly conduct which disrupts, disturbs, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
- Speak only when recognized by the Chair and refrain from speaking over others
- Be responsible, transparent, and accountable for all of our actions; and
- Improve accountability, transparency, ethical conduct, and effectiveness in all working relationships.

## **MEETINGS**

Meetings will be scheduled no less than quarterly. At the launch of the HEAC, a more frequent meeting schedule may be required. Special meetings may be called and scheduled by the Chair.

Minutes and materials will be kept and disseminated, in addition to the agenda, before the following meeting.