

Meeting Minutes: Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition (HCLHIC)

Date: July 16, 2026

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 am

Location: In-person at 8930 Stanford Blvd, Columbia, MD 21045. Virtual via Zoom.

Coalition Co-Chairs Present: Dr. Maura Rossman and Dr. Jeanette Nazarian

Note Taker Present: LaTonya Love

1. Attendees

Members Present: Amanda Toohey, Anna Clayton, Ashton Jordan, Beatrice Osei-Amoh, Bernadette Bindewald, Carla Gates, Caroline Morton, Carrie Ross, Chris Miller, Christine Ballou, Chynae Vicks, Dana Wachter, David Wu, Eden Adeferis, Emily Harris, Erica Taylor, Erin Anderson, George Townsend, Harsana Showunmi, Heather Sites, Heidi Marine, Hunniya Jafri, Ivy Kough, Jennifer Lee, Jessica Fisher, Julie Kwedar, Kaitlyn Miranda Carrera, Karen Sider, Katie Collier, Kelly Krispin, Kelly Russo, Kelsey Lineberger, Kendra Robinson, Kirk Rookwood, Kristine Nellenbach, Lauren Synan, Laurencia Hutton, Lekwalo Edwards, Lidymar González, Linda Ashburn, Lisa de Hernández, Lois Joellenbeck, Lynne Layug, María José Candanoza, María Moscoso, Maribet Rivera-Brute, Mary Laitari, Melissa Green-Parker, Morgan Spliedt, Natalie Hall, Patrice Tucker, Priya Koushik, Rachel Filar, Reena Rambharat, Samantha Cribbs, Sapna David, Shannon Blount, Shannon Harris, Stacey Ibekweh, Stef, Stephanie Foster, Tatiana Attipoe, Tavia Patusky, Vanda Lerdboon, and Yvonne Akukwe.

2. Agenda Items

2.1 Welcome and Introductions and Action Items

Discussion: Ms. Maribet Rivera-Brute started the meeting at 9:01 am and welcomed everyone virtually and in person to the Full HCLHIC Meeting.

Ms. Rivera-Brute set meeting rules (chat box to submit questions, raise virtual hand), housekeeping items and non-recording notification rules. Ms. Rivera-Brute

Website: www.hclhic.org **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/hclhic **Instagram:** @hclhic

reviewed the agenda and introduced Dr. Maura Rossman, Director, Howard County Health Department for Welcome and Opening Remarks.

Dr. Rossman opened the Full HCLHIC meeting with a welcome to in-person and virtual attendees and then yielded the floor to Ms. Rivera-Brute. Ms. Rivera-Brute introduced Dr. Nazarian, who provided her remarks and subsequently returned the meeting to Ms. Rivera-Brute.

The agenda for this meeting included the following topics:

- Welcome Remarks and Introductions
- University of Maryland Legal Resource Center
- Women's Health Focus Group Outcomes
- HCLHIC and Workgroup Updates
- Advocacy Needs in Howard County
- Member Announcements, Resource Sharing, and Networking
- Next Steps and Wrap-up

Action Items/Resources Shared:

- HCLHIC website: <https://www.hclhic.org/>;
- Community Request Form: <https://www.hclhic.org/about/contact>;
- Link to captions by MD Relay: [Captions to the meeting](#)

2.2 Member Presentations and Action Items

Legal Resource Center for Public Health Policy

Mr. Townsend introduced himself to the group and began with an introduction and information regarding the Maryland General Assembly:

- Regular sessions occur annually from January to April.
- Bills have hearings before they are voted on.

Mr. Townsend listed the resources that the Legal Resource center can provide (pre-session webinar, legislative tracking, bi-weekly update meetings, other advocacy training opportunities). Mr. Townsend spoke on and described the following Cannabis Advertising bills:

- HB 1519 (not pass)
- SB594 (did pass)
- SB439 (did pass)
- SB1008 (did not pass)



Mr. Townsend provided info about the full cannabis rescheduling hearing, mentioned the following bills regarding licensing for entities that are associated with tobacco manufacturing and sales:

- SB249 (pass)
- SB279/HB 918 (passed)
- HB766/SB623 (premium cigar lounges-did not pass)
- Howard co. bill 48-2026 (clean air integrity act.

Mr. Townsend closed his presentation and provided his contact info for follow-up.

Action Items/Resource Shared:

- Contact email for Mr. Townsend: gtownsend@law.umaryland.edu.
- Contact email for Ms. Feeley: k.feeley@law.umaryland.edu.

