



Connecticut HIV Planning Consortium 16 September 2020 Meeting Summary



Location:	Zoom virtual meeting		
Date:	16 September 2020	Recorders:	Michael Nogelo/Dave Bechtel
Start Time:	9:32 a.m.	End Time:	10:44 a.m.
Presiding Chairs:	Gina D'Angelo, Blaise Gilchrist, Barry Walters		
Attendance:	See last page for roster of CHPC members and public participants		

MEETING AT A GLANCE

- CHPC Co-Chairs made several announcements: 1) CHPC members elected Nilda Fernandez as CHPC Community Co-Chair; 2) Dante Gennaro will replace Gina D'Angelo as the DPH-designated CHPC Co-Chair; 3) A committee chair opening exists in Quality and Performance Measures (QPM); 4) The October CHPC meeting will be held virtually on Zoom; and 5) Committee chairs will deliver brief committee updates at the main CHPC meeting starting today.
- The knowledge-building segment focused on the topic of stigma and inclusion. Participants were encouraged to get involved because their voices make a difference.
- The main presentation consisted of a "Voice of the People" panel discussion.
- CHPC committees conducted virtual meetings from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER, MOMENT OF SILENCE, AND INTRODUCTIONS

CHPC Co-Chair Blaise Gilchrist called to order the Connecticut HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC) at 9:32 a.m. and introduced Co-Chairs Gina D'Angelo and Barry Walters.

Mr. Gilchrist provided an overview of the meeting agenda, and explained that the CHPC is a statewide HIV prevention and care planning body that exists to reduce the rate of new infections and to help those who are living with and affected by HIV/AIDS connect to services. The CHPC is responsible for developing and implementing a statewide integrated HIV prevention and care plan to end the HIV epidemic. The plan spans the timeframe of 2017 to 2021. The plan places an emphasis on addressing the health disparities and inequities so prevalent in HIV.

Mr. Gilchrist led participants in a moment of silence to remember those we have lost and support those who are living with and affected by HIV.

CHPC LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. D'Angelo made the following announcements:

- CHPC members elected Nilda Fernandez as CHPC Community Co-Chair. Ms. D'Angelo congratulated Ms. Fernandez, whose term will begin in January 2021, and thanked Brian Datcher and Clara O'Quinn for also volunteering for consideration as a Co-Chair.
- Dante Gennaro will replace Ms. D'Angelo as the CHPC Co-Chair designated by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH). Ms. D'Angelo will continue to serve as the DPH resource liaison to the Getting to Zero (G2Z) Committee, attend HIV Funders Group meetings, and assist in the coordination of statewide planning activities.



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- A Data and Assessment Committee (DAC) co-chair opening exists to lead the DAC Quality and Performance Measures (QPM) Team. The CHPC hopes to fill this opening by early 2021.
- The October 21 CHPC meeting will be held virtually on Zoom.
- Committee chairs will deliver brief committee updates at the main CHPC meeting starting today.

Results of CHPC Virtual Vote to Approve the August 19, 2020 Meeting Summary. CHPC members approved the August 19, 2020 meeting summary using a virtual approval process. The results of the vote are shown in the table.

CHPC Vote Summary: August 2020 Meeting Summary

Motion to approve	Second the motion	# Yes Votes	# No Votes	# Abstain	Did Not Respond
Executive Committee	N/A	16	0	2	7

Discussion, additions and/or corrections during the review process:

- Several participants suggested changes to grammar and wording.
- Most participants stated the document accurately reflected the meeting.

CHPC COMMITTEE UPDATES

Ms. D’Angelo explained that the Executive Committee decided to include a brief segment each month on committee updates to increase awareness of committee activities in the virtual meeting environment.

