

OHPB Health Equity Committee Annual Digest 2024

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Committee Information

Committee Name: Health Equity Committee

Website: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/EI/Pages/Health-Equity-Committee.aspx>

Name(s) of Oregon Health Authority Lead staff: Maria Elena Castro, Alex Freedman

Name(s) of Chairs: Katie Cox, Bryon Lambert

Oregon Health Policy Board Liaison: Carly Hood-Ronick (outgoing), Dr. Rosemarie Hemmings (current)

Number of members: 14 + 1 Tribal representative

Number of vacant seats: 2

Summary of 2024 Progress, Updates and Changes

HEC finished the first quarter of 2024 with a presentation of its strategic workplan and community-based advocacy letters on Gender Affirming Care and Ombuds Recommendations Support at the April 2nd OHPB meeting. In preparation for this meeting, HEC co-chairs worked to build relationship and foundational understanding of HEC’s equity approach through regular meetings with HEC and OHPB co-chairs, and several “Health Equity Co-learning Sessions” open to all HEC and OHPB members, in which participants shared perspective on health equity and committee roles and responsibilities. After HEC’s presentation, OHPB prepared its own statement of support and action recommendations with input from HEC, to share publicly with OHA and statewide leadership. HEC also completed a round of recruitment in early 2024, adding four new members who completed onboarding and joined the June hybrid HEC meeting.

HEC made progress on its strategic goals in the middle of 2024: HEC worked with the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) to build a collaboration plan that included **improved public engagement opportunities** and a **health equity framework** that includes an antiracist

approach. HEC consulted with the Metrics and Scoring Committee (MSC) to support both **community engagement strategies** for future health equity metrics work and in supporting Senate Bill 966, the study of the CCO Quality Metrics Incentive Program. HEC also provided a letter of support to the Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) application to the Center for Health Care Strategies' (CHCS) Building State Capacity for Community-Informed Policymaking Learning and Action Series, a program that supports state governments in making their federally mandated Medicaid advisory groups more equitable, accessible, and impactful.

OHA staff representatives from multiple teams worked with HEC members to discuss **policy development strategy**, including Government Relations, Health Policy & Analytics, and Equity & Inclusion divisions, who lead OHA's Gender Affirming Care Workgroup as it moved from implementation of HB 2002 to developing wider policy recommendations related to health equity for LGBTQIA2S+ communities. HEC made progress on its **structures to improve engagement**, implementing members' requests for more relational opportunities in meeting and committee structure and approving an additional tool for consensus-based proposal review and decision-making in meetings, the "Fist-to-Five" model.

OHPB and HEC received a response from OHA's director's office in Q3 2024 with specific requests for action to move recommendations forward. HEC members are now participating in a **Gender-Affirming Care Provider Recommendations Development workgroup**, hosted by the OHPB Healthcare Workforce committee. The workgroup's preliminary recommendations will be presented at the February 2025 HEC meeting for feedback, before being presented at the March 2025 Oregon Health Policy Board meeting.

In the final quarter of the year, HEC wrapped up its 2024 strategic work with significant progress in several focus areas. In October, HEC received an introduction to OHA's **Health Equity Impact Assessment tool suite**, which is currently in its pilot phase, and members expressed interest in involvement in both the pilot process and eventual implementation of the tool across the agency. The Metrics and Scoring committee also presented on its Quality Incentive Program research study, providing feedback about how community engagement and voice must be prioritized and incorporated into OHPB and OHA committee processes and decision-making.

In November, HEC members participated in a day-long virtual retreat, with sessions focused on OHA's proposed **Community Engagement Framework, Health Equity Impact Assessment Tool**, and **OHA's Tribal Affairs work**. At HEC's final meeting of the year, HEC members held a **public forum for community members** to share their stories and experiences with the Oregon Health Plan and Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs), as part of an effort across OHPB subcommittees to collect community-based data for CCO 3.0 Contract Procurement. This public forum brought forward critical concerns from community members, and HEC has worked to incorporate their needs into its 2025 strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Updates

Based on HEC's 2023-2024 [Strategic Workplan Dashboard](#), HEC made progress in each of its strategic goal areas.

