



Meeting Minutes: Healthy Lifestyle (HL) Workgroup Meeting

Date: June 18, 2026

Time: 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Co-Chair Present: Michelle Rosenfeld

LHIC Staff Present: Miriam Anderson, Christine Ballou, María José Candanoza, Stephanie Foster, Maribet Rivera-Brute.

1. Attendees

Members Present: Emily Harris; Vanda Lerdboon; Reena Rambharat; Eunise Foster; Hunniya Jafri; Jennifer Lee; Kara Griggs-Goldheim; Karen Seider; Lois Joellenbeck; Nikki Savoy; Rachel Filar; Shannon Blount; Tavia Patusky; Chris Miller; Carla Gates; Tiffany Holtman; Zitao Weng; Ovan Shortt; and Matthew Castner.

2. Agenda Items

2.1 Welcome and Introductions

The meeting proceeded while waiting for the co-chair's arrival. Attendees were informed that the meeting was being recorded to assist with meeting minutes.

2.2 Updates, Community Resources, and Announcements

Several community announcements and upcoming events were shared:

- Howard County Community Baby Shower scheduled for July 11, 2026, 10 am – 12 pm for Howard County residents.
- Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services announced its Mom and Baby Mobile Health Unit, operating twice monthly.
- Howard County Food Connections Map has been updated. It includes the Farmers' Markets and School Summer Meal sites. To learn more about the Food Connections Map, click [here](#).
- Carla Gates announced an upcoming Implicit Bias and Structural Racism Training scheduled for July 23, 2026, at 2:00PM. Click [here](#) to learn more.

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- Nikki Savoy announced that Susan Larson had been appointed Executive Director of Accessible Resources for Independents and highlighted a newly available Affordable Housing Coalition Dashboard focused on housing disparities.
- Tavia Patusky from Columbia Association shared information regarding free summer programming, including:
 - Lakefront Live Concert Series
 - Juneteenth Celebrations
 - Community FIFA Viewing Events
 - Outdoor Yoga Programs
 - Additional community engagement opportunities are available through Columbia Association websites and email communications.

2.2.1 Food Bank Updates

The Community Action Council is proud to partner with Gorman Farms and Laurel Woods Elementary School, to deliver fresh produce to the community in need every week throughout the summer. They need volunteers to roll up their sleeves and support this free community produce market every Tuesday morning from late June through mid-November. To request more information, please email CACVolunteer@cac-hc.org.

2.2.2 Movement Updates

Office on Aging and Independence provided updates, including:

- Falls Prevention activities planned for September at 50+ Centers.
- Summer Splash Event scheduled for July 2.
- An eight-week Summer Steps Walking Challenge designed to encourage physical activity among older adults.
- Indoor walking opportunities and incentives are available to participants.
- The Office on Aging will provide program information for inclusion in community outreach platforms.

2.2.3 Howard County Food Council Updates

The Howard County Food Council reported that two strategic priorities have been finalized:

1. Food System Collaboration
2. Farm-to-Plate Initiatives

Additional updates included:



- School hydroponics projects are nearing completion.
- Growing Together CAC volunteer opportunities.
- Introduction of Emily Harris, Food Council Administrator, who will provide future updates to the coalition.

2.3 The Role of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in Access to Healthcare Resources

Maria José Candanoza, Community Health Worker Team Lead, provided a detailed overview of the Howard County Health Department Community Health Worker Program.

Program Overview

The CHW Program currently consists of a three-person team dedicated to serving as trusted community connectors. CHWs help residents navigate healthcare and social service systems while addressing barriers to care and improving access to community resources.

Program Accomplishments

As of May 31, 2026, the CHW team reported:

- Participation in 207 community events.
- More than 3,900 resident interactions.
- Delivery of health education is related to chronic disease prevention and tobacco prevention.
- Social needs screenings and warm handoffs to services.
- Navigation assistance for clinical and social support systems.

CAREAPP Utilization

The team demonstrated how CAREAPP is used to:

- Conduct health and social needs assessments.
- Document interactions.
- Track referrals.
- Facilitate service navigation and follow-up activities.

Community Assets Profile (CAP) and Photovoice Projects

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The CHW team presented updates on ongoing Community Assets Profile and Photovoice initiatives.

Highlights included:

- Resource mapping across seven priority census tracts.
- Documentation of community strengths and gaps.
- Resident engagement through Photovoice exhibitions.
- Development of impact reports containing recommendations and action items.

Progress to date includes:

- Three census tract maps were completed.
- Two additional maps are nearing completion.
- Future reports will identify community priorities and opportunities for action.

Future Initiatives

The team shared plans to establish Community Wellness Stations at trusted community locations such as food pantries and partner organizations. Services would include:

- Health screenings
- Resource navigation
- Health education
- Referrals to services

School-based initiatives, including Safe Routes to School efforts, are also being developed based on findings from Community Assets Profile activities.

Contact Information

The CHW team shared current contact options:

- Email: chw@howardcountymd.gov
- Phone: 410-313-7223
- WhatsApp Community Groups (in development)

CHW-School Partnership Discussion



A discussion was held regarding opportunities to strengthen partnerships between Community Health Workers and Howard County schools.

Participants noted that families often face challenges navigating:

- Healthcare enrollment processes
- Transportation barriers
- Language barriers
- Access to social services

Suggestions included:

- Assigning CHWs to specific schools.
- Creating school-specific outreach materials.
- Developing QR codes linking families directly to CHW services.
- Providing CHW contact information in school nurse offices and family resource centers.

2.4 2026 Walktober Planning

The coalition began initial planning discussions for Walktober 2026.

Facilitators shared:

- Walk Maryland Day is scheduled for **October 7, 2026**.
- October 2025 participation included:
 - 171 events
 - 23 participating organizations
 - Approximately 4,400 participants

A planning committee will be created to coordinate Walktober 2026 activities.

The committee will:

- Meet monthly beginning in mid-July.
- Continue meetings through September.
- Provide updates during the September 17 Healthy Lifestyle Workgroup meeting.

Several partners expressed interest in participating in and hosting future meetings or events. Community walks were highlighted as a successful engagement strategy that could support multiple community health goals.



2.6 2026 Next Steps and Action Items

Action Items/Resource Shared:

- HCLHIC Staff will follow up with previous and current workgroup members to plan for Walktober 2026 and include the Interest Survey in the follow up email.
- Information about the resources shared during the meeting will be included in the follow-up email.
- The next Healthy Lifestyle workgroup meeting will be on September 17, 2026, at 1:00 pm. An invite will be sent closer to the meeting date.
- The next full LHIC will be held on July 16, 2026, at 9:00 am. To register, please click [here](#).

The meeting concluded with appreciation expressed to presenters, coalition members, and community partners for their continued collaboration. Participants were encouraged to stay engaged in upcoming initiatives and planning efforts.