Quality and Performance Measures (QPM) Team

Ms. Fernandez reported the following about CHPC indicators:

- New HIV diagnoses continue to decline (<220 in 2019)
- Viral load suppression for people in care is around 90%, although the overall rate is around 70%
- Late testers continue to be a challenge (29% of new diagnoses in 2019)
- The Syringe Services Program (SPP) is exceeding state goals
- Connecticut is making progress on decreasing disparities in new infections for many groups (men who have sex with men (MSM), Hispanic/Latino men, Black/African American women, and Hispanic/Latino women), but has seen an increase among Black/African American men

Needs Assessment Projects (NAP) Team

Ms. D’Angelo reported that NAP:

- Identified a short list of core competencies that front-line workers should have within 90 days of hire and within one year of hire
- Identified available training resources and gaps
- Identified a process to verify the existence of a competency



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Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC)

Stephen Feathers reported that:

- MAC published three newsletters during 2020
- The new member mentoring process has been going well
- New member applications are due by October 15, 2020 and recruitment is focused on Hispanic/Latino/a people, those under age 30, and people from Fairfield, Middlesex, or Tolland Counties. All are welcome to apply. The application form is on the CHPC website.

Getting to Zero (G2Z)

Ms. D'Angelo reported:

- The New Haven G2Z capacity building grant project is underway with processes to: review plans from other areas, conduct stakeholder interviews, launch a marketing campaign, and build local teams
- Statewide coordination activities include exploring redesigning: a) the Positive Prevention CT website to make providers the primary audience; and b) the G2Z website to focus on residents/consumers

HIV Funders Group

Ms. D'Angelo reported:

- Advance planning work is underway for the 2021 statewide persons living with HIV (PLWH) survey. A Data Team with data managers from each group is working on the methodology. The full Funders Group is reviewing and updating survey instruments and questions.
- The group collaborated with Beacon Health Options on a statewide Substance Use Disorders (SUD) needs assessment. PLWH have four times the number of claims for substance use treatment. The statewide SUD needs assessment process will include HIV survey questions on the statewide medical provider survey.
- Dr. A.C. Demidont asked if any provider-based survey or the aforementioned SUDs needs assessment survey is collecting information about substance use during COVID, and said she has seen data about significant increases in substance use during the pandemic.
 - Ms. D'Angelo acknowledged the importance of the topic and indicated that it did not specifically come up during the conversation with Beacon Health Options.
 - Dr. Demidont offered to share information with the group and talk about the topic offline.

PATH TO OUR VISION KNOWLEDGE BUILD: THE VALUE OF INCLUSION AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

Mr. Walters explained that the Path to Our Vision segment builds a common understanding of an important strategy for Getting to Zero. An important part of Getting to Zero involves reducing stigma. CHPC member Brian Datcher focused on four core messages: 1) stigma negatively affects people; 2) See me. Know me. IMperfect!; 3) Use your voice. Get involved. Build relationships; and 4) Lead with love. Mr. Datcher shared personal experiences and the meeting participants completed interactive poll questions.



CHPC PRESENTATION: VOICE OF THE PEOPLE PANEL

Mr. Walters introduced the annual CHPC “Voice of the People” panel discussion. This panel creates a discussion space that focuses entirely on the experiences of the people the HIV community intends to support. Dante Gennaro served as moderator. Three panelists – Angel Cotto, Corey Gerena, and LaTonya McNair – provided in-depth responses to structured questions. Interactive poll questions created an opportunity for all meeting participants to join the conversation.

Introductions:

- Mr. Cotto, who is from Hartford, said he has been living with HIV for just over a year. He works for the Institute for Community Research, is involved in other nonprofits, and loves video games and connecting with people.
- Mr. Gerena, who lives in Waterbury, was born with HIV 30 years ago, is a father of two, loves music, and was recently installed as a pastor.
- Ms. McNair, who lives in Bridgeport, has been living with HIV for 27 years. She found out she had HIV when she passed the virus to her child by breastfeeding. She is currently an intern at GBAPP and is working towards her associate’s degree.

Topic 1: How the COVID-19 pandemic has changed access to HIV services

- Ninety-three percent (93%) of CHPC meeting participants responding to an instant poll agreed that access to HIV services has changed during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Mr. Cotto said that getting services has been different in some ways during COVID. It has been harder to get in touch with his doctor to set up or reschedule appointments. When he is at the doctor’s office, there are precautions, but the services seem to be the same.
- Mr. Gerena reported that he has been doing a lot of things by video, but he has been able to go to the doctor the past couple of months, and he has not had a problem accessing services.
- Ms. McNair agreed that it has been difficult getting responses from doctors. Once she is in the office, however, she appreciates the social distancing, and video appointments have worked well.