Women's Health Focus Group Outcomes

Samantha Cribbs and Erica Taylor, Growing Healthy Families Workgroup Co-chairs, provided a presentation about the outcomes of the Women's Health Focus Group sessions.

The Women's Health Focus Groups gathered input from women across Howard County to better understand their health needs, challenges, and priorities. The four sessions, held between late 2025 and mid-2026, included 15 participants representing diverse life stages and caregiving roles. Women shared priority concerns such as heart health, mental health, being heard by providers, early screening, and access to culturally responsive care. They discussed barriers like long wait times, confusing healthcare systems, limited breastfeeding support, insurance and language challenges, and feeling dismissed by providers. Participants expressed a desire for clearer communication, compassionate listening, more time with providers, and greater support for self-advocacy. They also highlighted needs related to pregnancy and parenting, including doulas, case managers, mental health services, transportation help, and increased awareness of available resources. Women reported getting health information from providers, online searches, social media, friends and family, community organizations, and sometimes AI tools. Stressors included caregiving demands, financial pressures, social and political climate, and limited support systems. Across all groups, participants emphasized the importance of improving access to resources, enhancing provider communication, strengthening mental health supports, and expanding peer-to-peer and community connections.

2.3 Workgroup updates and Action Items

Discussion: Ms. Rivera-Brute introduced Ms. Samantha Cribbs and Ms. Erica Taylor (Co-Chairs) to present the following Growing Healthy Families workgroup updates:

- 4 Women’s Health Focus Groups were held in November 2025, December 2025, January 2026 and June 2026 with 15 attendees.
- The focus groups identified important Women’s health issues, Healthcare challenges and barriers faced and Ways to improve Patient-Provider communication.
- The workgroups provided important and valuable feedback from attendees and opportunities for action.

Ms. Rivera-Brute provided the Healthy Lifestyle workgroup updates which included the following:

- Falls Prevention + Walktober 2026 – Planning meetings starting July 30.
- Planning future events in nutrition education.
- Food Connections Map and Food Pantry and Hot Meals brochures recently updated. If you need copies, please complete a request form [here](#).
- Safe Routes to School Educational Event – August/September 2026. Date TBD.
- Walking groups – sign up form here: <https://bit.ly/letswalkhoco>.

Ms. Rivera-Brute introduced Ms. Jessica Fisher (Co-Chair) to present the following Healthy Minds and Suicide Prevention Coalition Updates:

- Next workgroup is July 16, 2026, at 2 pm.
- Planning for the 2027 Firearms Safe Storage Workshop will begin in December 2026.

Ms. Rivera-Brute introduced Ms. María José Candanoza and Ms. Amanda Toohey (Co-Chairs) to present the following Community Health Worker Learning Collaborative Updates:

- Photovoice Exhibition – Next will be on September 2026. Date and time TBA.
- National CHW Awareness Week – Last week in August; planning meetings to start July 22, 2026. Email provided if interested in taking part.
- Collaboration with The Healthy Church to recruit 15 high school students to complete CHW program certification.

Ms. Rivera-Brute provided the 2026-2028 HCLHIC updates and included the following:

- Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Action Plan FY26-28 updated. Link will be provided for more information.
- Howard County Walktober Initiative won a 2026 Achievement Award presented by the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Rivera-Brute prepared an interactive exercise for the group. She presented the exercise that included the following questions and solicited feedback from the group:

- What does “health advocacy” mean to you in Howard County?
- How do you and/or your organization currently engage in advocacy (if at all)?
- What internal barriers limit your advocacy (policy, capacity, legal, lack of tools)?
- What partnerships would strengthen advocacy efforts (schools, faith communities, small businesses, health providers, first responders, libraries, parks & rec, housing)?
- If we offer an opportunity for grassroots advocacy training for community members and organizations, how would you like to participate and would you join?

Members submitted their responses via the link provided. The group then discussed their responses.

Ms. Rivera-Brute then introduced Ms. Reena Rambharat, MPH, MCHES® to provide updates on the Howard County Food Council and included the following:

- Introduction of Ms. Emily Harris, new Food Council Coordinator
- Provided updates on the Hydroponics program with participating Howard County school and the benefits of the program.

Action Items/Resource Shared:

- Email address to contact CHWs: chw@howardcountymd.gov.
- Link to access the updated Action Plan: <https://www.hclhic.org/community/action-plans/267>.
- Link to request Food Connections Map and Food Pantry Brochures: [Food Connections Map website](#).
- Link to complete the Walking Group Sign Up for organizations: <https://forms.gle/U63rA4spu3yKkBkZA>.



