

Members appointed to serve on Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Written by

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Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) recently appointed 33 people to a council charged with reducing disparities within programs serving human services clients.

The Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2013, and will advise the Human Services commissioner on reducing disparities that affect racial and ethnic groups in human services programs and ensure that departmental policies and procedures are aligned to promote the best possible outcomes for all Minnesotans.

"While Minnesota ranks highly in overall health, education and workforce measures, the state continues to exhibit significant disparities among cultural and ethnic communities," said Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson. "The work of this council will enable our agency to more fully meet our mission of helping people meet their basic needs so they can live in dignity and achieve their highest potential."

The Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council was authorized by the Legislature as a result of recommendations made by the Disparities Reduction Advisory Committee formed by DHS in 2007 to identify and address disparities in access and outcomes for cultural and ethnic communities served by the agency.

Over the course of the next two years, the council will develop a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate with jurisdiction over human services. The report will identify major problems and issues confronting racial and ethnic groups in accessing human services, and will provide recommendations to address the issues.

The council's members represent the chairs and ranking minority members of Health and Human Services committees at the Legislature; racial and ethnic minority groups; tribal service providers; culturally and linguistically specific advocacy groups and service providers; human services program participants; public and private institutions; parents of human services program participants; members of the faith community; and DHS employees. They are:

- Rep. Jim Abeler, House HHS Finance Minority Lead
- Titilayo Bediako, WE WIN Institute Inc., Multicultural: Children's Issues
- Mitchell Davis Jr., Minneapolis Urban League
- Sen. Michelle Benson, Senate HHS Policy Minority Lead
- Pamela Cosby, University of Minnesota, Minnesota Urban Area Health Education Center

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- Sarita Ennis, Fernbrook Family Center, Inc.
- Hector Garcia, Chicano Latino Affairs Council
- Jose Gonzalez, director, Office of Multicultural and Minority Health, Minnesota Department of Health
- LaRone Greer, DHS Chemical and Mental Health Administration
- Muriel Gubasta, Ombudspersons for Families (rotating)
- Dave Haley, executive assistant to department director, Ramsey County Human Services
- Kamaludin Hassan, Hennepin County Adult Mental Health Local Advisory Council
- Paula Haywood, quality assurance and community engagement manager, Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation
- Sia Her, Council on Pacific Islanders Minnesotans
- Annamarie Hill, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
- Rep. Tom Huntley, House HHS Finance Chair
- Rev. Janet Johnson, ordained elder, Wayman African Methodist Episcopal Church
- Scott Leitz, DHS assistant commissioner, Health Care Administration and DHS Senior Management Team member liaison
- Rep. Tina Liebling, House HHS Policy Chair
- Pa H. Lor, InterCorps Council of Minnesota, Americorps
- Sen. Tony Lourey, Senate HHS Finance Chair
- Rep. Tara Mack, House HHS Policy Minority Lead
- Anna Mazig, DHS Operations
- Edward McDonald, Council on Black Minnesotans
- Vayong Moua, senior advocacy and health equity consultant, Center for Prevention, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
- Bauz Nengchu, Ombudspersons for Families (rotating)
- Kamala Puram, executive director, SEWA-AIFW, Asian Indian Family Wellness
- Sen. Julie Rosen, Senate HHS Finance Minority Lead
- Hassan Samanthar, multicultural parent advocate and trainer, PACER
- Maria Sarabia, DHS Health Care Administration
- Saciido Shaie, parent leader for child safety and permanency, Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota
- Sen. Kathy Sheran, Senate HHS Policy
- LaJuana Whitmore, Target Corporation
- Pahoua Yang, Amherst Wilder Foundation, Southeast Asian Services

The first meeting of the council is scheduled Friday, Nov. 15. More information about the council can be found on the [DHS website](#) .