



MePCSW Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2017, 9:00 – 11:00

Nash School, Augusta

In Attendance: Amy Gallant, Regina Rooney, Jill Randall, Kelly Bentley

Participating remotely: Marianne Moore, Ruth Kermish-Allen, Fatuma Hussein, Holly Stover, Cara Courchesne, Samantha Lott Hale, Meredith Strang-Burgess

Absent: Marjorie Crowley

Gather, Welcome & Member Updates

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve April 12, 2017 minutes, June 14, 2017 minutes - edited to reflect that Jane Haskell was not absent, and Aug 9, 2017 minutes by Marianne, Cara seconded, all approved.
- Motion to approve October 11, 2017 minutes - edited to reflect that Holly Stover will also serve as a NEWPI contact - by Meredith. Amy seconded, all in favor.

Grant Project Update (Kelly Bentley)

Took effort to move the grant funds from NEWPI to the UMaine System, but funds now at UMF. Focus - How denial of funds can affect women's health and therefore infant health.

Quantitative piece -

The Intern is geo-mapping to compare Maine's statistics to other New England states. We are the only state in New England not receiving the funds. He will be using Maine's vital statistics, vital statistics from other New England states, and CDC data.

Qualitative/storytelling piece -

Stories of women who were not insured during their first trimester. Start with WIC offices. (Once enrolled in WIC, you have access to health care.) The university has numbers people can call. Kelly will put together some guiding questions by the end of January and bring to the commission for approval. She will plan on advertising in February.

There is a finite amount of money. Students can collect some of those voices by doing an interview in person or over the telephone. Marianne, Amy, Sam, and Fatuma agreed to speak with a participant if she is located near them. Kelly will check with the university to see if there can be an option to submit perspectives online.

The Commission agreed to set aside funds and offer \$20 gift cards in recognition of a participant's time. Two card options will be offered.

Intern

The student intern is graded for this work. He may attend a meeting. He will prepare a policy brief that the Commission can use. He is required to do a presentation on Student Symposium Day where students present their research. Commission members may attend.

NEWPI Updates (Marianne, Amy, Holly)
No correspondence from NEWPI.

Recruitment & Membership Updates (Regina)

- Ruth and Marianne's resumes will be submitted by Regina for reappointments.
- Regina reached out to Marjorie, but has not heard back from her.
- In February, Regina will step back as Acting Chair for 6 months.

Next Steps from Conversation at Retreat (Regina)

- **Affirmation of Commission Member Roles & Commitments**
No concerns with assignments.

- **Connecting to Related Groups**

Maine Women's Lobby, Women's Employment Issues Committee of the State Workforce Labor Board, Maine Women's Fund

In January Regina and Amy will work to invite these groups to the February meeting. Discuss areas of alignment and collaboration on NEWPI work.

- **Moving Forward with Amplification Plan**

Highlight and educate people about the opportunities that exist for Maine women and girls. Great role for the Commission to fill. Start with a post to the Facebook page once a month, focusing on the five areas of the report.

Ad hoc committee - Cara, Sam, and Ruth will work on this. Potential external advisor Susan Gardner, Dir. of Women's Gender Studies at UMO. Meredith will check to see if #mainewomen is available.

- **Legislative action/testimony** (Amy)

Eloise Vitelli, sponsor of the ERA bill, asked us to support it last session. The Commission is empowered to do this per statute. The bill is a constitutional amendment that did not get a 2/3rds vote and was carried over. Unlikely to come up this session.

How will we engage with this in 2019? Do not want to put the perception of our non-partisanship on the line. Passing this bill is only a first step. There will be a campaign to approve a constitutional amendment. Not something the commission considered.

Eloise has a newsletter from the commission from the 80's that elevated the ERA and the commission. The newsletter was a key voice.

To prepare for 2019 when it may be reintroduced, invite Eloise and Ellie Espling to attend the June 13 meeting from 9:30-10:30. Ask Eloise to share a historical perspective of the commission and ask both to share their perspective of the bill. (No testimony against, but mostly a party line vote in House.)

Closing & Next Steps

- Attention needs to be paid to bylaws regarding voting and updating.
- Next meeting on Feb 14, 2018