Topic 2: Experiences using technology to participate in services

- Ninety percent (90%) of meetings participants use technology solutions to access services.
- Ms. McNair reported that virtual interactions with her doctor’s office have gone smoothly, as they made sure she had internet and access to a computer. She said she could see a problem getting care for people who lack internet or access to a computer, however.
- Mr. Gerena said it has been pretty easy since March. His support group moved to a virtual format and has been going well. No one in his support group has gotten COVID-19.
- Mr. Cotto said he has not been offered any video meetings, as the only services he receives currently is an appointment at his doctor’s office every six months.

Topic 3: The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on HIV stigma

- Eighty percent (80%) of meeting participants said HIV stigma has not changed during the COVID-19 crisis, 17% said it has gotten worse, and 2% said it has gotten better.



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- Mr. Gerena said he feels that HIV stigma has gotten worse, as some people are not getting educated about HIV and seem content not talking about it and staying in a place of stigma. HIV needs to be talked about so everyone can get educated. HIV is not a death sentence, and it affects all types of people.
- Ms. McNair stated that she does not think it has gotten worse, but it certainly has not gotten better. HIV/AIDS has to be talked about more to reach the point where we talk about HIV/AIDS like we talk about cancer.
- Mr. Gennaro noted that there is now a cure for Hepatitis C, but many people feel ashamed of having had Hep C even after being cured.
- Mr. Cotto agreed that many people do not want to be educated or talk about it, but does not feel like he sees more stigma due to COVID. He observed that friends and family know about it but do not talk about. He noted that he has started to see commercials on TV related to HIV.

Topic 4: The impact of COVID on mental and emotional health

- Ninety-two percent (92%) of meeting participants agreed that COVID has impacted their mental and emotional health.
- Ms. McNair stated that she started receiving therapy two years ago, and she recommended it for everyone, saying that she probably would be a lot worse off during the pandemic without that support. Her mental health has been fine, and she does remote therapy sessions weekly with no problems.
- Mr. Cotto said he has been spending a lot of time with family, hiking, playing video games, and watching TV. It has taken a toll on his overall mental health, as it is harder to get energy and ground yourself without face-to-face interactions. Doing Zoom meetings every day is miserable and wears on you. Mr. Cotto agreed with Ms. McNair about the value of therapy.
- Mr. Gennaro noted that the CT DPH team holds at least one outdoor, socially distanced, in-person meeting each month, and it makes a difference compared to having another Zoom meeting.
- Mr. Gerena said the first three months were very hectic trying to adhere to all recommendations, but for the past three months, he has decided to go out and live life, as he goes to store, mall, and church, and gets tested regularly. He said he appreciates connecting with people in person, even if he had issues with them before. He travels to New Jersey to see his family. When the pandemic is over, he said he thinks we will all appreciate seeing each other in person so much more. He has been learning to deal with it all and balance physical safety and mental and emotional health.
- Mr. Gennaro encouraged everyone to do their part to protect public health by wearing masks and practice social distancing so we can control the spread and get back to being together in person soon.

Topic 5: Positive changes as a result of the COVID-19 crisis

- Seventy-nine percent (79%) of meeting participants agreed that they have experienced positive changes in their lives since the start of the COVID crisis.
- Ms. McNair said she practiced social distancing to some extent before COVID because she has a compromised immune system, and she now appreciates others practicing sanitizing and social distancing.



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- Mr. Gerena explained that he has been divorced for three years, and his relationship with his ex-wife has improved in terms of raising their daughter. It took COVID to improve their communication for their daughter's benefit. He also recently was installed as a pastor.
- Mr. Gennaro noted that COVID has allowed people to reflect and work on relationships in a different way.
- Mr. Cotto said he has been spending more time with his family and doing things as a family that they have talked about doing. He added that he temporarily lost his side job at a restaurant. He received unemployment compensation and enjoyed an extended vacation from that job after four years. Having paid time off was great for a lot of people who are stuck working in these types of jobs.

