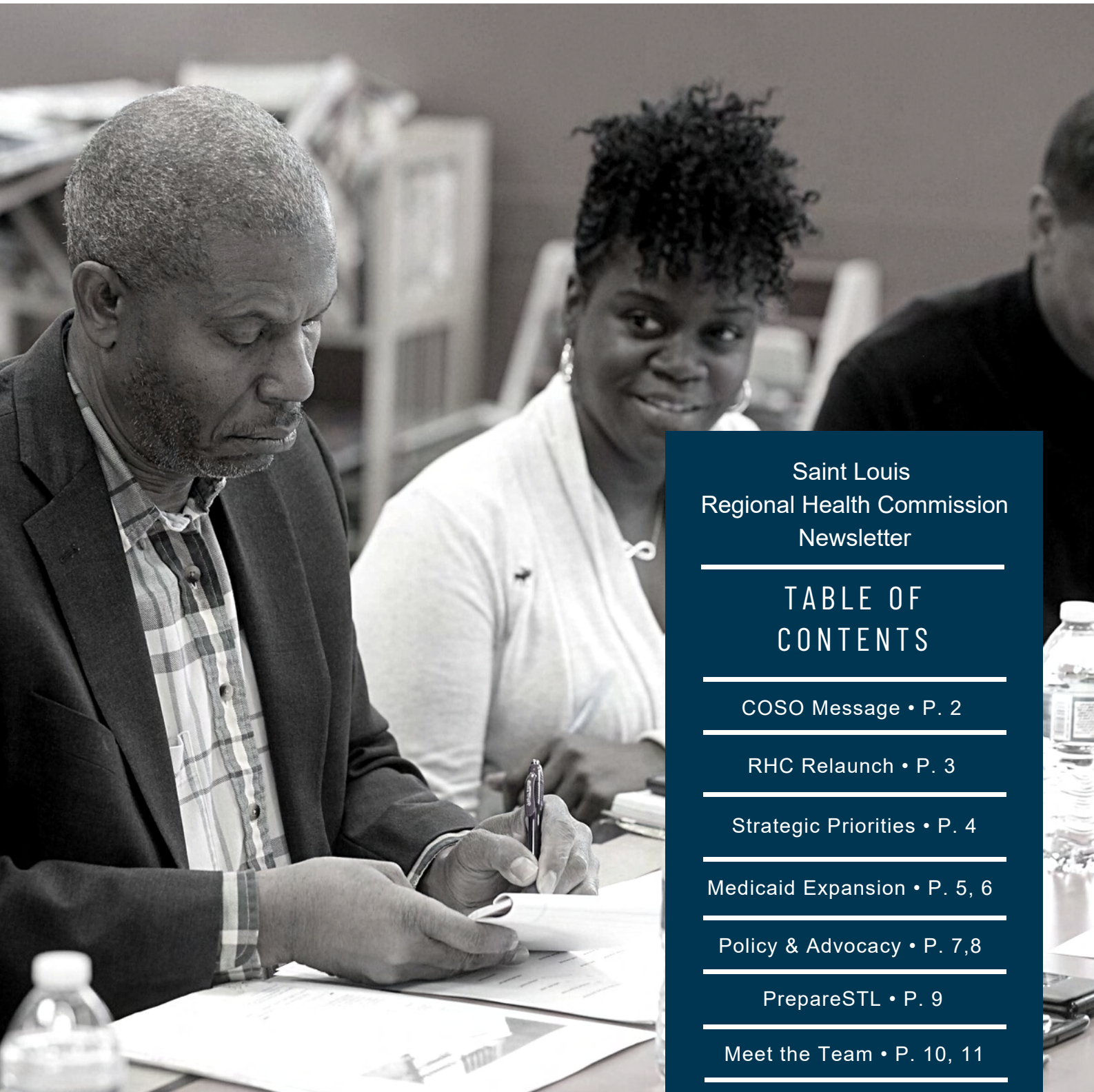




Health Care Happenings

June 2022

Achieving zero health disparities through community and health system partnerships in the STL area



Saint Louis
Regional Health Commission
Newsletter

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OPERATIONS AND STRATEGY OFFICER

Throughout 2021, the St. Louis Regional Health Commission took a moment to reflect on all that has been accomplished over the past 20 years and to cast a vision for the future we imagine. Our backwards glance reaffirmed our commitment to multi-stakeholder collaboration and regional coordination for the development and implementation of innovative strategies and long-range planning to improve healthcare access and delivery for the uninsured and underinsured in our region. The Transition Planning process itself was designed as a launch of our revised approach that centers bi-directional communication and power-sharing between community members who use the healthcare safety net and the healthcare ecosystem that provides care.

