



Membership & Awareness Committee
March 17, 2021 Meeting Summary



Date: March 17, 2021

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

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

Public Participants: None

CHPC Staff: Michael Nogelo

Meeting Accomplishments

1. The group approved the February Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) meeting summary.
2. The group discussed possible changes to the CHPC member mentoring program.
3. The group reviewed changes made to the CHPC website and discussed changes that had been suggested but cannot be made due to technical limitations.
4. The group discussed strategies for engaging more community members in CHPC and MAC meetings.
5. The group agreed to schedule a time for Carl Ferris, Stephen Feathers, and Dante Gennaro to visit (virtually) the Aging Positively support group at A Place to Nourish your Health (APNH).
6. The group discussed opportunities for MAC to collaborate with Positive Prevention CT (PPCT).
7. The group reviewed CHPC member attendance and agreed upon member retention steps.

Identified Tasks

1. Staff will draft the March MAC meeting summary.
 2. MAC co-chairs and staff will ask CHPC leaders about the possibility of allowing new CHPC members to opt out of the mentoring program or to choose a less-intensive “check-in” option.
 3. Staff will send Ron Lee his mentee’s new phone number.
 4. MAC co-chairs and staff will look into the possibility of creating business cards with QR codes that link to CHPC and MAC meetings.
 5. Dante Gennaro will reach out to Nadine Ruff at APNH to schedule a time for Carl Ferris, Stephen Feathers, and Dante Gennaro to meet with the Aging Positively support group.
 6. Ron Lee will call two CHPC members who missed their second 2021 meeting in March.
 7. Staff will send warning letters to two members who missed their second 2021 meeting in March.
 8. Staff will send discharge letters to two members who missed their third 2021 meeting in March.
 9. Dante Gennaro will send staff a list of towns where sites are prepared to host community members to facilitate access to virtual CHPC meetings.
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A. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) co-chair Stephen Feathers called the meeting to order at 11:11 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. MENTORING PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Feathers said MAC staff had given a report during the February MAC meeting on which new members and mentors had been in contact. Two mentoring pairs had still not made contact at that point. Mr. Feathers asked staff for an update on those two pairs.

Mike Nogelo said he did not know if mentor Clara O'Quinn had made an initial attempt to contact her mentee Peta-Gaye Nembhard, but noted that Ms. Nembhard had expressed her feeling that she did not need a mentor. Mr. Nogelo reported that mentor Reggie Knox had attempted to contact his mentee Tawana Guadarrama several times and in several ways, but she had not responded to his outreach.

Mr. Nogelo asked the group to discuss how these situations should be handled.

- Mr. Feathers noted that participation in the mentoring program is a requirement for new members. The requirement, however, does not contain consequences or an enforcement component.
- Debi Lombardo suggested that, in the absence of an enforcement mechanism, new members be given the freedom to figure out if they want a mentor.
- Mr. Feathers and Taylor Edelmann suggested that new members be given the ability to opt out of having a mentor.
- Mr. Nogelo said former CHPC leadership from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) had wanted every new member to have a mentor, but this policy could be revisited with the new CT DPH leadership.
- Mr. Feathers suggested a less-intensive option in which the new member is assigned a mentor and makes initial contact with them, but could then opt out of monthly contact if they feel they are not needed.
- Mr. Edelmann said this option would ensure that a new member has support if needed without burdening them unnecessarily.
- Carl Ferris said he understands new members with significant previous CHPC experience not wanting a mentor, and suggested that new member applications ask applicants to state their CHPC experience.
- Victor Acevedo stated his opinion that having a mentor is a good idea.
- Ron Lee said he was not able to contact his mentee prior to the March meeting because her phone number had changed. Mr. Nogelo said he would send Mr. Lee his mentee's new phone number.



D. CHPC WEBSITE DISCUSSION

Mr. Feathers said that, during its February meeting, MAC had taken a quick tour of the CHPC website and flagged sections that should change or be reviewed more carefully. Mr. Feathers invited Mr. Nogelo to share his screen to walk through the changes that had been made and to follow up on other suggestions MAC had made in February.

- Mr. Nogelo showed the group four changes that had been made: a) A message of encouragement and unity, including information on support groups, was added to the Home and News & Events pages; b) A link to the CHPC membership application was added to the MAC section of the About page; c) A link to the Connecticut COVID-19 vaccine portal was added to the Resources + Partners page; and d) An invitation to get involved in the CHPC was added to the Contact Us page.
- Mr. Nogelo reported that the website does not have the technical capability to replace text links with clickable icons or buttons.
- Participants approved of the changes made and expressed understanding about the technical limitations preventing the final recommended change.

