

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
LACTATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
Monday, July 26, 2021**

The District of Columbia Lactation Commission held a public meeting on Monday, July 26, 2021, at 6:30 pm, via WebEx.

Notetaker: Aubrey Villalobos

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:34pm.

**II. Roll Call**

Attendance Via WebEx:

Commissioner Jennifer Tender—Pediatrician/Neonatologist Member & Commission Chair  
Commissioner Aubrey Villalobos—Public Health Expert Member  
Commissioner Sahira Long—Pediatrician/Neonatologist Member  
Commissioner Angela McClain—Community Outreach Expert Member  
Commissioner Kanika Harris—Public Health Expert Member  
Commissioner Gwendolyn West—Lactation Expert Member  
Colleen Sonosky—DC Department of Health Care Finance Representative  
Noni Robinson—DC Health Representative  
Suzanne Henley—DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education Representative  
Quamiece Harris—DC Department of Human Services Representative  
Sara Beckwith—Invited guest from DC Health  
Tera Jones—Invited guest from DC’s Office of Paid Family Leave  
Judy Campbell—Public Attendee

Absent:

Commissioner Lauren Propst-Riddick—Consumer Member  
Commissioner Christina Stowers—Consumer Member  
Cieara Davis—DC Department of Human Resources Representative

Vacancies:

1 OB/GYN Member  
1 Lactation Expert Member  
1 Community Outreach Expert Member

**III. Adoption of the Agenda**

A motion to adopt the revised agenda, with new business discussed first, was made by Commissioner Long and seconded by Commissioner McClain. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Approval of May 2021 Minutes**

A motion to approve the May 2021 minutes with no edits was made by Commissioner McClain and seconded by Rep. Sonosky. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. New Business**

- A. *Lactation Commission's Assistance with Paid Family Leave Outreach (Tera Jones, Media and Outreach Specialist Office of Paid Family Leave (OPFL))*
- a. Commissioner Tender met last week with Ms. Jones. DC Breastfeeding Coalition is exploring opportunities to support community awareness of DC's new paid family leave program eligibility and application procedures.
  - b. Support for prenatal leave dovetails nicely with Commission recommendations and DC Health goals to increase engagement in prenatal care. Goal for tonight was to connect DC Health reps with Tera. Also suggested Tera help spread the word about protections for nursing mothers returning to work.
  - c. Some policies being amended currently. Will be put to a Council vote on August 10<sup>th</sup>. Expecting to add prenatal care as a leave type but timing that new benefit would go into effect was unknown. Information still changing. May start October 1, 2021, January or July 1, 2022.
  - d. OPFL is trying to reach lower income families in Wards 7, 8, 5 to get the message out about the program. Current outreach strategies:
    - i. See [dcpaidfamilyleave.dc.gov](http://dcpaidfamilyleave.dc.gov) for outreach materials – Top 10 facts on rack card front and back; digital forms; 10 different focused 1-pagers
    - ii. Monthly e-newsletter to 30,000 subscribers (healthcare, employer, worker, etc.)
    - iii. Have cards that can be placed wherever new parents can find them (pediatrician's offices, DC libraries, FQHCs, etc.).
    - iv. Information sessions and tabling outreach at Unity and Mary's Centers sites. Commissioners offered to help connect Tera with key people at additional sites (e.g., social workers, family service).
    - v. Social media content is available that other agencies can push out (DOES handle)
    - vi. Contact for follow up: [tera.jones@dc.gov](mailto:tera.jones@dc.gov)
  - e. Commissioner McClain asked if had events at recreation centers in priority wards. Rep. Henley suggested MyChildCareDC, other early learning networks and communities. Commissioner Villalobos suggested leveraging the Parks and Rec website/listserv for parents in co-ops and summer camps. Rep. Harris suggested human services centers
  - f. Action items for Ms. Jones:
    - i. Restock rack cards as needed
    - ii. Share social media content that Commissioners, other DC government representatives, and community partners (e.g., DCBFC) can cross-post
    - iii. Have follow up meetings(s) and/or emails with DC government reps about providing outreach materials for dissemination – Sarah Beckwith, Noni Robinson from DC Health; Suzanne Henley from OSSE for early childhood + parks and rec connections; and Quamiece Harris from DC Human Services; Jenny Tender and Aubrey Villalobos for DC Breastfeeding Coalition and connections to staff at pediatric, family medicine, obstetric clinics and FQHCs (e.g., social workers, family service)
  - g. Action items for commissioners and representatives:
    - i. All commissioners can look at website to familiarize ourselves with the program and materials and disseminate through professional networks; come back with additional ideas/questions about how we can further promote and encourage enrollment in paid family leave program

- ii. Sara Beckwith will speak with her supervisor, Robin in Community Health Administration, and set up a follow up with Tera and DC Health to link to a multitude of programs.

