

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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December 16, 2022

Members Present – Sheila Mary, Claudette K. Thomas, Pamela Williams

Members Absent – Dr. Abe, Charlotte Antoine, Paul Mitchell, Paula Williams

Guests - Danisha Jefferson-Abye, Tubman Health Founder; Margaret Boddie, Julie Chinitz, Sina Jackson, Rokea Jones, Amanda Shi, Madinah Slaise

HSD/ADS Staff – Mary Mitchell, ADS Director; Sariga Santhosh, Lena Tebeau, Karen Winston

I. Tubman Center for Health & Freedom

The founder of the Tubman Center for Health and Freedom, Danisha Jefferson-Abye, presented information about the new center and plans for addressing Black health and wellness in Seattle and King County. She was joined by members of her staff Julie Chinitz, Director of Development, Rokea Jones, Director of Research, and Amanda Shi, Research Fellow. The Tubman Center for Health & Freedom addresses health and wellness from both systemic and clinical approaches. By practicing medicine from the intersection of health and freedom, we address both the health of our patients as well as the factors that determine their health. Tubman Health provides primary and preventative care, community resources, social services, political education, and advocacy.

Tubman Health has been in conceptual development for the past 10 years and officially founded in May 2020 by six grassroots Black and Indigenous community members galvanized by the COVID pandemic and the murder of George Floyd. This group made it very clear that the community should own this organization, that it should be rooted in community organizing principles, and built with a health justice and community framework. Their patients are their board of directors. The board committed itself to raising the first \$25k, mostly from low-income community members. Their goal is to organize an active patient base, building on the power to change policies and systems that make us unwell. All programming is going to be informed and directed by community, creating a community-led healthcare system with the clinical services, health justice programs, health career pathways, research, and advocacy our communities want and need.

Tubman Health is being rooted in community and the community is creating this new system. Community organizing principles are utilized, which acknowledges that the community knows what is best as the experts in their own health and health care needs. A series of community visioning sessions began in September of 2020. Community members were asked about their ideas were for improved health, what they want, and what new ideas, systems, and arrangements they had for better health care. Twelve community design sessions were held in 2022 to guide development of the flagship health center.

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Focus groups and surveys were also used for input and involvement. All these learnings from community are now being applied to the programming of the future flagship clinic. An example was shared from the summer of 2021, called the Blaxinate Campaign, which was an initiative to redesign the vaccination experience around trust and community connection in a VIP lounge setting. The VIP lounges were held at community events across the region, throughout Seattle and Tacoma. The VIP lounges were pop-up tents filled with comfy chairs to make it feel like a non-medical setting to invite people in to sit with community members trained as community outreach workers. Then, people could decide whether they wanted the vaccine or not.

Tubman Health has also launched a commuter school-based health center at the Rainier Valley Leadership Academy, called the Freedom Clinic. It is a pilot site that allows the testing of new health care delivery models with a smaller population, while providing health care to the students, staff, and families of the Rainier Valley Leadership Academy community. It is another opportunity to learn what the community wants that can also inform the design process. Tubman Health will be a 40,000 square foot Community Health Clinic in the south Seattle 98118 zip code area. It will be a Black community-owned and led center that supports wellness across the lifespan while addressing all intersecting identities. The anticipated opening date is 2025.

The Tubman Center for Health and Freedom will own and operate two for-profit companies that will generate income to support the medical care that the clinic provides. **Roots and Remedies** is a healthy food cafe, coffee shop, juice bar, and herbal apothecary, and **Liberate** is a hydrotherapy spa that will offer services to reduce stress and improve all types of health conditions. These businesses will help generate income to continue the work within the clinic, so that they are not entirely reliant upon the insurance industry.

Right now, Tubman Health is in the process of land acquisition. They have received funding from the City and State resources for the land acquisition and hope to close on a property soon. They are currently involved in a capital campaign with the goal of raising \$80 million (\$40 million for the built environment and \$40 million for the first year of operation). The center has received a great deal of support from local elected officials, leaders, and grassroots community members. Contact information for Tubman Health:

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Julie Chinitz, Development Director – julie@tubmanhealth.org

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Questions

1. What are you doing specifically for veterans, both old and young in the community? And what is your vision for growing?

