

**Summary**  
**Small Group Discussion**  
**Faculty and Trainee Diversity Workgroup**  
**MCH Training Program**  
**Joint Meeting**  
**LEND, LEAH, PPC, SPH Grantees**  
**March 4, 2007**

**Background**

Workgroups were established by the MCH Training Program as a strategy to provide training program grantees and affiliated colleagues with an opportunity to:

- Directly impact policies and procedures that guide the MCH Training Program
- Enhance the achievement of the MCH Training Program Strategic goals and objectives
- Assist in the telling of the “MCH Story”.

The purpose of the Faculty and Trainee Diversity Workgroup is to identify, assess, promote and support strategies and activities that contribute to the development and maintenance of diverse training program trainees and faculty and encourage graduates of training programs to seek employment in unserved or underserved communities. This will include consideration of how cultural competency relates to diversity and how grantees and the MCHB can effectively measure and monitor program efforts related to diversity.

Workgroup activities have focused on developing grantee guidelines for a “vigorous plan” for recruitment and retention of trainees from culturally diverse backgrounds; identifying resource materials to assist grantees in developing and implementing a diversity plan; and identifying additional information and guidance on recruitment and retention activities needed by grantees.

Following presentation of an overview of the workgroup process and activities, meeting attendees participated in small groups organized by workgroup and focused on specific questions. Those attending the Faculty and Trainee Diversity Workgroup session were asked to review the Diversity Guidelines and identify:

- What, if any, additional key elements or topic areas should be included?
- How can we best encourage and support Training Programs to develop Diversity Plans that can be actively used to improve the diversity within our training programs and of our MCH leaders?

## **Key Discussion Points**

Twelve meeting participants attended the small group discussion focused on the Diversity Guidelines and they included representatives from MCHB and the National Center for Cultural Competency.

***Guidelines look useful.*** Several participants indicated that they think the guidelines are very good and “right on target.” The comment was made that “what gets measured gets done” and provision of these guidelines recognizes that there are multiple pathways to improve diversity and cultural competence in the training program. Another participant indicated that the Guideline does a nice job of outlining the basic components that programs should consider.

***Definition of diversity and underserved.*** There were a few general questions about the definition of “diversity” and “underserved” being used by the Program and the extent to which this group is looking at the definition. Concern was expressed that the current performance measure focuses primarily on race/ethnicity and leaves out other factors such as disability. The facilitator clarified that this workgroup is using the definitions currently utilized by the program but the Reporting and Monitoring workgroup is addressing and how grantees report on “underserved.”

***Present the guideline as a tool rather than a punitive requirement.*** Some grantees see the Training Program’s push for more diverse trainees as punitive particularly if they operate in an area that has little diversity. One participant commented that currently it appears as if programs should always be improving on the diversity performance measure and there is concern that if they do not improve, their is funding at risk. They do not want this guideline to be perceived in the same light...what will be the expectations regarding reporting and the guideline? Participants cautioned that the Guideline should be presented as a tool to assist them with self-reflection and improvement rather than something else for which they may get “dinged” if they don’t complete. Also, the Training Program does not currently recognize programs that are doing innovative or particularly effective activities around diversity. It would be encouraging to grantees if they were recognized for their efforts.

***How Is “Culture” Included in the Guidelines?*** The concept that diversity includes “culture” should be emphasized more— for instance, considering how to include deaf people who see themselves as culturally and linguistically different. It is also important to recognize that each individual represents a culture and complexity of characteristics that influence how they perceive the world and other people. It was suggested that the introduction of the Guideline include more explicit language recognizing the impact and complex nature of culture that extends beyond just race and ethnicity.

***Include mandates from the other workgroups such as family-centered, interdisciplinary.*** Concepts related to family-centered practice and interdisciplinary practice are also important to the development of diverse and culturally competent trainees and faculty. References should be made to the family-centered and interdisciplinary concepts in the introduction of the guideline.

***Emphasize Communications Skills.*** Communication skills are critical in relation to diversity and cultural competency. The guideline should ask about availability of support for improving faculty and trainees' communication skills in this area, including self-awareness training and self-assessment tools. Having access to videotapes/movie scenes are particularly helpful in communications training in order to visually illustrate issues in inter-cultural communication. It can be difficult to find these resources specific to public health, but business leadership training often has these kinds of visual resources. Clare Dunne from the Cultural Competency Resource Center is aware of medical education videos that may be appropriate to include.

***Provide Examples.*** It would be useful to see how other programs have incorporated/utilized the guidelines by including specific examples as resources for implementation of the guideline. By presenting both the concepts for assessment and examples and resource links the Guideline becomes a one-stop shop for the MCH Training Program Diversity resources.

***Specify Who Should Be Involved.*** Include something about who should be involved in developing the guidelines/plan and more specific suggestions about the process for using the guideline.

***Do not lose focus on recruiting efforts.*** Recruiting diverse trainees is where most programs need help. Although it is important to address the other issues, one participant noted that the workgroup and the Guidelines should not lose focus on the recruiting issues. It would be helpful to include examples from programs that have had success in recruitment of diverse trainees.