B. *Lactation Commission Recommendations for DC WIC and Summary of WIC Outcomes (Sara Beckwith MS, RDN, LD, Bureau Chief, Nutrition and Physical Activity)*

- a. Bureau funds multiple community nutrition and physical activity programs. [See slides for complete details]
- b. DC Health has a perinatal framework strategy to improve outcomes with 7 core priorities (<https://dchealth.dc.gov/perinatal>)
- c. Based on USDA's WIC eligibility and coverage data, we do a good job of reaching eligible infants but there are opportunities to increase coverage among eligible pregnant women and children 1-4 years old. D.C. had an overall coverage rate below 50% of eligible participants in 2018. There has been an increase in enrollment from fiscal year 2019-2021, some of which is attributable to the pandemic impact on the economy plus a USDA waiver to complete evaluations remotely during the pandemic. Remote appointments have been extremely well-received across the country.
  - i. Number of enrolled infants is higher than postpartum women because of foster children.
  - ii. Why do they drop off after 1 year? No longer need costly formula, transportation, having to bring child in person, not a lot of money so not worth it, some do not realize they are eligible (perception it is for families with extremely low incomes but lots of working families are eligible), stigma, specific food options like 1% milk not well received, other reasons.
- d. Sara next discussed Recommendation #2 from our recent Commission report on increasing prenatal breastfeeding education through WIC outreach (see our report for details).
- e. In FY21, to try and increase enrollment DC WIC is taking 3 approaches.
  - i. establishing informal/non-binding partnership agreements with community-based organizations (CBOs) to strengthen relationships and solidify roles of state agency and CBO (e.g., Community of Hope, Martha's Table, Mamatoto Village, EduCare, Barbara Chambers);
  - ii. local agency WIC referral processes – Unity, Mary's Center, Children's, Howard University Hospital – local agency WIC staff and OBGyn/pediatric primary care departments are having facilitated meetings to increase awareness about WIC eligibility and enrollment. Next, plan to identify champions at each site and build out a clearer referral process (e.g., with a field in medical record); and
  - iii. virtual collaboration meetings with CBOs as an opportunity to build awareness of DC WIC in community (e.g., Child and Family Services, Million Hearts Collaborative, Smart from the Start, etc.)
- f. Challenges include identifying a champion within each obstetric, family practice, and pediatric clinics, plus provider capacity is strained. Opportunity to identify innovative strategies for referring patients to DC WIC, especially with technology.
- g. Challenge to invite local agency WIC staff to participate in clinic staff meetings to educate providers about WIC enrollment because of WIC staff capacity, too many clinics.

May not be best use of their time and effort. Also, WIC is transitioning to EBT system and having to learn new workflows and technology system at the moment. But state agency staff at DC Health can take this piece on with relationship building.

- h. FY22 outreach priorities include:
  - i. internal referral process;
  - ii. state agency to establish partnerships with clinics across the city, especially birthing facilities;
  - iii. revised food list with added options in categories including organic foods, more package sizes; and
  - iv. roll out EBT (instead of current checks)
- i. Data matching across DHCF and DHS was part of WIC expansion act so will be doing more to get eligible residents on WIC when apply for SNAP, TANF, etc.
- j. Contact for follow up: sara.beckwith@dc.gov

*C. Readout from meeting with Vital Statistics Department (Commissioner Tender)*

- a. Commissioner Tender met with vital statistics to see how data about breastfeeding could be captured on birth certificates. Birth certificates are too difficult to modify to capture more than what is already asked (breastfeeding at time of discharge).
- b. DC Health is working on the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data and looking at how they can make it publicly available now that they reached minimum response rate.
- c. DC Health is aware of legislation in development related to report cards from birthing facilities to include breastfeeding data.

