



Cuyahoga County Women's Health Commission

MINUTES

Thursday, February 19, 2026 | 9:00 AM

VIRTUAL

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chair Tenille Kaus at 9:03am

2. Roll Call

In attendance: Mayor Kim Thomas, Councilwoman Tenille Kaus, LaShon Carson on behalf of Dr. Connie Moreland, Councilwoman Nakeisha Nickerson, County Executive Ronayne, Emily Campbell, Heather Brissett, Dr. Lauren Beene, County Councilwoman Yvonne Conwell

Absent: Councilwoman Jasmin Santana, Dr. Melanie Golembiewski, Jazmin Long, David Merriman

3. Moment of Silence and Reflection

In recognition of February as Black History Month and March as Women's History Month, Chair Kaus asked for a moment of silence to acknowledge these two important months and what they mean to our County and to the world.

4. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Sabrina Roberts on behalf of Executive Ronayne moved to approve the prior meeting minutes; Heather Brissett seconded. Motion was approved by all members in attendance and the minutes were approved.

5. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

6. New Business

a. Overview of Issue Brief – Center for Community Solutions

Natasha Takyi-Micah, Fellow in Health Planning at the Center for Community Solutions, presented an overview of reproductive health in Ohio with a focus on health disparities across the lifespan. She noted that current public and legislative discussions are too narrow to fully address the range of reproductive health issues affecting women. Research at the state and local levels remains limited, and significant disparities persist, including income-based differences in period poverty, higher fibroid prevalence among Black women, and longer durations of menopausal symptoms among Black and Hispanic women.

Natasha highlighted several gaps in legislation, explaining that while some federal action exists around fibroids, related state-level legislation is absent in Northeast Ohio. State legislation addressing period poverty is limited, and no standalone policies address perimenopause. She shared that in 2026 the Center for Community Solutions will release issue briefs on period poverty, fibroids, and perimenopause/menopause, each examining disparities, research, and potential solutions.

Discussion centered on the role of social determinants of health and systemic racism in driving these disparities, and participants noted increasing openness in conversations about reproductive health. The group also discussed concerns about menstrual product access in jails, where distribution practices can be inconsistent or demeaning. Laurel will gather relevant policies and best practices, and Executive Ronayne plans to bring these issues to the county's jail planning team.

The meeting also touched on period poverty in schools and the need to understand student access to menstrual products. The group referenced recent conversations with community advocate Wendy Jones, who distributes menstrual supplies, and agreed to invite her to a future meeting to share more about her work.

b. Committee Reports

i. Mental Health

Heather Brissett shared an update from the Mental Health Committee. The group met in January to discuss the podcast initiative. The Ask Cuyahoga podcast is being revamped by the communications department and we are planning to release a WHC overview episode in March in relation to women's history month. Councilwoman Conwell and Chair Kaus have agreed to be the guests on the podcast.

ii. Physical Health

The physical health committee update was shared by Tenille Kaus. We are focusing specifically on the Community Health Event focusing on the East side. The initial event will be led by Mayor Thomas, Turner, and Kaus. Thomas has offered the Richmond Heights Recreation Center.

The date of June 11th was identified as the ideal date. Committee members were asked to hold this time on their calendars. The Clerk will send out a calendar invite to hold the date for everyone and will continue to provide details as they are confirmed.

Topics that rose to the top were heart disease, perimenopause, and stress and mental health. The commission discussed the topic of Hormones Across the Lifespan (puberty, perimenopause, and PCOS). Sabrina Roberts brought up the topic of blood pressure mentioning that it would be an interesting topic to explore further as people don't always understand it. Mayor Nickerson brought up the topic of stroke for women in our community. There is a lack of knowledge on so many of these topics that we could shed some light on with our events.

Emily Campbell recommended that we keep the topics pretty broad so that these events will have wider appeal. She also recommended a focus on things that can help women be their own advocates and show some of the links between mental and physical

health, and how can women address these issues on their own. Promoted the idea of empowerment.

Heather suggested a focus on nutrition and exercise. There are systemic things happening to women in our community and we have to create this safe space for women to come together on these topics. What we do know from so many studies, it is the connectivity and community that helps women in our community.

7. Additional Items of Business

Executive Ronayne shared that the Office of Violence Prevention is in the middle of listening tours with each District and perhaps there is opportunity for a series to span the entire County. We received a call from the Hamilton County commissioner, and she asked us to engage on a luncheon or a meeting with the Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls. The mission is slightly different but there could be some opportunities to learn and connect.

The question was raised about the funds that exist for Women's Health. The funds live with Center for Community Solutions and we continue to partner and identify the best way to deploy them. They are one-time dollars that we need to spend this year. There are a number of things that are in the original grant and legislation but a portion of it we can deploy for some of these programs while the majority of the funds are meant to be deployed to community organizations that are doing the work. It was also suggested that we consider connecting with some of the foundation program officers in this space to talk more to them about the work that we're doing.

Councilwoman Conwell shared a brief update on the planning of the Domestic Violence Series in October 2026. There is something planned for every Thursday in October from 5-7pm at the Journey Center. They are in the process of confirming survivors to speak at the event. Councilwoman asked the committee members for some assistance with finding

therapists or counselors that can be at the event. Clerk will send calendar invitations to all members to hold Thursdays in October for this event series.

Emily shared that she dropped information off at the PADS store front and the group asked if we can arrange a field trip for our Commission members to see the space. County staff will work to organize this opportunity with PADS and Commission members.

8. Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held on May 28 at 9am. A calendar invitation has been sent out by Clerk Bucholtz to hold on calendars.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Heather Brissett; seconded by Councilwoman Conwell. The motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned at 10:09am.