**Date:** January 16, 2019

**Location:** Chrysalis Center, Hartford **Time:** 10:30 a.m. – 11:48 a.m.

**Attendance:** MAC Members: Kat Auguste, Carmen Cruz, Thomas Evans, Stephen Feathers, Carl Ferris, José Figueroa, Blaise Gilchrist, Ana Gonzalez, Juan Gonzalez, Clara Langley, Ron Lee, Waleska Mercado, Glenn Scott

Public Participants: Melanie Alvarez, Audrey Bell, Jahmyia Boyette, Wanda Dunbar, Gloria Eason, Debra Lombardo, DeLita Rose-Daniels, Pamela Studley, Charna Teasley, Sandra Wade

CHPC Staff: Michael Nogelo

# Meeting Accomplishments

1. The group approved the August 2018 Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) meeting summary with no changes.
2. The group discussed CHPC membership.
3. The group reviewed the committee work plan for 2019.
4. The group planned the article topics and possible authors for the March newsletter.

# Identified Tasks

1. Staff will create the January MAC meeting summary.
2. Carmen Cruz and Ron Lee will call CHPC members who missed the January meeting.
3. All MAC members will look at the CHPC membership application before the February MAC meeting and come prepared to discuss the application.
4. Stephen Feathers and MAC staff will look for information to support MAC’s recommendation to add a question to the CHPC membership application related to high-risk heterosexual behaviors.
5. MAC staff will connect with the identified newsletter article authors to pull together a draft of the March newsletter for review at MAC’s February meeting.

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) co-chair Kat Auguste called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and welcomed committee members and guests. All participants introduced themselves. Ms. Auguste reviewed the meeting agenda and described the ground rules and processes used by MAC.

* Debra Lombardo asked about a client of hers who had applied for CHPC membership in 2018 but never received notification of whether she was accepted or rejected.
* Ms. Auguste asked Ms. Lombardo to connect with MAC staff person Mike Nogelo after the meeting to ask about this specific case.
* Ms. Lombardo suggested that the membership application include a space for applicants to list their case manager to help CHPC staff contact applicants whom they are unable to reach directly.

# August 2018 Meeting Summary

MAC co-chair Clara Langley asked members to review the August 2018 MAC meeting summary.

* The meeting summary was approved by consensus with no changes.

1. **Membership Update**

Ms. Langley stated that MAC is responsible for member retention and selection. She reported that nine new CHPC members had completed orientation and started their terms. Ms. Langley referred the group to the membership diversity chart for a snapshot of the CHPC’s current membership.

* Mr. Nogelo walked the group through the diversity chart and explained how the diversity chart guides MAC in its member recruitment and selection processes.
* Ms. Auguste stated that the application process is strictly confidential.
* Charna Teasley asked if a member guidebook can be provided to potential applicants.
* Ms. Auguste offered to visit any agency to speak about the CHPC. She stated that individuals do not need to attend CHPC meetings in order to apply, and added that only members may receive transportation support from the CHPC.
* Tom Evans said he knows people in New Haven who want to apply but who cannot make it to meetings in Hartford.
* Mr. Nogelo stated that anyone who receives transportation support to CHPC meetings may tell CHPC staff that they would like to bring a guest, and staff can let them know if there is extra space available in a car that is transporting members.
* Stephen Feathers encouraged public participants to ask providers in their community if they would be willing to bring them to meetings. Ms. Auguste noted that some agencies may not allow staff to transport clients due to liability concerns.

Ms. Langley explained that each new member has an experienced CHPC member as their mentor, and referred the group to a list of the mentor-new member matches. Mentors will contact their mentees each month, and will serve as their “go-to” person for anything related to CHPC. The CHPC did not offer “lunch and learn” sessions with mentors and new members in 2018. MAC recommended to the CHPC Executive Committee that lunch and learns should start again. Ms. Langley said a get-to-know-you session would take place during lunch that day, and sessions will be scheduled for future meetings.

Ms. Langley reported that MAC sometimes calls members who have missed meetings to encourage them to come to the next meeting. Carmen Cruz and Ron Lee typically make these calls, but other MAC members are welcome to volunteer to help.

* Ms. Cruz said she called several members and invited participants from a Waterbury support group.

Ms. Langley stated that members receive a warning after their second absence and are dismissed after their third absence in a calendar year, and asked if MAC should reach out to any members who missed the January meeting.

* Mr. Nogelo suggested reaching out to the two new members who missed the meeting.

Ms. Langley said the CHPC co-chairs asked MAC to think about anything else that can be done to improve CHPC member attendance, and asked the group to brainstorm ideas.

* Carl Ferris suggested bringing on new members in the middle of the year, but Ms. Auguste responded that the Executive Committee discussed this and ultimately decided it was not plausible to bring on new members mid-year due to the need for new member orientation.
* DeLita Rose-Daniels asked if the CHPC has considered producing a short video about the CHPC to promote the CHPC’s mission and role.
* Mr. Ferris said Ms. Auguste can come to agencies to speak with staff and clients about the CHPC.

1. **MAC 2019 Planning**

Ms. Auguste asked everyone to review the draft of the MAC work plan for 2019 in their packets, and then walked the group through the planned tasks and activities.

