



Membership & Awareness Committee
August 17, 2022 Meeting Summary



Date: August 17, 2022

Location: Virtual Meeting **Time:** 11:04 a.m. – 12:38 p.m.

Attendance: CHPC Members: Victor Acevedo, Melanie Alvarez, Stephen Feathers, Carl Ferris, Dante Gennaro (*part of meeting*), Charles Hardy

Public Participants: Danielle Warren-Dias

CHPC Staff: Michael Nogelo

Meeting Accomplishments

1. The group approved the July Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) meeting summary.
2. The group reviewed a draft of the September newsletter.
3. The group discussed plans to secure feedback on the 2022-2026 HIV Plan from three support groups.
4. The group discussed strategies to increase the engagement of people with HIV (PWH) in the CHPC.
5. The group planned for the CHPC's annual Voice of the People panel scheduled for October.
6. The group reviewed the year-end surveys for mentors and new members.
7. The group reviewed membership issues and agreed on member retention and recruitment activities.

Identified Tasks

1. Staff will complete the newsletter (including translation and state approval) for dissemination.
 2. Staff and MAC members will schedule support group visits between August 18 and September 20.
 3. Staff will ask CHPC leaders for guidance about topics to be addressed with support groups.
 4. MAC leaders will recommend to the CHPC Executive Committee that, starting in 2023, potential CHPC members be required to attend at least one CHPC meeting before being eligible for membership.
 5. Staff will revise and share with CHPC leaders the proposal for adjusting participation stipends for eligible CHPC members.
 6. Staff and others will disseminate the Voice of the People flyer.
 7. Staff will administer the mentor and new member surveys.
 8. Carl Ferris will make member retention calls, as needed.
 9. Staff will issue attendance warning and dismissal letters to CHPC members, as needed.
 10. Staff will update the diversity chart to align with the membership application form, for review and discussion at an upcoming MAC meeting.
 11. MAC will develop a short document for people to use to recruit new CHPC members.
-



A. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) chair Stephen Feathers called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. and welcomed committee members. All participants introduced themselves.

B. JULY MEETING SUMMARY

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

C. SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER PLANNING

Mr. Feathers said MAC produces a newsletter three times each year. The group reviewed a draft of the September newsletter and agreed on the following next steps:

- Melanie Alvarez and Carl Ferris will collaborate on two articles related to HIV, HIV-related stigma, and housing: Ms. Alvarez writing from the perspective of a service provider and Mr. Ferris from the perspective of a community member.
- A grade-level check will be conducted to ensure accessible language.
- “Live-saving” will be changed to “life-saving” on page 1.
- Alixe Dittmore’s title will be confirmed.
- The extra type on the chart on page 1 will be removed.
- The 2022-2026 Plan will be defined on page 2 to provide context.
- Information on Positive Prevention CT (PPCT) chairs and meetings will be updated on page 3.
- “Bedding” will be added as a monkeypox transmission source on page 6.

Mr. Nogelo noted that the planned interview involving Ms. Alvarez and Mr. Ferris would not occur due to a change in Ms. Alvarez’ job. MAC will explore an audio recording for a March 2023 newsletter article.

Mr. Feathers said staff will finalize the newsletter based on the group’s feedback, get final approval from the Department of Public Health (DPH), get a Spanish version, and send out the English and Spanish newsletters in early September.

D. SUPPORT GROUP OUTREACH

Mr. Feathers said MAC is supporting the development of the new Integrated Plan by connecting with support groups to get community input into the important issues that should be addressed in the Plan and to get community feedback as the Plan develops. Mr. Feathers met with an MPowerment group in Hartford in April. Mr. Nogelo met with a Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) in Meriden in early July, and with a Black Men and Resiliency group in Stratford on August 11. Mr. Nogelo and Mr. Feathers will try to schedule follow-up visits with these three groups before the September CHPC meeting. Mr. Nogelo will ask CHPC leaders for guidance about what Plan elements they need feedback on or what specific questions they would like input.

- Mr. Ferris asked Mr. Nogelo for information about the Black Men and Resiliency group.
- Danielle Warren-Dias suggested focusing on Plan Goal #2 (Improve HIV-related health outcomes for people with HIV (PWH)) with the Meriden CAB.



- Ms. Warren-Dias noted that the CHPC has not received much input from heterosexual black men, and suggested focusing on Plan Goal #3 (Reduce HIV-related disparities and health inequities) with the Black Men and Resiliency group. She suggested using the chart from the newsletter showing increasing overdose death disparities to spark discussion.
- Mr. Feathers suggested focusing on Plan Goal #1 (Prevent new HIV infections) and Goal #3 with the two non-PWH groups, and said MAC should consider prioritizing the engagement of high-risk HIV-negative people in 2023.

E. FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE PEOPLE WITH HIV (PWH)

Mr. Feathers said that, in June, MAC discussed various strategies to engage PWH in the CHPC that came out of recent MAC discussions with the Hartford and New Haven/Fairfield Ryan White Planning Councils. MAC agreed that a requirement for CHPC applicants to attend one meeting prior to being accepted as members should be pursued. Mr. Nogelo has started to encourage potential applicants who have not attended CHPC meetings to attend a meeting before applying. While it is not realistic to make this a requirement for the current applicants, Mr. Feathers asked if MAC wanted to make a recommendation to the CHPC Executive Committee that, starting in 2023, attending one CHPC main meeting and one committee meeting be mandatory before an applicant can be accepted as a new member.

