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# **The Arc of PA Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among People with Disabilities**



**Advocacy and Policy Day 2023**

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# Initiative Overview

- To what extent are we using a disability-inclusive approach to combat COVID-19?
- To what extent will we use a disability-inclusive approach to prepare for future emergencies?





# Initiative Purposes

- Bring together disability and healthcare provider stakeholders to identify barriers, disparities, solutions
- Release accessible media campaign
- Report to the PA Department of Health



# Solutions work to date

**Core:** Front of report, most important for DOH

**Additional:** Back of report, less important for DOH and/or for other Departments or across multiple Departments

## November 2021 – April 2022

### Barriers Review: Solutions Brainstorming

Barriers Listening Tour

Regional Community Work Group (RCWG) & Task Force Meetings

389 Brainstormed Possible Solutions

## July – October 2022

### Elevating Core Solutions for DOH

RCWGs: Spotlighted Most Important

Task Force Survey: Core vs. Additional

Solutions Listening Tour (n = 116)

7 Core + 32 Additional

### Solutions Literature Review

Frameworks of Systemic Solutions

Thematic analysis brainstormed + literature

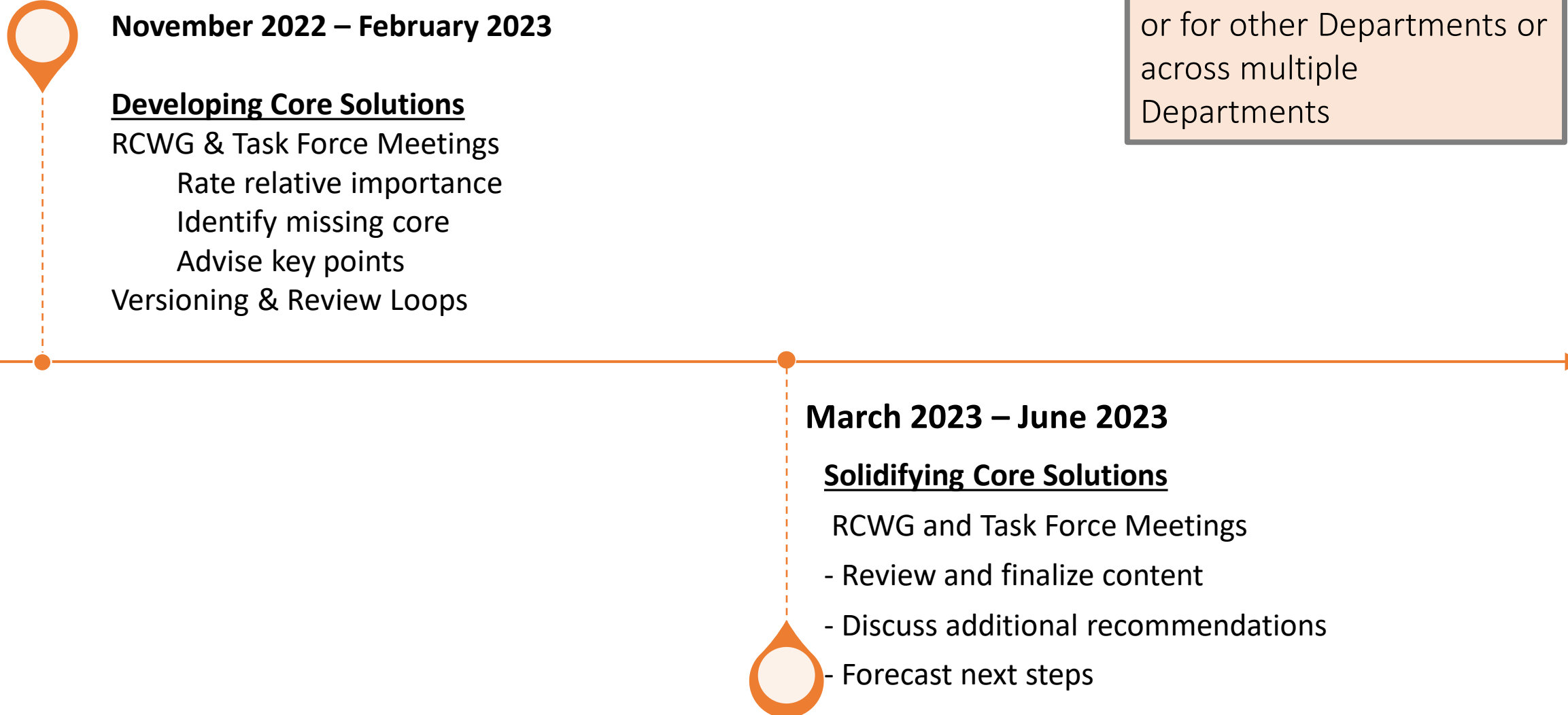
7 Themes/44 Possible Solutions

## May – June 2022

# Solutions work to date

**Core:** Front of report, most important for DOH

**Additional:** Back of report, less important for DOH and/or for other Departments or across multiple Departments



## November 2022 – February 2023

### Developing Core Solutions

RCWG & Task Force Meetings

Rate relative importance

Identify missing core

Advise key points

Versioning & Review Loops

## March 2023 – June 2023

### Solidifying Core Solutions

RCWG and Task Force Meetings

- Review and finalize content

- Discuss additional recommendations

- Forecast next steps



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# Core recommendations to the PA Department of Health



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## Core Recommendation #1

Create and promote new opportunities for people with lived experience of disability, their families, and caregivers to provide critical input into policy making and implementation about the healthcare delivery system.



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## Core Recommendation #2

Immediately reactivate all aspects of the Executive Order, 2006-09. Reinststate the Pennsylvania Governor's Cabinet for People with Disabilities and Governor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities. Ensure coordination among agencies to ensure a disability inclusive approach in decision-making, oversight of disability rights and health care access.





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## Core Recommendation #3



Identify and maintain tangible policy changes, federal and state waivers and flexibilities that were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure access to care and services and continue planning efforts to support health systems and health professionals to be more inclusive of the disability community.



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## Core Recommendation #4



Expand the Community-Based Health Care Program in the Department of Health to include:

- Expansion and protection of accessible telehealth services;
- Development of accessible mobile health care clinics



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## Core Recommendation #5



Appoint disability representatives to the Department of Health's Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee.



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## Core Recommendation #6



Provide disability-specific whole person-centered health care training for health care professionals.



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## Core Recommendation #7



Collaborate with the Governor's Office and/or the General Assembly to request Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to waive the geographic barrier requirement to designate people with disabilities as a Medically Underserved Population.



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## Core Recommendation #8



Establish and expand standardized data collection and develop statistics regarding the health and health care needs of people with disabilities.



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## Core Recommendation #9



Provide accessible, plain, and multi-language resources.



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## Core Recommendation #10



Remove disability as a metric in determining Quality-Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) during times of health care rationing decision making to ensure equitable triage of care.