Strategic Goal	Details	HEC Role	Status
Policy Goal 1: Anti-Racism Approach	Work with E&I division to develop, adopt, and implement an anti-racism approach and practices within OHA	Lead	In Progress
Policy Goal 2: Equity Toolkit	Compile and/or create an equity toolkit for widespread use at OHA composed of existing or newly developed tools	Advise	In Progress
Policy Goal 3: HEC relationship building	Create opportunities for relationship building and training among HEC members in and outside of regular HEC meetings	Lead	Complete
Policy Goal 4: Community Participation	Create and implement better systems for community participation and voice in HEC meeting (public comment, presentations, reports, etc)	Lead	In Progress
Feedback Goal 1: Community Engagement Framework	Review and provide input into OHA's efforts to promote standards, tools, processes, and vision for community engagement across OHA	Monitor	Complete
Feedback Goal 2: Policy Consultation	Develop and pilot a specific process with clear expectations for HEC to provide policy consultation to OHA	Lead	In Progress
Feedback Goal 3: Ombuds Recommendation Tracking	Track OHA responses to equity-related Ombuds report recommendations	Lead	In Progress
Collaboration Goal 1: Power Mapping	Clarify and document relationships between OHPB, OHPB committees, and OHA related to communication flows, decision-making, and accountability	Lead	In Progress
Collaboration Goal 2: OHPB Subcommittee Collaboration	HEC and the other OHPB subcommittees are more aware of each others work, have a process and understanding for how to collaborate, and equity is embedded in their efforts.	Lead	Complete
Collaboration Goal 3: relationship building w/ OHA Director's Office and Governor's Office	Develop relationships with new OHA Director and Deputy Directors, and Governor's office to support health equity efforts in Oregon	Advise	In Progress

Upcoming committee work

Based on its progress in 2024, HEC is moving into 2025 with updated strategic goals that focus on more specific topic areas, while leaving room for advocacy on emerging community needs and long-term strategic and policy-development work. The 2025 HEC strategic priorities will be approved by HEC members in March 2025.

Committee changes

Based on community and committee member feedback, HEC continues to explore ways to make committee meetings more equitable and accessible for community members to participate and advocate for their needs. In 2024, HEC worked on:

- Improvements to how HEC meetings are publicized, including using social-media-based communications to HEC member networks and through more community-focused OHA channels;
- Recruiting and filtering presenters to be most relevant to HEC's strategic goals, and guiding discussion to focus on equity impact;
- Proposing an updated co-chair structure that reflects HEC's equity values in practice.

HEC Member Reflections on 2024

Highlights:

"I feel grateful that the work of all the members of HEC is being reflected in the policies of OHA and our communities."

"I am proud that I am able to be a voice for the Nine Tribes and the Urban Native population. I hope I am making an impact for all."

"I'm proud of so many things! The letters to OHBP, the subsequent work on GAC, building relationships with other committee's and OHA divisions."

"Getting the gender affirming care letter to the board to help establish the future of trans healthcare with gender affirming care being secure in the future in Oregon."

"I'm proud of the work we've covered relating to community engagement. I've appreciated all the conversations around what we mean by "community" and how we want to see this "engagement" look like."

"I'm proud of the opportunities I've had to lift up the equity needs for children (and their families), particularly the 0-5 age group. Despite all of my organization's advocacy work in this area, the state frequently leaves them out of the conversation."

Upcoming recruitment opportunities

HEC will have another round of recruitment either in Spring or Fall 2025 to fill vacant seats, filling specific gaps in representation including OHP consumers.

2025 meeting dates:

HEC Meetings take place on the **Second Thursday of each month, 12:00pm – 2:00pm**. All public meetings are fully remote or hybrid format with a remote joining option. Meeting links, materials, and past meeting recordings are provided on the [HEC website](#).

2025 meeting dates:

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Thursday, March 13, 2025 – In-person retreat

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Thursday, May 9, 2025

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Thursday, July 10, 2025 – Retrospective meeting (Hybrid)

Thursday, August 14, 2025

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Thursday, October 9, 2025

Friday, November 13, 2025 – Virtual retreat day

Thursday, December 11, 2025