

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Oversight Working Group (NHALOWG)

Meeting Summary

Thursday, November 12, 2020, 10:00 am via Zoom

The meeting was convened by Representative Toni Walker, NHALOWG Co-Chair.

1. Opening Statements

- Representative Walker introduced her Co-Chair, Adelita Orefice from the Department of Public Health. Ms. Orefice stated that she looked forward to co-chairing the working group with Rep. Walker and to the working group developing ideas that can better support the State's pandemic response and strengthen the long-term care system.

2. Subcommittees

- Co-Chair Orefice proposed changing the name of the "Infectious Disease Protocols and COVID Recovery Facilities" Subcommittee to "Outbreak Response and Surveillance" Subcommittee. Without objection, the name change was adopted.
- Introduction of Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members and Staff
 - Co-Chair Walker announced the Subcommittee Co-Chairs and introduced the Subcommittee Administrators:
 - Outbreak Response and Surveillance –Co-Chairs: Senator Mary Daugherty Abrams and Deputy Commissioner Heather Aaron (DPH); Valentina Mehmeti, Administrator
 - Staffing Levels – Co-Chairs: Representative Michelle Cook and Kate McEvoy (DSS); Heather Ferguson-Hull, Administrator
 - Socialization, Visitation and Care-Giver Engagement – Co-Chairs: Senator Cathy Osten and Mairead Painter (Long Term Care Ombudsman); Susan Keane, Administrator
 - Infrastructure/Capital Improvement Funding – Co-Chairs Representative Jonathan Steinberg and Deputy Secretary Kosta Diamantis (OPM); Beverley Henry, Administrator
 - Subcommittee Membership lists will be sent to NHALOWG members and posted on the NHALOWG website
- Establishment of Subcommittee Meeting Schedule Work
 - Co-Chair Walker stated the goal of six weeks for subcommittee work.

- Susan Keane, NHALOWG Administrator, announced that the subcommittee administrators would be contacting subcommittee co-chairs to schedule an initial meeting of their respective subcommittees.
- Timeline for Subcommittee Work
 - Week 1 – Identify issues under the subcommittee’s purview
 - Subcommittee issues list will be presented to the full working group for feedback
 - Week 2 – Identify subject area experts to inform the subcommittee’s work and to provide data
 - Week 3 – Meet with subject area experts
 - Week 4 – Meet with subject area experts
 - Week 5 – Review information and data compiled to begin crafting subcommittee recommendations
 - Week 6 – Finalize subcommittee recommendations

3. Review of " NHALOWG Committee Recommendations and Proposed Topics"

- Co-Chair Orefice reviewed the document with members, which includes suggested Mathematica recommendations for each subcommittee to review. She explained that the recommendations are coded as short term or long term.
- Members discussed the process for recommending other areas of interest for subcommittee deliberations.
- Sen. Osten stated that the recommendations of the working group should serve as a template for future legislatures and administrations in dealing with pandemics.
- Rep. Cook stated that the group's work should not be solely narrowed on a pandemic response but should address long term effective policy changes for nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- Rep. Steinberg suggested a creating a portal on the NHALOWG website for the public to offer suggestions.

4. Working Group Website

- The NHALOWG website will be linked to the Appropriations Committee webpage. Full working group and subcommittee information will be posted.
- Ease of Access and Public Input
 - Rep. Petit suggested that a link to the NHALOWG website be prominent on the CGA Homepage.
 - Susan Keane will consult with ITS staff.
 - Elizabeth Stern asked about the public's ability to provide input.

- Susan Keane will consult with ITS staff regarding posting a statement on the website that public comments/recommendations can be sent to her.

5. COVID-19 Update by DPH

- Update was provided by Dr. Vivian Leung, DPH (slides are posted on the NHALOWG website)
- Members discussed various aspects of the presentation.

Seeing no further discussion, Representative Walker adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting – Thursday, November 19, 10 am via Zoom