Through this framework, our diverse cross-section of community and systems leaders affirmed that our work over the next 20 years and beyond must be equity-focused and community-centered. What does this look like in practice? Creating space for our community stakeholders to share point-of-service failures and healthcare system stakeholders to share constraints. To use this space to collectively design solutions, develop accountability and thereby build trust.

If we are to achieve our vision of zero health disparities, it will be through:

1. an unwavering commitment to center community voices as we identify where and how we are falling short,
2. an unflinching dedication to engage affected communities in solutioning using a bi-directional communication and power-sharing framework, and
3. resolute perseverance in pursuing systemic change that eradicates the existence and reinforcement of unjust access, experience, and outcomes.

In 2022, we are living into our refreshed vision, mission and strategic approach with a robust table of stakeholders representing a comprehensive array of those who have an impact on and/or are impacted by the regional healthcare ecosystem. I am challenged and energized by our strategic priorities that create a pathway to confront historic and contemporary injustice embedded in our healthcare ecosystem. I am confident that our partners and stakeholders are up to the task and excited to see what we will accomplish in the next 20 years.

Riisa Rawlins-Easley

THE RHC RELAUNCH

RHC HAS A NEW MISSION, VISION, AND THEORY OF CHANGE

OUR VISION

We envision the St Louis region committed to achieving zero health disparities through a community driven approach that yields health equity in all policy and outcomes.

OUR MISSION

The RHC will serve as a regional model for bi-directional relationship building and shared decision making that harnesses the power of systems and communities to foster accountability and improve equitable healthcare access and outcomes particularly for communities of color.

ST. LOUIS REGIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION THEORY OF CHANGE

VISION

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TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT

Regional Coordination

Increased Access

Zero Health Disparities

Community-driven Policy Change

Responsive Systems

Improved Workforce Capacity

Shared Data System

HOW?

- Champion solutions
- Translate information
- Change and inform policies
- Harness collective power/shared power

WITH WHOM?

- Strategic Partners
- Healthcare Organizations
- Public Health Departments
- Community Organizations
- Government Sector/ Elected Officials
- Business Sector
- Criminal Justice Sector



DRIVERS

Equity

Community centered

Power sharing

Bi-directional Communication

Choice

Accountability

Anti-racism

Relationships

Find more information on our new mission, vision, and theory of change at www.stlrhc.org/who-we-are/.

RHC STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

RHC HAS RE-ENVISIONED OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our 2022 strategic priorities include:

1. Regional Coordination and Communication Strategy to Execute Equity-Centered Agenda for Health and Well-being
2. Shared Data Reporting Dashboard to Measure Efforts to Achieve Zero Health Disparities and Foster Accountability
3. Community-Driven Policy Change for Health Equity and Well-Being
4. Increased Access and Choice for Under-resourced Patients
5. Improved Workforce Wellness and Capacity to Address Emerging Needs



POLICY PRIORITY AREAS

Our new strategic priorities help inform the priority areas for the RHC's health advocacy efforts, which include:



Expanding coverage for the uninsured and underinsured



Achieving health equity



Developing the health care workforce



Addressing social determinants of health

MEDICAID EXPANSION EFFORTS



MEDICAID EXPANSION WEBPAGE: COVERSTL.ORG

In August 2020, Missouri voters approved Medicaid expansion! As of October 1, 2021, Missouri Medicaid covers adults ages 19 through 64 with incomes at or below the limit for their household size. The RHC prioritizes expanding coverage for the uninsured and underinsured. To that end, the RHC and its partners are closely tracking developments around Missouri Medicaid expansion, reporting on current legislation's potential impacts on health care access, and helping lead advocacy efforts to improve the St. Louis health care safety net.

Medicaid insurance covers hospital stays, ER visits, visits to your doctor or the clinic, regular vaccines, brand name medications, dental fillings and root canals, vision care, mental health care including substance use treatment, and much more!

For a comprehensive list of resources, information, and community events, visit CoverSTL.org for all your Missouri Medicaid Expansion needs!



STEP-BY-STEP APPLICATION VIDEO

Check out this [step-by-step guide](#) for Missouri's online Medicaid application!