E. COMMUNITY OUTREACH DISCUSSION

Mr. Feathers said that, during its January and February meetings, MAC had discussed ways to increase community engagement in the CHPC. Community participation, including participation from people living with HIV (PLWH), is critical for the CHPC, but community participation and membership applications have both decreased since the CHPC had to switch meetings to virtual because of the pandemic. To address these problems, MAC has discussed creating a list of support groups interested in engaging with the CHPC through virtual visits from CHPC leaders and enlisting MAC members to serve as CHPC community liaisons to support groups. In February, Mr. Ferris offered to ask the Aging Positively support group leaders from A Place to Nourish your Health (APNH) about scheduling a virtual visit from CHPC leaders.

- Mr. Ferris reported that the group leaders expressed willingness to have CHPC leaders visit the group. Mr. Ferris added that he had expected two Aging Positively group members to attend the March CHPC meeting, and added that Aging Positively virtual meetings are open to people from anywhere in Connecticut.
- Mr. Gennaro expressed understanding that people have lives and routines that may prevent them from attending CHPC meetings, but it is important for support groups to be aware of the CHPC so they will be receptive to requests for input on CHPC planning processes.
- Mr. Ferris suggested that each MAC member invite a PLWH to apply for CHPC membership.
- Mr. Gennaro said he has been attending the Hartford and New Haven Ryan White planning groups as a CHPC representative. He added that Positive Prevention CT (PPCT) created business cards with QR codes to the PPCT Pulse Survey and the PPCT website, and wondered if the CHPC could create similar cards with a QR code with the link to MAC meetings.
- Mr. Feathers suggested the cards also include a link to the main CHPC meetings.
- The group agreed that Dante Gennaro should contact Nadine Ruff at APNH to schedule a time for Mr. Ferris, Mr. Feathers, and Mr. Gennaro to meet with the Aging Positively support group.



- Mr. Gennaro said the goal of the visit would be to promote awareness of the CHPC and build rapport to lean on when input from PLWH is needed for CHPC planning processes. Mr. Gennaro added that this could be a test-run for future support group visits, including one to a support group for younger people that APNH is starting.

F. POSITIVE PREVENTION CT (PPCT) COORDINATION

Mr. Feathers reminded the group that MAC meetings have a standing agenda item for PPCT updates. Mr. Feathers invited Mr. Gennaro and Mr. Edelman to give updates on PPCT activities and upcoming plans, including any ways that MAC can provide input.

- Mr. Edelman reported that the theme of the PPCT anti-stigma video campaign had been changed to a superhero theme. PPCT members will meet with the campaign production partner soon to plan the campaign. Mr. Edelman also reported that the PPCT website committee will meet on Friday, March 19 to continue to work on designing the new PPCT website.
- Mr. Gennaro showed the group the under-construction version of the website. Mr. Gennaro reminded the group that PPCT is designed to support frontline service providers, so the website is designed for that target audience (but promotes public-facing websites such as Getting to Zero and In It to End It). The website has pages for the Distribution Center, care, prevention, provider resources, and facts, as well as resources for testing, PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), and provider education, among others.

G. MEMBER ATTENDANCE & RETENTION

Mr. Feathers said MAC is responsible for member retention. Ron Lee calls members who have missed meetings to encourage them to come and to let them know the CHPC is thinking of them.

- Mr. Lee reported that he had called Cynthia Hall (who said she would attend the March meeting) and had attempted to call Jose Figueroa and Luis Martinez.
- Mr. Gennaro suggested asking members for their preferred contact method.
- Mr. Feathers recommended asking members to update their contact information when they renew for a second membership term.
- The group reviewed a CHPC attendance summary, noting that Mr. Figueroa and Mr. Martinez appeared to miss their third meeting of 2021 in March (and would be discharged with an opportunity to appeal) and Ms. O'Quinn and Jeffrey Snell appeared to miss their second meeting of 2021 in March (and would receive warning letters).
- Mr. Gennaro reminded the group that the CHPC purchased equipment to facilitate access to virtual CHPC meetings for members, and has several CT DPH-funded sites prepared to provide a tablet and technical assistance to community members who come to the site to participate in meetings.
- Mr. Gennaro said he would send staff a list of towns where sites can do this.
- Mr. Nogelo said he would include this information in attendance warning letters sent to members.



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H. PROCESS CHECK

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

- Mr. Gennaro said he had loved the conversation.
- Mr. Nogelo thanked Mr. Ferris, Ms. Lombardo, and Mr. Lee for their persistence and patience in getting access to the meeting.
- Mr. Gennaro said the group should consider getting buttons for CHPC members, particularly for those who volunteer as liaisons to support groups.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Feathers thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m.