

**Virginia Health Catalyst
Water Equity Task Force
Monday, December 16, 2019 | 1:00 - 3:00p.m.**

MINUTES

Attending: Tonya Adiches (Virginia Department of Health, Dental Health Program); Jeanette Bowman (Virginia Department of Health, Dental Health Program); Chelsi Bennett (American Heart Association) McAllister Castelaz (Horizon Health Services, Inc.); Brenda Davy (Virginia Tech, Department of Human Nutrition); Brittany DeKnight (United Way of Roanoke Valley); Laurie Forlano (Virginia Department of Health); David Fridley (Virginia Department of Health, Three Rivers Health District); Andrea Gregg (Virginia Department of Social Services); Frank Iournio (West End Orthodontics); Parham Jabari (Virginia Department of Health); Matt Jacob (Jacob Strategies, LLC); Marty Kilgore (Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth); Emily Keenum (Virginia Early Childhood Foundation); Leigh Anne Krometis (Virginia Tech, Department of Biological Systems Engineering); Laura Kornegay (Virginia Department of Health, Central Shenandoah District); Erin Ling (Virginia Tech, Virginia Household Water Quality Program); Cindy McKelvy (Virginia Department of Health, Henrico Health Department); Stephanie Norris (Virginia Department of Health); Robert Noriega (Healthy Living and Learning Center, Petersburg); Susan Pharr (Virginia Dental Hygienists Association); Dwayne Roadcap (Office of Drinking Water); Brenden Rivenbark (Virginia Department of Health); Hannah Robbins (Virginia Foundation for Health Youth); Polly Raible (Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association); Sarah Raskin (Virginia Commonwealth University, Government and Public Affairs); Sharon Stull (Old Dominion University, School of Dental Hygiene); Danny Saggese (Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth); Brad Stallard (Virginia Department of Health, Lenowisco District); Casey Tupea (Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services)

Staff: Sarah Bedard Holland, Lauren Sawyer, Brita Bergland, Chloe Van Zandt

Proceedings:

Desired Outcomes

- Cultivate a network of water stakeholders across the state.
- Brainstorm about how to improve equity issues related to tap water across the Commonwealth.
- Build consensus on the next steps to get us closer to our mission: that everyone in Virginia has safe, trusted, fluoridated water that they are drinking.

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Overview: Laurie Forlano gave an introduction on the Virginia Department of Health priority of water safety and accessibility.
- Water Equity Task Force presentation: Sarah Bedard Holland, Chief Executive Officer, Virginia Health Catalyst (*attached*)
- Wakefield Study presentation: Matt Jacob, Jacob Strategies, LLC (*attached*)
- Small Group Discussion: three prompt questions
 - How does considering the equity implications change the effort?



- What action steps can we take to meet the goal of safe, trusted, fluoridated water that people drink?
 - What additional information do you need?
- Main Themes from Discussion
 - Current Inequities: Not everyone has safe, running water in their home. Socioeconomic status and race are key indicators of access to safe water, and cultural backgrounds impact one's disposition towards water and water safety. Behavioral data that's localized and regional will help identify high priority areas of water disparity. For example: one participant highlighted that tidewater citizens primarily use private water wells that are often too high in naturally occurring fluoride and sometimes too high in sodium. Public water supplies use the same aquifers and face the same two basic challenges, but have the advantage of consumer confidence reports (CCR). Tidewater rural population is entirely on their own for taking responsibility for their drinking water, with no information or resources.
 - Consumer Confidence Report: CCR's are produced by localities and distributed to the public. Their language is often technical and convoluted. Reports can be revamped, with consumer input, to have an understandable and clear message.
 - Waterwork Structure: More information is needed regarding the current waterworks structure and plans for upgrades in Virginia. Well systems are not static and change rapidly as the environment changes; rural areas with lower average income are more likely to have private water systems (wells) and there is insufficient funding to test the safety of private waterworks. Local authorities often struggle with affording local water problems due to inadequate economy of scale.
 - Schools: Water that children drink in school is an important point of impact due to the time spent at school. If schools have safe water, positive messaging around the quality of tap water and the benefit of drinking water would be helpful. Frequent testing of water in schools will build trust in communities.

Action Items

- Next meeting date to be determined.
- At the next meeting, we will collectively develop workgroup structure for the Water Equity Task Force and prioritize goals and action steps.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.