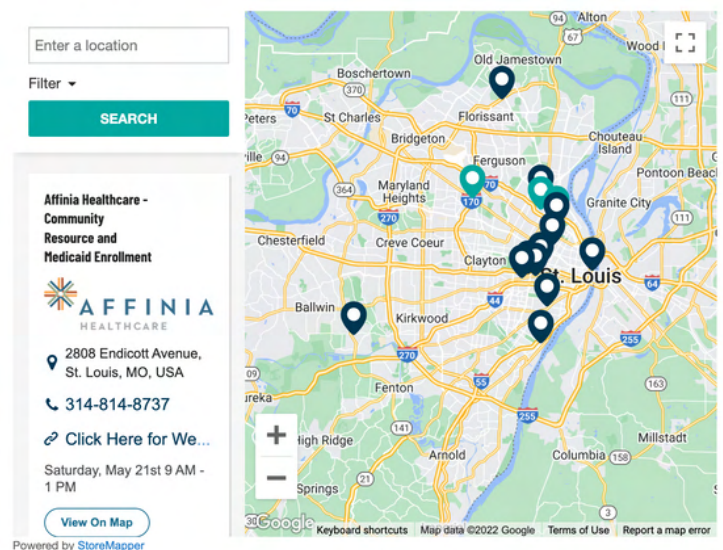
By hovering over the dots on the bottom of the video, or clicking on the "chapters" function in the bottom right corner, you can navigate to relevant sections of the video!

IN-PERSON APPLICATION HELP

Check out the map to find Medicaid application assistance locations in St. Louis City and County! Try out the "search" function to find help in your area or select "filter" to differentiate between pop-up and standing locations.

If your organization is holding assistance events that you would like featured on the map, fill out our [event submission form here](#).

To view the map, [visit here](#).



MEDICAID EXPANSION EFFORTS

MEDICAID EXPANSION HELPLINE

The St. Louis Regional Health Commission (RHC), Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM), and St. Louis University's Center for Health Law Studies, have partnered to pilot a [Medicaid Expansion Helpline](#) to support residents of Saint Louis City and County. If Missourians have questions about Medicaid expansion, whether or not they qualify, or need help applying, there is help available!

With this helpline, trained volunteers can help answer questions regarding qualification, navigating the application, or any other questions about expansion. Callers are encouraged to leave a message over voicemail and can expect to be called back within 24 hours or on the next business day.

Call the Medicaid Expansion Helpline at

888-686-1744



All Gateway to Better Health (GBH) members are encouraged to apply for Medicaid today!

For shareable flyers and more materials, visit the RHC medicaid web page: CoverSTL.org

Missouri Medicaid has new rules!

Right now, there are long wait times for Medicaid coverage after applying. Don't be discouraged!

You may be eligible for MO Medicaid if...

- > You live in Missouri.
- > You are aged 19-64.
- > You are single and make less than \$1,481 per month before taxes.
- > You are a family of four (there are 3 other people in your family and you live together) and your family makes less than \$3,048 per month before taxes.

You can apply for MO Medicaid even if...

- > You're not a parent.
- > You do not currently work.
- > You currently have other health insurance or benefits, such as Gateway to Better Health coverage or employer-sponsored insurance. If you have Medicare, you are not eligible for Medicaid Expansion.

What are the benefits of Medicaid Expansion?

- > Medicaid insurance covers hospital stays, ER visits, visits to your doctor or the clinic, regular vaccines, brand name medications, dental fillings and root canals, vision care, mental health care including substance use treatment, and much more!

How can you apply?

- > **Online:** <https://cutt.ly/QRD760B>
- > **Phone:** Family Support Division, 1-800-372-9996
- > **On paper:** <https://cutt.ly/NRDBw6e>

If you have questions, Call the Medicaid Expansion HelpLine at **888-686-1744!**

Trained helpers are there to answer your questions and help you apply!

Missouri Medicaid eligibility

Wondering if you are eligible for Missouri Medicaid?

Now that Medicaid has been expanded in Missouri, the rules have changed! More parents and adults without children now qualify for Medicaid.

To calculate your income, use the chart below!

If your monthly household income is at or below the amounts listed in the chart, you may be eligible for Missouri Medicaid!

How many people live in your home?	What is your household income (including wages and tips) before taxes?	
1 person (just me!)	\$1,563 per month	\$18,754 per year
2 people	\$2,106 per month	\$25,268 per year
3 people	\$2,649 per month	\$31,781 per year
4 people	\$3,192 per month	\$38,295 per year
5 people	\$3,735 per month	\$44,809 per year
6 people	\$4,277 per month	\$51,322 per year

If you have questions, Call the Medicaid Expansion HelpLine at **888-686-1744!**

Trained helpers are there to answer your questions and help you apply!

