

Health Disparities Advisory Meeting | MINUTES

June 5, 2025, | 1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. | Location: Microsoft Teams

Meeting called by:	Division of Health Disparities Elimination	Approximately: 40 ppl.
Type of meeting:	Weekly Health Disparities Advisory Meeting –	
Facilitator:	Dr. Katherine Diaz, Office of Faith-Based and Community Engagement	

Motivational Quote: (Dr. Katherine Diaz) On today Thursday, June 5, 2025, this week’s inspirational quote is “Midyear check, stay on track, don't let your goals slack.” - Unknown

(Dr. Katherine Diaz)

Mini Health Observance Speaker: Rochelle Roberts

- **Alzhiemers and Brain Awareness Month** An estimated 140,000 Tennesseans aged 65 will be living with Alzheimer's disease in Tennessee, and that number is expected to rise by nearly 20% in the next five years, however the burden is not equal, black adults are twice as likely and Hispanic adults are 1 1/2 times as likely to be diagnosed with this disease. Women are twice as likely to develop the disease and less likely to be diagnosed early. Delayed diagnoses are missed chances for planning, accessing treatments that are only available when you have early diagnosis and improvement quality of life over time.

We can change our story by protecting brain health because when it declines everyone feels the impact from families, communities, caregivers and even the health system. Brain health suffers when families cannot afford routine checkups and medications for high blood pressure or diabetes. It also suffers when you live with chronic stress and social isolation.

The Tennessee Department of Health have launched a statewide movement called Tennessee Dementia Navigator program which is to build what we call our dementia infrastructure. What this means is there’s training for more providers, expansion for community resources and making sure that no family is left to navigate this journey alone. If you would like more information, please contact Rochelle L. Roberts at rochelle.l.roberts@tn.gov.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Focus: Suicide in Tennessee: 2025 Annual Report

Presenters: LaDonna Merville, Communication Specialist/Grant Coordinator & William Thomson, Epidemiologist /

TDH Suicide Prevention Program

Summary: This annual report provides an overview of suicide data and prevention resources in Tennessee, this report identifies high risk groups based on demographic trends, highlights accomplishments of our suicide prevention program, and we're here to share some evidence-based strategies for suicide prevention. It's sad to mention that suicide is the leading cause of death here in the U.S. and it's becoming a growing public health problem in the state of Tennessee. In the past 3 years suicide has increased in the year 2023 - 1,279, 2022 - 1,248 and 2021 - 1,219 deaths.

Geographically, the east, the northeast and Sullivan has the highest rate of suicide rate in Tennessee. Normally the rural areas of Tennessee are 1.2 times higher than metro areas but in the past 5 years suicide rates have changed there's been a decrease in the rural areas and an increase in the metro areas. The suicide rates are split by gender and there's a much higher suicide rate among men than women, nearly four times higher. Since 2022 and 2023 for the first time, there has been a slight shift of increase of suicide among women between the ages of 25 – 44 and 45 – 64. Methods of death are majority firearms, and that rate has even increased in the past 10 years to 69% more than 2 out of 3 deaths in Tennessee.

The rate of suicide among teens ages 10 – 17 has increase at an alarming rate of 47% since 2019 and was paired with an 80% rise in the use of firearms in those deaths. It has been identified some of the more common risk factors for suicidal ideation and self-injury for youth aged 10 to 17, are to their depression, anxiety, substance misuse, PTSD and parental abuse. The Tennessee Youth Behavioral Risk Survey found that 42.7% of high school students reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for more than two weeks in a row.

Here's a few efforts we like to provide regarding our suicide prevention programs and raise awareness of suicide prevention resources in Tennessee, in 2024:

- We launched sources of strength, which is an evidence-based youth suicide prevention program that can be tailored to schools and faith-based organizations. Source strength seeks to enhance the protective factors associated with reducing suicide risk at the school population level.
- The program engages middle and high school students through peer led projects designed to increase.
- Help seeking behaviors and foster strong connections.
- 988 Suicide and Crisis-Line PSA Campaign

If you or you know of anyone have a crisis or thoughts of suicide, please the Suicide and Crisis Line by dialing 988. If you would like more information about Suicide in Tennessee, 2025 Annual Report please contact LaDonna Merville and William Thomson by via email at ladonna.merville@tn.gov and/or william.thomson@tn.gov.

Member Comments: Announcements and Upcoming Events

- TDH Health Disparities Advisory Group is in search for Monthly Health Observance Mini-Series Speaker, if you would like to become a mini-series speaker, please email us TDH.OFBCE@tn.gov.

Speaker Details:

- We are looking for a speaker for the first Thursday of each month from 1 pm CST- 2 pm CST for a 15-minute presentation.
- The speaker should share key facts and information about the health observance for that month.
- They can highlight any events or initiatives related to that health observance.
- Presentations are informal, and slides may be used but are not required.

Resources mentioned during call:

Upcoming Webinar Topics, Dates & Meeting Link:

- **June 19th:** Financing Your Project
- **Microsoft Teams**

Join the meeting now

Meeting ID: 295 944 874 252 / Passcode: nN32LU7w

Dial in by phone

+1 629-209-4396, 82246934# / [Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 822 469 34#

Join on a video conferencing device

Tenant key: stateoftn@m.webex.com / Video ID: 115 180 065 7

- If you need more information, please visit our website at www.healthdisparitiestn.com

Chat Box – links / website / events:

➤ **OFBCE Offers Easy Online Access to Key Forms**

The Office of Faith-Based and Community Engagement (OFBCE) is pleased to announce that three important forms are now available online, making it easier than ever for community members and organizations to connect with OFBCE and the Health Disparities Advisory Group.

The following forms can be accessed on our Contact page, [here](#).

- **Community Outreach Worker [Request Form](#):** Request support from OFBCE community outreach workers for health initiatives, including workshops, educational materials, health fairs, and more.
- **Top Ten Newsletter [Submission Form](#):** Submit health-related events, training opportunities, and funding announcements for inclusion in the weekly Top Ten newsletter.
- **Health Disparities Advisory Group Presentation [Submission Form](#):** Share your expertise on health disparities with a coalition of leaders by presenting at a weekly meeting.

We encourage community members and organizations to utilize these online forms to connect with us and collaborate on improving the health and well-being of all Tennesseans. These forms streamline the process and make it more convenient for everyone to engage with our important initiatives.

Next Meeting June 12, 2025, from 1pm-2pm via Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams Meeting details are as follows:

Join on your computer or mobile app.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 629-209-4396, 641975577#](#) United States, Nashville

Phone Conference ID: 641 975 577#