Questions and answers:

- Ms. D'Angelo shared questions for the panelists that meeting participants had asked via the chat. One person raised privacy issues related to the use of technology, asking the panelists if any privacy issues have come up from the delivery of virtual services.
- Mr. Gerena responded that he believes his iPhone protects his privacy, as he feels safe using FaceTime or just talking on the phone.
- Ms. McNair said she has not worried about privacy issues. She is open about many things, but she obviously does not want her information floating around.
- Mr. Cotto agreed that he has not been too concerned, as he uses all the platforms on his Samsung phone. When he did virtual therapy sessions in his room, he was concerned about his family hearing him.
- Ms. D'Angelo asked if any of the panelists know of people who are not receiving services because of lack of technology or internet access.
- Ms. McNair responded that she would try to help anyone in that situation
- Mr. Gerena said that StayWell Health Center sent people who lacked technology what they needed to be able to connect to a doctor.
- Mr. Cotto stated that he has seen people post about public places being available to access technology (e.g., college computer labs). People need a laptop or phone to speak with their providers virtually.
- Ms. D'Angelo noted that many meeting participants had praised the panelists in the chat. One participant made a distinction between "social distancing" and "physical distancing," saying that we can still be social while being physically distanced and safe. Many people have spent lots of time with family and pets. It is important to find the good in this challenging situation.



COMMITTEE MEETINGS (Virtual meetings held separately)

Committee Updates. Ms. D’Angelo described the CHPC committee structure and explained that virtual committee meetings will begin at 11:15 a.m. Access information to committee meetings can be found on the CHPC website in case someone needs the information. Committee Chairs will share progress at the Executive Committee.

The table below shows a summary of the focus of the committee work for August 2020 and September 2020.

Committee	Focus of the Committee Work	
	August 2020	September 2020
Getting to Zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G2Z capacity building updates • Statewide communication vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G2Z capacity building updates • Statewide coordination
Membership & Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice of the People Panel planning • Membership recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-of-year mentor program surveys • Membership recruitment and selection
Needs Assessment Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce competencies and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce competencies and training
Quality & Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress review of CHPC Indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexually transmitted disease presentation
Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve June meeting summary • Committee work plan coordination • August CHPC meeting agenda & improvements to virtual process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September CHPC meeting agenda & improvements to virtual process • Committee work plan coordination

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. D’Angelo reminded all participants that they would receive an online link to a 1-minute feedback survey. Please fill out this survey and also share any feedback on how to improve virtual CHPC meetings. Ms. D’Angelo thanked everyone for a productive and highly energetic meeting, and adjourned the meeting at 10:44 a.m.



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CHPC ATTENDANCE RECORDS (1 = present; 0 = absent; arriving late is counted as an absence for official records)

* = Attendance not officially marked as an absence due to circumstances affecting capacity and availability to participate during COVID-19 pandemic.

First Name	Last Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Victor	Acevedo	1	1			*	*	1	*	*
Laura	Aponte	1	1			1	1	1	*	1
Thomas	Butcher	1	1			*	*	1	1	1
Angelique	Croasdale-Mills	1	1			1	*	1	1	1
Gina	D'Angelo	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Brian	Datcher	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Xavier	Day	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Stephen	Feathers	0	1			1	1	1	1	1
Nilda	Fernandez	0	1			1	1	1	1	1
Carl	Ferris	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Jose	Figueroa	0	0			*	*	*	*	*
Dante	Gennaro	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Corey	Gerena	1	0			1	1	1	1	1
Blaise	Gilchrist	1	0			1	1	*	1	1
Cynthia	Hall	1	1			*	*	1	1	1
Reggie	Knox	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Ronald	Lee	1	1			*	*	1	1	1
Luis	Martinez	0	1			1	*	1	*	*
Waleska	Mercado	0	1			*	*	*	*	*
Mitchell	Namias	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Clara	O'Quinn	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Bob	Sideleau	1	1			1	1	*	1	1
Jeffrey	Snell	1	1			1	1	*	1	1
Roberta	Stewart	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Barry	Walters	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL		22	24			21	19	22	22	21
PERCENTAGE		79%	86%			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



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PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS (1 = present)

Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Alvarez, Melanie		1			1	1	1		
Lucinda Balsome							1	1	
Barlow, Cinque	1								
Bartlette, Beasha					1	1			
Batson, Clifford	1	1							
Binford, Monique		1							
Sheila Birth							1	1	
Blaschinski, Ellen	1								
Boone, Joyce	1	1							
Bowens, Samuel		1							
Brown, Jean					1		1	1	
Buchelli, Marianne	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Burns, Sara		1			1	1	1	1	
Carbonell, Carlos	1								
Casey, Catellia						1			
Castro, Christian	1								
Cataquet, Jimmy		1							
Chung, Latasha		1							
Ciborowski, Lauren	1								
Clark, Belinda		1							
Colbert, David		1						1	
Nancy Copeland							1		
Cordero, Reina	1	1							
Cotto, Angel						1	1		1
Cruz, Johanna					1		1	1	
Cubano, Jenny						1			
Danvers, Karina					1		1	1	
Davidson, Daniel	1	1			1	1			
Davidson, Megan	1	1				1	1		
DeJesus, Emely		1							
De La Cruz, Martina	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Del Vecchio, Christina	1	1			1		1	1	
Delgado, Sabrina					1		1		
Demidont, A.C.		1				1	1		1
Diaz, Luis		1			1	1	1	1	1
Diaz, Mildred		1							
Dones-Mendez, Dulce	1								
Dumont, Natalie								1	1
Dunbar, Wanda		1							
Edelmann, Taylor		1			1				
Ferraro, Linda		1						1	
Fleurival, Alsamendi							1	1	
Fonseca Tapia, Juan								1	
Francis, Shannon					1	1	1		1
Gardner, Brittany	1	1							
Gibson, Lynette	1				1	1	1	1	1
Gonzalez, Monica		1					1		1
Gosselin, Deborah		1			1	1			
Gowitzke, Elizabeth		1							
Hall, Shanay	1	1			1				
Heron, Venesha	1	1			1		1	1	1
Hernandez, Juan	1								
Hulton, Daniel					1	1	1		



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Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Ifkovic-Mau, Alicia								1	
Jenkins, Heidi	1								
Jean-Baptiste, Clunie	1	1			1	1		1	1
Jones, Coley	1						1		1
Joseph, Marcelin	1	1							
Kelly, Abbie					1				
Kenny, Will								1	1
Kingwood, Nancy						1			
Kotey, Dionne	1	1				1	1	1	1
Lane, Stuart		1							
Ligon, Barbara		1							
Linardos, Heather		1					1	1	1
Lombardo, Debra	1	1				1		1	1
Lorenzo, Maria		1						1	
Mairena, Oscar					1		1	1	1
Major, Sue	1				1	1	1	1	1
McAllistor, Keiva	1				1		1		1
McDavid, Kiana								1	1
Mike McGowan							1		
McNair, LaTonya									1
Millet Saez, Myrna					1	1			
Mitchell, Gabrielle									1
Morgan, Nicole					1				
Moore, Kelly		1							
Morales, Fernando		1							
Moranino, Marlene	1								
Mott, Ericka		1						1	
Muñoz, Consuelo		1			1	1	1	1	1
Muñoz, Kay		1							
Nembhard, Peta-Gaye	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Nieves, Maribel	1	1							
Novis, Steve		1			1	1			
Ogbuagu, Onyema					1				
Parsons, Rhonda						1	1	1	1
Pawlow, Dustin							1	1	1
Pierre-Louis, Luje								1	1
Pigatt, Shaquille	1	1							
Pope-Wiggins, Lorrie	1	1							
Pulliam, Cedric					1				
Quettant, Francesca					1		1	1	
Quinones, Yaritza									1
Quintero, Eduardemar		1			1				
Robertson, Jackie		1							
Rodriguez-Santana, Ramón	1	1			1		1	1	1
Rodriguez, Joselyn		1							
Rodriguez, Rosie	1						1		
Rosa, William		1							
Rose-Daniels, Delita	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Ruiz, Angel		1			1	1	1	1	1
Sauza, Ben		1							
Sherr, Eric						1		1	
Speers, Sue	1				1		1	1	1
Thuillier, Antoinette					1		1	1	
Torres, Abigail		1							



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Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Vargas, Jennifer						1	1		1
Velez, Idiana		1					1	1	1
Velez, Yolanda	1								
Warren-Dias, Danielle	1	1			1	1	1	1	1
Wimbish, Roselyn						1			1
Yopp, Melinda					1		1	1	
[name not legible]		1							
TOTAL COUNT	38	59			40	32	44	43	36