- Link to access the Howard County Food Council:
<https://www.hclhic.org/council>.

2.4 Announcements and Action Items

Other announcements shared:

- 2026 Full LHIC quarterly meetings – October 16, 2026, 9 am. Link and schedule is available now.
- Community Assets Profile Project – The Community Assets Profile (CAP) project is available to view on the HCLHIC website.
- The new Community Health Worker (CHW) website is now available on the Howard County Health Department (HCHD) website.
- HCHD WhatsApp Channel is now available. Other groups were created as follow:
 - Elkridge Channel
 - Columbia Channel
 - Jessup/Savage Channel
- HCLHIC Digital Content Tools for organizations to add to the newsletter are now available on the website.
- Columbia photovoice – Owen Brown is coming in September 2026.
- The Momma's Circle (free support and education group) has upcoming sessions, July 18, 2026, and 25 from 12:30pm-2:30pm.
- LARS Mama & Baby Mobile Health Unit – July 21, 2026.
- Black Teen Girls Mentorship Program hosted by The Healthy Church will take place September 2026-December 2026.
- Pop-Up Farmer's Markets: August 11th, September 8th and October 13th, 2026 from 11:00 am-1:00 pm.
- Johns Hopkins Medicine/Howard County Medical Center hosts "Cancer Survivors' Café", a weekly drop-in support group, with multiple dates available throughout July 2026.
- Unity in the Community Resource Fair – August 1, 2026, from 10:00 am-2:00 pm with free admission.
- Adult ADHD Across the Lifespan free, virtual workshop – July 21, 2026 from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm.
- L.E.T.S. (Listening, Empathy, Trust, Support) Save Lives Presentation on July 23, 2026, beginning at 4:00 pm.
- Tobacco & Cannabis Announcements made by Ms. Natalie Hall, HCHD.
- Ms. Natalie Hall introduced the new Nicotine and Vaping Educator, Ms. Sapna David, who recently joined the team. Ms. Hall also provided information on the HCHD Tobacco and Cannabis Website and ways to request Tobacco and Cannabis prevention presentations and materials.
- Safeguard your home Brochures are available on the HCLHIC website to download.



- Howard County LHIC Calendar- scan the QR code to access the HCLHIC website for events.
- HCLHIC Post-meeting Survey – Responses needed! Please complete the post-meeting survey.

Action Items/Resource Shared:

- Link to Howard County Food Council: <https://www.hclhic.org/council>.
- Link to register for the HCLHIC Full quarterly meetings: [Link to register for the 2026 full LHIC meetings](#).
- Link to access the Community Assets Profile project website: <https://www.hclhic.org/community/data>.
- Link to join the HCHD WhatsApp channel: <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VbCBprl5a23yioALp11Q>.
 - Link to join the Elkridge channel: [Elkridge WhatsApp channel link](#).
 - Link to join the Columbia channel: [Columbia WhatsApp channel link](#).
 - Link to join the Jessup/Savage channel: [Jessup/Savage WhatsApp channel link](#).
- Link to access digital tools for newsletters: <https://www.hclhic.org/membership/newsletter-tools>.
- Link with more information The Momma's Circle: [The Momma's Circle](#)
- Link for more information on Black Teen Girls Mentorship Program: www.healthychurch.org
- Link to register for the Johns Hopkins Cancer Survivors Café: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040C4CABA929A3FF2-64532931-july#/>
- Contact Triston Cooper for more info on the Unity in the Community Resource Fair at tcooper@howardcountymd.gov.
- Link to register for the Adult ADHD Across the Lifespan free, virtual workshop [here](#).
- Link to register for L.E.T.S. (Listening, Empathy, Trust, Support) Save Lives Presentation: <https://letsntnl0726.attendase.com/>.
- Link to register for National Night Out 2026: [National Night Out 2026](#).
- Link to access the resources about Tobacco and Cannabis: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/health/tobacco-cannabis>.



- Link to request educational materials related to tobacco and cannabis prevention:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKLx2fIC7IRkgIjzzUMcFeDHDHITs4x1Ca5Ii2l8x6MksLYQ/viewform>.
- Link to access the Safeguard your Home brochures:
<https://www.hclhic.org/healthy/suicide-prevention>.
- Link to access the HCLHIC calendar [here](#).

3. Next Steps and Meeting

Date/Time: Thursday, October 15, 2026, 9:00 – 11:00 am, hybrid.

Action Items/Resource Shared:

- Link to access the materials from July's full HCLHIC meeting:
<https://www.hclhic.org/home/meetingportal>.
- Link to complete the post-meeting survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/83FVZRD>.