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## **New members named to key advisory council on equity**

### *Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council advises department*

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) recently appointed seven new members to a council charged with reducing disparities within programs serving human services clients. The Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council, established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2013, advises the Human Services commissioner on reducing disparities that affect racial and ethnic groups in human services programs and ensure that departmental policies and procedures are aligned to promote the best possible outcomes for all Minnesotans.

The council recently sent a [report to the Minnesota Legislature \(PDF\)](#) highlighting the group's activities and accomplishments, as well as identifying major problems and issues confronting racial and ethnic groups in accessing human services, and recommendations to address the issues.

Council members represent Health and Human Services committees at the Legislature; racial and ethnic minority groups; tribal service providers; culturally and linguistically specific advocacy groups and service providers; human services program participants; public and private institutions; parents of human services program participants; members of the faith community; and DHS employees. New members appointed to the council are:

- **Michael Birchard**, Brooklyn Park, chief diversity and affirmative action officer and academic adviser at North Hennepin Community College; adjunct faculty member, St. Mary's University Minneapolis, North Hennepin Community College and St. Cloud State University
- **Patricia Brady**, North St. Paul, director, Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board and Workforce Solutions
- **Joni Buffalohead**, Plymouth, director of operations, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center
- **Ahmed Mullah**, Minneapolis, machine operator, Lake Region Medical Center; and professional interpreter
- **Marilyn "Susie" Nanney**, Minneapolis, associate professor, University of Minnesota Department of Family Medicine and Community Health
- **Kristine Rhodes**, St. Paul, executive director, American Indian Cancer Foundation
- **Nyagatare Valens**, Woodbury, grants specialist, Minnesota Department of Education

More information about the council can be found on the [DHS website](#).