Response: All research that has been gathered is published on our website. Eventually, we plan to share more with the academic and scientific communities. We know that current medical research takes about 17 years to go from research to implementation, but the Tubman center is literally taking our research and immediately inputting it into the way we are designing every aspect of the Tubman Center for Health and Freedom. We expect that our focus group participants will be able to walk through the clinic doors and physically see/experience the things they shared in focus groups. Next year, we will develop more relationships with providers, and we hope to build an association of trusted providers that will allow us to create those safe referral pipelines for our communities, since we know we won't be able to have every specialty in-house at Tubman Health. In terms of our veteran community, we understand the complex needs of veterans and we think we can address it best through our Tubman Guides, which are our Community Health Workers that will work directly with families by helping them navigate the system. We are making sure that community has someone working side-by-side with them and making sure they are getting the support they need. We are following an integrative medicine model of care because our community has made it very clear that they would love more access to alternative therapies.

2. Are homebound elders a part of the Tubman Health vision?

Response: Yes, home visits will be a key aspects of care for older adults. We will conduct home visits, assist with transportation, and make sure they have the right supports in-place within their homes. This is essential for our elders. Tubman Health is really about relationship building. We know that many of our elders, during the pandemic, faced loneliness and social isolation, so we are working to find opportunities to engage elders, and making sure they feel connected and loved.

Comments

- The picture of the Blaxinate clinic was a good visualization of how you can center people's needs and still be able to provide the clinical services that are needed. I appreciate what Tubman Health is doing and what you are building. We are here to partner with you and support you. It means a lot! The experience will feel different than what we are used to, so it may take people some time to wrap their head around something that serves us and gives us what we need and how we need it.
- Please remember our elders and involve them in the planning processes to see what they think and what they want—even those with dementia. Also, people who are involved in administering programs for elders because they know who needs help, and how they want to receive it. If you don't include elders in the beginning, they will not trust you. I am happy with what I heard today, but don't forget us!

II. ADS Updates

Mary provided the following updates.

Federal

- Congress is working to pass an omnibus bill and has until December 16. The bill would fund the government through September 2023 or pass a shorter continuing resolution to avoid a partial government shutdown. Current versions of the bill include increases to the Older Americans Act, but we need Republican support for passage.

State

- We are gearing up for the 2023 legislative session. The Advisory Council's Advocacy Committee is putting the final draft together for the 2023 legislative priorities, that will include funding for Case Management. We're also asking for funding to expand the dementia resource catalyst program, though it is not listed as a priority.
- The W4A group (aka – WA. Association of Area Agencies on Aging) has lobby week scheduled for January 30 to February 3. Sariga will start making appointments with legislators soon. Also, an Advocates Training webinar is scheduled for January 23.

Local

- The Seattle City Council passed the 2023-2024 budget, which includes \$247 million for the Human Services Department. This budget prioritizes funding for critical programs and services, while addressing recent negative economic forecasts and our anticipating operating deficits on the city side, not on the state or federal side. This includes inflationary adjustments to service provider contracts in 2023 and 2024. And I believe that was right around 7% increased that went to our service providers.

III. Seattle Age Friendly Updates – No report.

IV. 2023 MCAAE Elections – Tabled

V. 2023 In-Person and Hybrid Meetings

Members briefly discussed future meetings that offer both in-person and hybrid opportunities, and meeting downtown vs. in community. Karen is researching potential meeting locations, e.g., Douglass Truth Library or the Garfield Community Center.

VI. Announcements

- Margaret reported that a nurse has been hired for the AAEP! Her name is Jaqueline Hurd, a retired nurse from the VA for 35 years. It was a six-month hurdle to find someone, but they did it! She thanked everyone for their assistance and support.
- Karen introduced Madinah Slaise, MSN, RN. She has submitted a cover letter and her resume for appointment to the MCAAE commission. She was flight nurse in the Air Force and an educator at SPU. Madinah has worked with nursing students and community health for a long time. Her focus is community health for African American elders.

VII. January Meeting - The January meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 20.