



Membership & Awareness Committee
February 17, 2021 Meeting Summary



Date: February 17, 2021

Location: Virtual Meeting **Time:** 11:04 a.m. – 12:29 p.m.

Attendance: MAC Members: Victor Acevedo, Taylor Edelmann, Stephen Feathers, Carl Ferris, Dante Gennaro, Ron Lee, Debra Lombardo, Clara O’Quinn

Public Participants: None

CHPC Staff: Michael Nogelo

Meeting Accomplishments

1. The group approved the January Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) meeting summary with no changes.
2. The group heard an update on the CHPC new member mentoring program.
3. The group reviewed and discussed a draft of the March newsletter.
4. The group reviewed and discussed potential changes to the CHPC website.
5. The group discussed opportunities for MAC to collaborate with Positive Prevention CT (PPCT).
6. The group discussed strategies for conducting community outreach.
7. The group conducted a process check.

Identified Tasks

1. Staff will draft the February MAC meeting summary.
 2. Staff will make the agreed-upon changes to the newsletter, request approval from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH), get the newsletter translated into Spanish, and disseminate the final newsletter on March 2.
 3. MAC staff and leaders will make agreed-upon improvements to the CHPC website, and will report back to MAC on other website discussion items.
 4. PPCT leaders will request CHPC staff to send an invitation to take the PPCT social media survey via the CHPC listserv.
 5. Carl Ferris will ask the APNH (A Place to Nourish Your Health) Aging Positively support group leaders about scheduling a virtual visit from CHPC leaders.
 6. Debra Lombardo will talk with Sam Bowen from the Waterbury Health Department to see if there would be a way to facilitate access to virtual CHPC meetings for Waterbury community members.
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A. WELCOME

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

B. JANUARY MEETING SUMMARY

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

C. MENTORING CHECK-INS

MAC Co-Chair Clara O'Quinn said that MAC had agreed in January to check with the new CHPC members and their mentors to see if initial contact had been made.

MAC staff person Mike Nogelo reported that five mentor/mentee connections had been made prior to the check-in, three additional connections had been made as a result of the check-ins, and two mentors and their mentees had yet to connect.

- Mr. Feathers noted that new member Peta-Gaye Nembhard had expressed her feeling that she did not need a mentor, so Mr. Feathers said the lack of contact from her mentor should not be a major cause for concern.
- Mr. Nogelo reported that the other mentor and mentee who had yet connect both expressed a desire to connect, but the mentor's attempts to make contact had been unsuccessful.
- Carl Ferris stated that he and his mentee had finally connected and had a positive conversation.

D. REVIEW MARCH NEWSLETTER DRAFT

Ms. O'Quinn said MAC produces a newsletter three times each year, and asked the group to review a draft of the March newsletter.

- Debi Lombardo praised the newsletter for being attractive and having quality content.
- The group agreed on suggestions to add context to the article on Tibetan singing bowls.
- Taylor Edelmann requested a change to the Positive Prevention CT (PPCT) campaign section.
- Mr. Feathers suggested adding a QR code and a second link to information about COVID vaccine eligibility and sign-up.
- Mr. Feathers suggested filling a blank space with a picture from an in-person CHPC meeting and a positive message.

Ms. O'Quinn said Mr. Nogelo would make the agreed-upon changes, request approval from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH), get the newsletter translated into Spanish, and disseminate the final newsletter on March 2.

E. REVIEW CHPC WEBSITE

Mr. Feathers said MAC led the launch of the CHPC website several years ago and is the CHPC committee with responsibility for the website, but MAC has not reviewed the website for more than a year. Mr. Feathers asked the group to take a tour of the website and flag sections for further review.