Applied for Missouri Medicaid, what happens next?

Right now, there are long wait times for Medicaid coverage after applying. Don't be discouraged, your health is worth it!

After you apply for Medicaid:

- > The Department of Social Services (DSS) will send mail to your address. They will either send:
 - * A letter asking for more information.
 - * A determination letter
- > If you are not eligible because you are over income or don't meet other eligibility requirements, Medicaid will send your application to the marketplace.
- > If you are not eligible for Medicaid, you may have other insurance options. Reach out to the helpline for more information!

If it has been longer than 6 weeks (45 days) since you applied for Medicaid:

- > Don't apply again!
- > Don't fill out more than one application in a short period of time.
- > Reach out to the Medicaid Expansion Helpline at 888-686-1744! Trained helpers will help direct you to more information.
- > If you filled out a paper application, reach out to the Medicaid Helpline for more instructions! Helpers can help you fill out an online application to make sure your application is entered correctly.

If you have questions, Call the Medicaid Expansion HelpLine at **888-686-1744!**

Trained helpers are there to answer your questions and help you apply!

POLICY TRACKER

On the RHC's [Policy Tracker](#), we follow state legislation that could significantly affect the St. Louis health care system. We provide plain language descriptions, updates, and our stance on the legislation. Throughout the 2022 legislative session, we updated our tracker as bills that aligned or conflicted with RHC priorities were introduced and developed in the legislature.

LEGISLATIVE SPOTLIGHTS



[Medicaid enrollment backlog persists as advocates say Missouri could be doing more](#)

An [article](#) by the Missouri Independent highlights the extended wait times that Missouri residents are facing to get approved for health insurance through Medicaid expansion. According to the state's latest figures, almost 73,000 Missourians had Medicaid applications pending as of January, and the time that residents are waiting for approval is increasing.



[HJR 117 Undermines Will of Missouri Voters](#)

Angela F. Brown, CEO of RHC, issued a statement in [The St. Louis American](#) and [The Longview News-Journal](#) in Texas, describing the way that [House Joint Resolution \(HJR\) 117](#) would undermine the will of the voters, threaten Missourians already receiving care with a risk of losing coverage, and jeopardize our opportunity to experience the economic growth and expansion numerous other states have experienced because of Medicaid expansion



[Health leaders assail GOP's latest attack on Medicaid expansion](#)

An [article](#) published by the St. Louis American highlights criticism from Missouri health leaders, including RHC CEO Angela Brown, as they respond to the [House Joint Resolution \(HJR\) 117](#) bill that puts Missourians' access to Medicaid at risk.



[RHC Opposes HJR 117](#)

The RHC sent an [advocacy alert](#) on February 16, 2022 to urge our elected officials and stakeholders to oppose HJR 117 and stand up for the will and health of Missourians. HJR 117 would allow the legislature to determine whether or not to fund expanded Medicaid and to place work reporting requirements on those in the expansion population. These busy work requirements would have created extra bureaucratic barriers and could have caused Medicaid recipients to lose their health care.

2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUMMARY

The 2022 Missouri Legislative Session officially adjourned May 13, 2022. Overall, the session was marked by infighting within the Republican party (conservative caucus and leadership) and divisiveness between the parties. Additionally, an enormous amount of time was expended on congressional mapping, which passed with 6:2 ratio, and efforts to limit transgender girls from sports, which did not pass. In the end, 66 bills truly agreed & finally passed, including 19 routine budget appropriations bills.

MEDICAID: EXPANSION AND EXTENSION

Medicaid Expansion was fully funded in the budget! After several attempts to reverse the expansion and impose work requirements via bills such as HJR 117, the will of Missouri voters to expand Medicaid remains, and Medicaid remains FULLY funded.

Unfortunately, efforts to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months did not pass. However, there was strong bipartisan support of bills which would have supported this change. Under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, there are still 4 more years to try to enact this extension of postpartum care under Medicaid. The RHC supports the extension of Medicaid postpartum coverage because caring for women's health after pregnancy is critical to achieve health equity.



VOTING, ELECTION, AND BALLOT INITIATIVE EFFORTS

During the 2022 session, there were many efforts to pass bills which would make it harder for all Missourians to initiate and pass ballot initiatives to amend the constitution, such as HJR 79. Fortunately, none were successful! The RHC opposes bills which make it harder to pass ballot initiatives because they limit the ability of Missourians to address health inequities and expand health care access through a grass-roots democratic process.