- Mr. Ferris said the requirement seems particularly reasonable as long as meetings are virtual, as transportation does not pose a barrier to attendance.
- Dante Gennaro stated the importance of prospective members understanding the commitment.
- Ms. Warren-Dias clarified that applicants would not need to attend a meeting prior to submitting an application, but they would need to attend a meeting prior to being accepted as a new member.
- The group agreed that the recommendation should include providing transportation to one meeting for applicants, when the CHPC resumes in-person meetings.
- Mr. Gennaro suggested that CHPC members offer to drive applicants, if possible, to create a warmer introduction to the CHPC.
- Ms. Warren-Dias said applicants should receive attendance credit for attending future hybrid meetings at a satellite location.

Mr. Feathers said MAC agreed in July that community members should be paid a flat amount that does not depend on the income they forego to attend CHPC meetings, and that the current CHPC stipend of \$40 for attending a CHPC meeting and committee meeting (\$25 for attendance and \$15 for food) should be increased. Mr. Feathers asked the group to discuss a draft MAC proposal for increasing participation stipends for CHPC members who are not employed or paid by their job for attending CHPC meetings.

- Ms. Warren-Dias asked how the proposal accounts for additional time spent by members (e.g., on Executive Committee meetings or Co-Chair meet-ups).
- Mr. Feathers noted that the stipend has not previously been adjusted for Executive Committee members.



- Ms. Warren-Dias suggested paying members by the hour for additional meeting time, or paying them for the same number of hours but increasing their hourly rate. She noted that this would provide an incentive to participate at a higher level.
- Ms. Warren-Dias said Peta-Gaye Nembhard recently enabled people who registered for a conference to receive a food voucher when they registered.

F. VOICE OF THE PEOPLE PANEL PLANNING

Mr. Feathers said MAC is helping to plan the annual “Voice of the People” panel discussion at the main CHPC meeting in October. MAC is using a similar recruitment and panelist screening process to the process that worked well in 2021. When reviewing the newsletter earlier in the meeting, the group had reviewed and approved a flyer created by PPCT to be sent out to recruit potential panelists. The flyer includes a QR code that takes potential panelists to a questionnaire that collects background information and information about topics the person would like to talk about. There will also be a Spanish flyer that takes people to a Spanish questionnaire. The flyers will be sent to the CHPC email list and to other groups.

- Mr. Gennaro said these other groups may include CT DPH listservs, Planning Councils, and groups of infectious disease doctors.

G. MENTOR PROGRAM SURVEY PLANNING

Mr. Feathers said the CHPC mentoring program helps new members feel more prepared and comfortable. This year, we had six new members who were assigned a mentor to start the year. There were several adjustments to mentor-new member pairings during the year due to changes in membership. MAC will ask mentors and new members to complete short surveys at the end of the year. The group reviewed the 2021 mentor and new member surveys.

- The group agreed to add a question to the new member survey asking if they experienced barriers to attendance and, if yes, what those barriers were.

Mr. Feathers said Mr. Nogelo will make the agreed-upon change, email links to online versions of the surveys to mentors and mentees, and give people the option to be mailed a hard copy of the survey.

H. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

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. Ferris reported that he was in touch with Bob Sideleau, who attended the August meeting.

Mr. Feathers explained that members receive a warning after their second absence and are dismissed after their third absence in a calendar year. The group reviewed 2022 attendance and agreed that a member retention call and warning letter would be issued to Martina de la Cruz.

- Ms. Warren-Dias recommended framing the letters as wellness checks rather than warnings.
- Mr. Feathers said the phone call is intended as a wellness check to complement the administrative notice function of the letter.
- Mr. Nogelo added that the letters purposefully take a supportive tone.



Mr. Feathers said Mr. Nogelo had contacted the nine members whose first terms expire at the end of the year to ask them to notify him by September 1 if they want to renew for a second term.

- Mr. Nogelo said six of these members had renewed for a second term, one had declined to renew, and two had not yet responded.

Mr. Feathers said Mr. Nogelo also contacted the three CHPC members whose second terms expire at the end of the year to let them know they need to re-apply to be considered for a new term.

- Mr. Nogelo said two of these members had submitted an application for a new term.
- Ms. Alvarez stated that she would introduce Mr. Nogelo to Lauren Ciborowski, a potential AIDS CT replacement for Ms. Alvarez, who is resigning due to changing jobs.

Mr. Feathers said that, in July, MAC discussed member recruitment, and agreed to gently encourage members of the support groups we visit to consider applying, since the groups have people from CHPC priority populations. MAC also agreed that Mr. Nogelo would reach out to people who have attended several CHPC meetings as public participants to encourage them to apply and to challenge them to invite PWH from their communities to apply.

- Mr. Nogelo reported that this outreach had resulted in a few applications from frequent CHPC meeting attendees, as well as agreement to encourage PWH to apply.

Mr. Feathers walked through the CHPC membership diversity chart to see current membership composition and membership gaps.

- Mr. Feathers noted that the biggest membership needs are for PWH, males, people under age 30, and transgender individuals.
- Mr. Gennaro suggested adding people taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) as a category, per the advice of the CHPC's federal project officers.
- Mr. Nogelo stated that this category, along with several others mentioned in the federal guidance for the 2022-2026 Plan, were added to the membership application form, but the diversity chart needs to be updated to align with the application.
- Ms. Warren-Dias suggested including a category for people who use post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).
- Mr. Gennaro responded that this was an interesting point, but PrEP is more of a proactive prevention step.

I. PROCESS CHECK

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

- The group agreed that the conversation had been good.
- Mr. Gennaro suggested developing a short document for people to use to recruit members.

J. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Feathers thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 12:38 p.m.