*D. Thrive by Five meeting highlights (Rep. Sonosky)*

- a. Dr. Faith Gibson Hubbard is in a dual role now for Mayor's communications office plus Thrive by Five.
- b. Thrive by Five is working on two major initiatives:
  - i. safe sleep campaign funded by NICHD, conducting focus groups, conversations with infant mortality review committee, next steps unclear but upcoming stakeholder meetings; and
  - ii. Maternal and Infant Health Summit, being held virtually in September 2021, abstract notifications by August 2<sup>nd</sup>—Commissioner Villalobos and Commissioner Long submitted a session proposal on breastfeeding on behalf of the DC Breastfeeding Coalition
- c. Action item: Let Rep. Sonosky know if you want to be invited to the safe sleep stakeholder meeting

*E. New and Renewed Members (Rep. Robinson)*

- a. All outstanding reappointments for current Commissioners have been completed. Commissioners commented that it would be helpful to have more communication from MOTA to provide confirmation of status.
- b. Dr. McDonald will be the Lactation Commission's newest member, having recently completed her paperwork. She will fill the OBGyn vacancy and be invited to the next meeting in September.

- c. Rep. Robinson reminded the Commissioners that MOTA has a strong preference regarding new members and a recruitment priority for District residents and to keep this in mind when referring any potential candidates for vacant positions. Existing members who are not District residents are exempt from this criterion. Physicians who live outside D.C. but practice in the city are also exempt.

## **VI. Old Business**

### **A. *Collaboration Technology Access for Commission Members (Rep. Henley)***

- a. DC government will not allow Commissioners to use One Drive or SharePoint, even with DCBC emails. But Rep. Henley will set up a Google Drive folder and share with Commissioners and government representatives to facilitate collaboration on meeting minutes, annual reports, and other documents.

### **B. *Review of Proposed Bylaws Revisions (Commissioners Tender and McClain and Rep. Robinson)***

- a. Time ran out and this agenda item was tabled until the next meeting in September.

## **VII. Opportunity for Public Comment**

- A. Judith Campbell shared that some local advocates are working to revive the Lactation Consultants Association of Greater Washington (LCAGW), one of the first chapters of ILCA (and now under USLCA), started by Vergie Hughes in the 1980s. They would like to provide education, especially with local speakers, networking, and to be a resource for local job opportunities.
  - i. Action item: Please let Judy know if you'd like to be on their email list: [lcagwvp@gmail.com](mailto:lcagwvp@gmail.com)
- B. LCAGW is hosting a virtual discussion with Robert Marcus, DDS, about tongue tie on July 28<sup>th</sup> from 8:30-9:30 pm. Judy will share the details with the meeting attendees via email.
- C. Commissioner Long shared about DCBFC Breastfeeding Awareness Month and Black Breastfeeding Week events planned:
  - i. August 7<sup>th</sup> Virtual Global Big Latch On event
  - ii. Whole month will participate in Million Milk March virtual run/walk to count walking/biking steps/miles – Join the DCBFC team!
  - iii. Action item: Commissioner Long to send August events info to all Commissioners and Judy Campbell for broader dissemination
- D. Commissioner Villalobos shared that DCBFC is also in the early stages of planning a possible late September webinar on tele-lactation. Will share information once formalized.
- E. Commissioner West shared that Howard is working on activities to educate physicians, residents, students and Howard WIC is planning pop-ups around hospital to intercept potentially eligible mothers with games, prizes
- F. Rep. Robinson shared that all local WIC agencies also doing same at Unity, Mary's Center, Children's, plus Beautiful Beginnings clubs hosting drive by activities and education
  - i. Action item: Rep. Robinson to send Commissioner West updated WIC referral contact at other sites
- G. Rep. Robinson shared about a 1,000 Days collaboration for National Breastfeeding Awareness Month – local WIC agency peer counselors are going to post paper with 1 word describing their

experience with BF (e.g., love) will post on WIC website and social media; a WIC public health nutritionist will also do a video interview with 1,000 Days

**VIII. Future Meeting Schedule:** Next meeting will be held September 27, 2021.

- A. Action item: Rep. Robinson and Commissioner Tender to reach out to Dr. McDonald to provide an orientation to the Commission and ensure she is invited to the next meeting.
- B. Action item: Rep. Robinson and Commissioner Tender to look for schedule of notetakers and notify the assigned person prior to September meeting.
- C. Action item: Commissioner Tender to look into inviting Dept of Labor, Dept of Human Rights to next meeting to discuss workplace protections for nursing mothers; Also to look into inviting DC Health or Dept of Vital Statistics representatives to talk about adding questions to the PRAMS – whoever is available and whichever is more time-sensitive

**IX. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm.