



Membership & Awareness Committee  
March 16, 2022 Meeting Summary



**Date:** March 16, 2022

**Location:** Virtual Meeting      **Time:** 11:20 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

**Attendance:** MAC Members: Victor Acevedo, Stephen Feathers, Carl Ferris  
Public Participants: None  
CHPC Staff: Michael Nogelo

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### Meeting Accomplishments

1. The group approved the February Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) meeting summary with no changes.
2. The group planned the mid-year mentoring program check-in phone calls.
3. The group reviewed changes to the CHPC website.
4. The group identified agencies and individuals that may help MAC establish connections with support groups to get community input into the important issues that should be addressed in the Integrated Plan and to share progress on the development of the Plan.
5. The group agreed to start an analysis of best practices for engaging people with HIV (PWH) in HIV community planning.
6. The group reviewed membership-related issues.

### Identified Tasks

1. Staff will draft the March MAC meeting summary.
  2. Staff will work with a graphic designer make changes to the CHPC membership application form.
  3. Stephen Feathers and Michael Nogelo will call mentors and new members and will report back on the findings of the calls at the April MAC meeting.
  4. Staff will reach out to several support/community group facilitators to establish connections with these groups.
  5. Staff will ask each Ryan White Part A Planning Council how they engage PWH, what has worked well, and what challenges they have encountered.
  6. Mr. Feathers and Carl Ferris will call CHPC members who have missed meetings to encourage them to come and to check on them.
  7. Staff will issue warning letters to two CHPC members who missed their second meeting of the year.
  8. Staff will issue a discharge letter to one CHPC member who missed their third meeting of the year.
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## **A. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) chair Stephen Feathers called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m. and welcomed committee members. All participants introduced themselves.

## **B. FEBRUARY MEETING SUMMARY**

The group approved the February MAC meeting summary by consensus, with no changes.

## **C. PLAN MENTOR/MENTEE CHECK-IN**

Mr. Feathers explained that the CHPC mentoring program helps new CHPC members feel more prepared and comfortable by matching each new member with an experienced CHPC member. Every year, MAC checks in with every mentor and new member after a few months to make sure that contact is being made and to identify any issues or needs. Typically, a MAC co-chair or staff person calls each mentor and each new member.

Questions asked of new members include: a) Have you been in contact with your mentor each month? b) Have you and your mentor started to develop a relationship? c) Are you getting the support you need to be a successful CHPC member? and d) Is your mentor giving you the support you need? Mr. Feathers requested feedback on these questions.

- Carl Ferris said he has been unable to reach his mentee recently.
- Mr. Feathers wondered if new members should be asked if the time commitment involved in CHPC membership was different than the new member anticipated.
- Mr. Ferris noted that his mentee has been a CHPC member before.
- Michael Nogelo said questions about the CHPC membership time commitment feel separate from questions about the mentoring program, and added that the time commitment is made very clear during the new member onboarding and orientation process.

Mr. Feathers asked for feedback on the questions asked of mentors: a) Have you been in contact with your mentee each month? b) Have you and your mentee started to develop a relationship? and c) Do you feel you are able to give your mentee the support they need?

- Mr. Ferris said mentors may need reminders sometimes, but he reported that he fulfills his responsibilities as a mentor to the best of his ability.

Mr. Feathers said he and Mr. Nogelo would divvy up responsibility for calling mentors and new members and will report back on the findings of the calls at the April MAC meeting.

## **D. REVIEW CHPC WEBSITE CHANGES**

Mr. Feathers reminded the group that, during the February MAC meeting, it had agreed to make a few changes to the CHPC website to make sure the website highlights information relevant to the Integrated Plan the CHPC is working to create this year.

Mr. Nogelo walked the group through the changes, which promote the Ending the Syndemic (ETS) website and the Positive Prevention CT (PPCT) website and offer a clear definition of the term “syndemic.”



- The group agreed that the changes accomplish the goals discussed during the February MAC meeting.
- Mr. Feathers noted that a participant had asked during the main CHPC meeting about the availability of a recording of the CHPC main meeting.
- Mr. Nogelo said there had been discussions about the possibility of posting meeting recordings to the CHPC website or a CHPC YouTube channel, but confidentiality concerns would need to be addressed and CHPC decision-making protocols would need to be followed before this happens.
- Mr. Feathers asked about the possibility of posting only the knowledge build and presentation portions of the meetings.
- Mr. Nogelo noted that the knowledge build and presentation slides are posted to the CHPC website and the meeting summary includes questions and answers.
- Mr. Feathers suggested conducting a poll at an upcoming CHPC meeting about whether people would like to have meeting recordings made available.
- Mr. Nogelo said it would be important to make sure that meeting recordings could be made available before asking about it (and creating an expectation that the recordings would be made available if most people wanted this).
- Mr. Ferris said he appreciates the use of the term “syndemic” because it does not carry any of the negative connotations that the words “epidemic” and “pandemic” carry.

#### **E. SUPPORT/COMMUNITY GROUP OUTREACH PLANNING**

Mr. Feathers said MAC had agreed that it can support the development of the Integrated Plan by connecting with support groups and other community groups to: a) get community input into the important issues that should be addressed in the Plan, and b) share progress on the development of the Plan and get feedback. MAC wants to start preparing for this work by identifying a short list of support groups it can reach out to now to find out how MAC can connect with them as the Plan takes shape. Ideally, MAC can establish connections with a small number of support groups that cover different areas of the state and the CHPC’s priority populations: a) Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM); b) Black men; c) Black women; d) Transgender women; e) Youth 13-24; and f) People who use drugs. Mr. Feathers said Mr. Ferris has recommended contacting a young men’s group at the New Haven Pride Center, and asked if there are other support groups that might be open to collaborating and that would help with the geographic and demographic diversity MAC is looking for.

- Victor Acevedo said the Meriden Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) meets regularly. Maria Lorenzo or Josie would be appropriate points of contact.
- Mr. Ferris said there is a prevention group of young men at A Place to Nourish your Health (APNH) that faded out in the summer of 2021, but may start to meet again.
- Mr. Feathers stated that there is a transgender support group in Northeast Connecticut, and a youth empowerment group is also being established.
- Mr. Nogelo said contact should also be sought with community groups in Waterbury, Bridgeport, and Hartford.



- The group agreed that Sam Bowers from the Waterbury Health Department would be a good point of contact for Waterbury.
- Mr. Feathers suggested contacting Gigi Chaux from Stamford CARES, and noted that Apex Community Services would represent another source of groups in the Waterbury region.
- Mr. Feathers recommended contacting the Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective or the Connecticut Harm Reduction Alliance about community groups in Hartford.
- Mr. Nogelo reminded the group that the first steps would simply involve establishing connections and creating some level of mutual agreement about ways to collaborate.
- Mr. Feathers said introductory visits could be completed soon to lay the foundation for future visits as the Plan continues to evolve.

Mr. Feathers said Mr. Nogelo would reach out to the identified support/community group facilitators.

#### **F. MINI-SWOT ANALYSIS OF ENGAGEMENT OF PWH**

Mr. Feathers said the CHPC is interested in learning about how other HIV planning groups in Connecticut try to engage PWH and other community stakeholders and champions. The CHPC co-chairs are working with the leaders of the two local Ryan White Planning Councils to establish a “letter of collaboration” to clarify the relationship between the leaders of the respective Planning Groups and stimulate a higher level of coordination, collaboration, and accountability across planning groups and planning and implementation efforts to end the HIV epidemic. MAC may play a role in this process by doing a quick analysis or assessment of how each planning group tries to engage PWH and other community members in their processes. This may take the form of a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, or it may be more informal. Mr. Feathers asked the group for questions, thoughts, and ideas.

- Mr. Nogelo said the first steps would be to ask each Ryan White Part A Planning Council how they engage PWH, what has worked well, and what challenges they encounter.
- Mr. Feathers said the goal would be to learn from their best practices and lessons learned.
- Mr. Nogelo added that another goal would be to increase collaboration across planning groups.

#### **G. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

Mr. Feathers reported that Taylor Edelman, a CHPC member who was also a mentor and PPCT chair, had to resign due to changing his job. Dante Gennaro is the interim PPCT chair until a new chairperson is identified. Mr. Feathers said he is now mentoring Mr. Edelman’s mentee, since Mr. Feathers’ mentee resigned in February.

Mr. Feathers said a revised and re-designed draft of the CHPC membership application form would be available for MAC to review at its April meeting.

Mr. Feathers said MAC is responsible for member retention. Sometimes MAC members call CHPC members who have missed meetings to encourage them to come and to check on them. Mr. Feathers said both of the members he called before the March meeting said they had missed previous meetings because of work conflicts, but both said they hoped to attend the March meeting.



Mr. Feathers said CHPC members receive a warning after their second absence and are dismissed after their third absence in a calendar year. The group reviewed the 2022 member attendance chart, and agreed on member retention activities.

- Mr. Ferris said he would call Brian Datcher and would continue to try to reach Wallace Daniels.
- Mr. Nogelo said he would send a discharge letter to Lisa Weeks, who missed her third meeting of the year in March, and would send warning letters to Brian Datcher and Wallace Daniels, who missed their second meeting of the year in March.
- Mr. Feathers noted that an appeal process exists for discharged members.

#### **H. PROCESS CHECK**

Mr. Feathers asked the group for feedback on the meeting.

- Mr. Acevedo responded that the meeting had gone well.
- Mr. Ferris said he wished more people attended the meeting, but he also expressed appreciation for how smoothly the meetings go with a small group. Mr. Ferris added that he had invited some public participants to attend, but they did not show up.
- Mr. Ferris asked about the possibility of returning to in-person meetings at some point in 2022.
- Mr. Nogelo said he did not know when meetings would return to being held in person.
- Mr. Feathers noted that MAC meetings were typically attended by many community member public participants when the CHPC was meeting in person, and added that many MAC members and public participants now attend meetings of the new Ending the Syndemic (ETS) Committee or PPCT.
- The group agreed that it was easier to access the MAC meeting without a password requirement.

#### **I. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Feathers thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.