- Mr. Feathers suggested adding a link to the membership application within the blurb about MAC.
- Victor Acevedo recommended adding information about the COVID vaccine. Dante Gennaro suggested adding a link to the CT DPH COVID page to the “Resources + Partners” page.
- The group discussed ways to make the links on the “Resources + Partners” page more inviting and user-friendly.
- Mr. Nogelo agreed to look into the possibility of replacing the links with icons, and Mr. Gennaro offered to create clickable buttons if needed.
- The group discussed ways to make the virtual meeting access information more apparent and accessible.
- Mr. Gennaro suggested adding the meeting access information to a “Get Involved” section on the “Contact Us” page, and making the links to the meeting access information clickable icons rather than hyperlinks.
- Mr. Acevedo said the website should encourage people to reach out to each other and look out for each other.
- The group agreed that a positive message should be added to the website (e.g., “We’re all in this together.”) along with guidance to reach out to your local service provider for information on support groups in your community.
- Carl Ferris offered to find out if the Aging Positively virtual support group in New Haven is open to people from outside New Haven.
- Mr. Gennaro suggested that, if Aging Positively is open, the CHPC could send an invitation to participate via the CHPC listserv.

F. POSITIVE PREVENTION CT COORDINATION

Mr. Feathers reminded the group that, in January, it had talked about the new collaboration between MAC and PPCT, and had agreed that MAC meetings would have a standing agenda item for PPCT updates. Mr. Feathers invited Mr. Gennaro and Mr. Edlmann to give updates on PPCT activities and upcoming plans, including any ways that MAC can provide input.

- Mr. Gennaro gave an overview of PPCT and its current focus populations (men of color who have sex with other men, transgender folk¹, people who inject drugs, and Black heterosexual women). He said PPCT is looking for community members with lived experiences related to HIV, Hepatitis C, or sexually transmitted infections (STI) to share their stories for the current PPCT video campaign, which aims to help open people’s minds to combat stigma.
- Mr. Edlmann added that, ideally, people from the focus populations will share their stories for the campaign.

¹ The spelling of the English word “folks” with an “x” is often used in LGBTQ+ inclusive spaces as a visual representation of the inclusion of gender variant identities when addressing groups of people. The original word was intended to be genderless, the history of the genderless meaning was to combine binary men and women. The visual addition of “x” is simply used as a way to make the inclusion of gender variant identities intentional, rather than coincidental. It is pronounced the same way as folks.



- Mr. Gennaro invited people to let PPCT know if they are interested in participating in future campaigns, even if the current video campaign is not the right one for them. Mr. Gennaro offered to send a PPCT flyer to whoever expresses interest.
- Mr. Edelmann said PPCT is conducting an ongoing survey to understand people's social media use. Cards with a QR code to the survey can be sent out to people to do the survey themselves or to share it with their clients, support group members, or friends.
- Mr. Feathers suggested sending the QR code and an invitation to take the survey via the CHPC listserv, and including the QR code in the newsletter.
- Mr. Edelmann reported that the PPCT website is being overhauled, and asked anyone interested in participating in an upcoming meeting of the PPCT website design committee to contact him.
- Mr. Ferris offered to ask the Aging Positively support group leaders about scheduling a virtual visit from CHPC leaders.
- Mr. Gennaro expressed a desire to engage more with the community via outreach, and suggested that MAC create a list of support groups interested in engaging with the CHPC.
- Mr. Acevedo stated that there is a support group in Meriden that may be interested when it starts meeting again in the spring after the weather improves.
- Mr. Ferris asked where the Waterbury community members who used to participate in CHPC meetings had been.
- Mr. Nogelo replied that they used to come to meetings in Hartford in a van provided by the Waterbury Health Department.
- Ms. Lombardo offered to talk with Sam Bowen from the Waterbury Health Department to see if there would be a way to facilitate access to virtual CHPC meetings for community members.
- Mr. Gennaro suggested that MAC members could be designated as CHPC community liaisons to support groups, and could be given badges to confirm their status as liaisons.

G. PROCESS CHECK

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

- Mr. Gennaro noted that there had been great participation by committee members.
- Mr. Acevedo said that everyone had very positive feedback.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Feathers thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 12:29 p.m.