Unfortunately, Voter ID law HB1878 passed, which adds restrictions on registering voters and other additional features, though there will likely be a legal challenge to this in the future.

MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

Legislation passed allowing the Department of Mental Health to give \$149 million to Federally Qualified Health Centers, Community Mental Health Centers, and Certified Community Behavioral Health Organizations.



For more info on the bills we tracked this past legislative session, check out our [policy tracker](#).

PREPARESTL NAMED HEALTH ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

On March 17, 2022, [an article published by the St. Louis American](#) announced that PrepareSTL would be honored as the Health Advocacy Organization of the Year during the 22nd Salute to Excellence in Health Care on April 14 at the Frontenac Hilton.

The event recognized PrepareSTL for its quality work and community health campaigns: "PrepareSTL holds an abundance of programs and events annually to inform the community on how to monitor and sustain their health. The COVID-19 pandemic challenged this function, tasking the organization with how to effectively combat rising case numbers and COVID-19 related death rates."

Check out [this video](#) feature on PrepareSTL's work within our St. Louis community!

"PrepareSTL has created an incredible infrastructure for communications, community outreach, and economic development, which have all been rooted in racial and health equity."
- Courtney Stewart, vice president of Strategic Communications at Missouri Foundation for Health.

"They got together for the purpose of helping African Americans and foreign-born people of color in these times of COVID to be able to survive and be able to move through the negative impacts that a public health crisis can bring."
- Rebeccah Bennett, PrepareSTL managing director

PREPARE STL

**Helping Black St. Louisans
PREPARE AND PREVAIL**



MEET THE TEAM

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

Staff

We are so excited to welcome a new staff member to the RHC team!



Pearlina Boyd, JD, MPPA
Public Policy & Advocacy
Director

About Pearlina

Pearlina “Pearl” Boyd is a native of St. Louis, Missouri. Prior to joining the Regional Health Commission, she worked as a Public Policy Manager for a HIV/AIDS service organization in Washington DC, held a Law clerkship at the Louisiana Department of Health, worked as a Law Clerk at the Louisiana Attorney General in the Criminal Division, and worked as a contractor in the Contracting Department for Home State Health (Centene Managed Care Entity). Pearlina earned her Juris Doctorate (J.D.) in 2017 from Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and holds a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Public Policy Administration. She was also invited to speak in Beijing, China on the topic of Building Public Awareness Campaigns to control AIDS, and her overall experience in the healthcare industry. Finally, Pearlina is a member of the American Health Lawyers Association and in the process of becoming a member of the St. Louis Area Health Lawyers Association. To [read more about Pearlina](#), visit our staff page.

Board Members

We are thrilled to announce 11 regional leaders who will be joining the Commission to partner in working toward our vision of achieving zero health disparities through a community driven approach that yields health equity in all policy and outcomes.



Angela Clabon
Chief Executive Officer of
CareSTL Health



Angeline Stanislaus, MD
Chief Medical Director of
the Missouri Department of
Mental Health



**Bethany Johnson-Javois,
MSW**
President & Chief Executive
Officer
Deaconess Foundation



Faisal Khan, MBBS
Acting Director of the St.
Louis County Department
of Public Health

MEET THE TEAM, CONT.

Board Members, cont.



Kirk Mathews
Chief Transformation
Officer of MO HealthNet
Division, Missouri
Department of Social
Services



Matifadza Hlatshwayo, MD
Director of Health for the
City of St. Louis Department
of Health



Nia Sumpter
Patient Advisory Co-Chair



Ray Weick, MD
President of Mercy Clinic
in the St. Louis and South
communities



Robin Cole, MA
Patient Advisory Co-Chair
Coordinated Entry Case
Manager with St. Patrick
Center



**Sheila Grigsby, PhD, RN,
MPH, APHN-BC**
Dean's Fellow for
Community Engagement,
Assistant Professor
University of Missouri- St.
Louis