Ms. Auguste said MAC spent a lot of time in 2018 looking at CHPC policies related to membership, and provided an update on a policy recommendation discussed in August. In August, MAC recommended adding a question related to high-risk heterosexual behaviors to the CHPC membership application to allow the CHPC to identify “high-risk heterosexuals,” which is a priority “prevention population.” The CHPC Executive Committee felt that, even with a clarifying definition, the question should not be added to the application. The decision was made due to CHPC co-chairs’ reservations about asking questions regarding sexual practices.

* Ms. Auguste noted that organizations that offer prevention services now have to report high-risk sexual behavior to federal funders.
* Mr. Ferris said the application should capture married men who have sex with men (MSM).
* Mr. Nogelo pointed out that the application does ask about MSM (a sexual risk behavior).
* Thomas Evans wondered if the HIV-negative partner of a person living with HIV (PLWH) who cannot pass the virus to others (due to better medications) would be considered a high-risk heterosexual.
* Melanie Alvarez said the CHPC wants people at the table who are at-risk or who have experienced risk. Understanding that many people may not disclose that information on an application, Ms. Alvarez asked how MAC can get the right people around the table.
* Stephen Feathers suggested looking for more information to inform MAC’s recommendation about including a question related to high-risk heterosexual behaviors.
* Ms. Alvarez said she understands not wanting to make the application too complicated, but it is hard to fit a person into the application boxes. She wondered if applicant interviews would enable MAC to get into deeper questions and decipher who really wants to be a member.
* Ms. Auguste stated that it is important to give applicants the message that CHPC members have to be committed.
* Ms. Auguste suggested that everyone look at the membership application before the February MAC meeting in order to inform MAC’s continued discussion of the topic.
* Mr. Nogelo agreed to bring copies of the application to the February meeting.
* Mr. Evans requested confirmation that all personal information disclosed in MAC meetings remains confidential. The group confirmed that this is correct.

1. **Plan March Newsletter**

Ms. Auguste stated that MAC produces a newsletter three times per year, and that the group needed to plan the articles and identify possible authors for the March newsletter. The newsletter features eight articles in total, including two regular features (CHPC Update and Department of Public Health Corner). Ms. Auguste asked the group to think about articles that could fill the remaining six spaces.

* Mr. Nogelo said he was still looking for someone to write an article about the discrepancy between the public response to the current opioid epidemic and response to previous drug epidemics that primarily affected communities of color.
* Ms. Alvarez offered to speak with Shawn Lang about the possibility of writing this article.
* Ms. Alvarez said an AIDS CT client is undocumented and living with HIV. For years, PLWH could not apply for citizenship, but the Obama administration lifted that ban. Ms. Alvarez offered to look into the possibility for an article on the first AIDS CT client to go through the naturalization process.
* Ms. Alvarez offered to write an article about the AIDS CT Oscars fundraiser, as well as provide photos.
* Mr. Evans said he was at a Ryan White Planning Council meeting in December where a Yale doctor said that by early 2020 there will be a cure for AIDS. Mr. Evans reflected on how much this would mean to long-term survivors. Mr. Evans volunteered to draft the article and to reach out to the Yale doctor for input.
* Ms. Rose-Daniels suggested an article from an HIV-negative partner with an HIV-positive partner who is on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). She said that HRA clients may be willing to write this article.
* Mr. Nogelo stated that an article on the *Getting to Zero* report release would be timely.
* Ana Gonzalez offered to write an article on Ryan White program funding cuts, particularly cuts that impact housing for PLWH.
* Carmen Cruz reported that many PLWH are concerned about how the government shutdown may impact services.
* Ms. Alvarez said there have been many changes to housing for PLWH regardless of the shutdown. The process for accessing housing has changed, as a centralized system (a “Coordinated Access Network” or CAN) is now used in each region. In Hartford, the CAN has one waiting list for all people who have applied to the Housing for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program.
* Jahmyia Boyette expressed concern about the availability of medicines on the Connecticut AIDS Drug Assistance Program (CADAP). Several participants assured her that CADAP will not be impacted.
* Mr. Ferris encouraged everyone not to worry about things and to remain calm. Ms. Auguste suggested that Mr. Ferris write an inspirational poem for the newsletter.
* Ms. Cruz shared her concern about possible cuts to Section 8.
* Ms. Teasley expressed confidence that Connecticut’s new Governor will protect PLWH, but she encouraged people receiving food stamps in January to spend them slowly because the next food stamps might be impacted by the government shutdown.
* Mr. Feathers said food stamps might be a good article topic because it would be relevant whether the shutdown ends before the newsletter is published in March or not. The article could give everyday cost-saving measures.
* Mr. Evans encouraged people to use their phones to stay informed on current events that impact PLWH.
* Ms. Alvarez said the Hartford HOPWA program is putting together supports for PLWH in need of employment.
* Mr. Evans encouraged people to talk with their case managers about employment training opportunities in New Haven.

Ms. Auguste stated that Mr. Nogelo would connect with the identified authors to pull together a draft of the newsletter for review at MAC’s February meeting.

1. **Process Check**

Ms. Langley asked the group to evaluate the meeting.

* Audrey Bell said the meeting was interesting but overwhelming, and reiterated other participants’ concern about housing.

1. **Adjournment**

Ms. Langley thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 11:48 a.m.