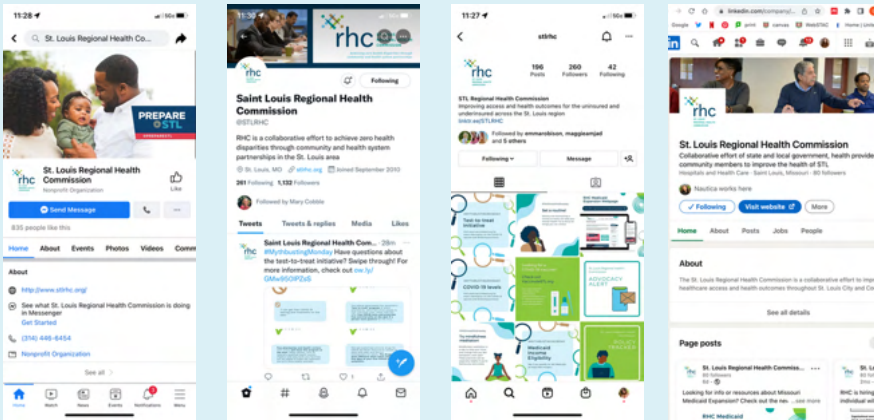


Sidney Watson, JD
Director, Jane and Bruce
Robert Professor of Law
Saint Louis University
School of Law's Center for
Health Law Studies

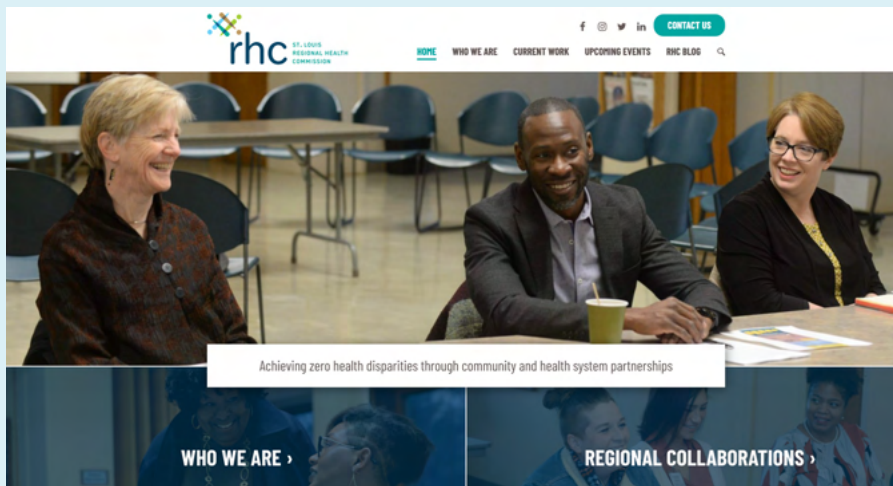
For more info on the Commission members and their appointments, visit [our blog here](#).

FOLLOW US ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIAS!

For #MythbustingMondays, #WellnessWednesdays, health advocacy updates and more, check us out on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#)!

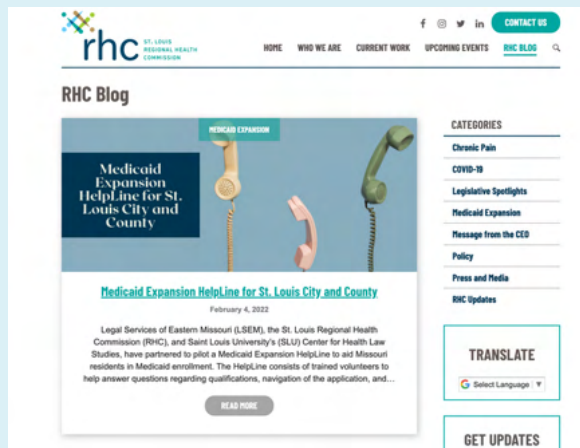


CHECK OUT OUR [WEBSITE](#)



RHC IN THE MEDIA

Visit our website for [recent media coverage](#) and read what we have been up to on our [blog](#)!



ABOUT

The [St. Louis Regional Health Commission](#) is a nonprofit organization that envisions a St. Louis region committed to achieving zero health disparities, through a community driven approach, that yields health equity in all policy and outcomes.

Upcoming Events

Join us for an [upcoming meeting](#)! All RHC meetings are open to the public, and we invite you to get involved. Have questions? Contact Emily Vandas by emailing evandas@stlrhc.org.



[Provider Services Advisory Board Meeting \(virtual\)](#)



[Commission Monthly Board Meeting \(virtual\)](#)



[Community Advisory Board Meeting](#)



[Patient Advisory Board Meeting \(virtual\)](#)

[VIEW MORE MEETINGS](#)

GET IN TOUCH

Contact us [online](#) or by calling our team at 314.446.6454.

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www.stlrhc.org