



Membership & Awareness Committee  
August 19, 2020 Meeting Summary



**Date:** August 19, 2020  
**Location:** Virtual Meeting      **Time:** 11:22 a.m. – 12:18 p.m.  
**Attendance:** MAC Members: Stephen Feathers, Carl Ferris, Corey Gerena, Ron Lee, Clara O’Quinn  
Public Participants: Melanie Alvarez, Debra Lombardo  
CHPC Staff: Michael Nogelo

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### Meeting Accomplishments

1. The group approved the July 2020 Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) meeting summary.
2. The group reviewed the draft September newsletter, and suggested final changes.
3. The group heard the results of the mid-year mentoring program check-in process.
4. The group generated feedback for CHPC leaders on the planning of the “Voice of the People” panel scheduled to occur during the September CHPC meeting.
5. The group discussed CHPC membership issues.

### Identified Tasks

1. Staff will draft the August MAC meeting summary.
  2. Staff will make the agreed-upon changes to the newsletter, secure approval from the Department of Public Health, have the newsletter translated into Spanish, and disseminate the newsletter electronically in early September.
  3. The MAC co-chairs and staff will communicate MAC feedback on the “Voice of the People” panel to CHPC leaders.
  4. CHPC staff will send an email to CHPC members who are living with HIV asking them to consider volunteering as panelists for the “Voice of the People” panel.
  5. MAC members and public participants will consider reaching out to people at their agencies or in their communities who might be interested in volunteering as “Voice of the People” panelists.
  6. MAC staff will post a CHPC member recruitment message to the CHPC website.
  7. MAC staff will prepare for MAC to provide input on new member selection at the September MAC meeting.
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## A. WELCOME

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) co-chair Clara O'Quinn called the meeting to order at 11:22 a.m. and welcomed committee members and guests. All participants introduced themselves.

## B. JULY MEETING SUMMARY

The group approved the July 2020 MAC meeting summary by consensus, based on a prior review.

## C. REVIEW DRAFT SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

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

- Melanie Alvarez complimented the powerful article by Rev. Alex Garbera.
- The group agreed to add uplifting content in the empty space. Debra Lombardo suggested a quote by Marie Curie. The group agreed that this quote should be added to the newsletter.
- The group provided positive feedback about content contained in the rest of the newsletter.

Ms. O'Quinn said Michael Nogelo would make the agreed-upon changes to the newsletter, secure approval from the Department of Public Health, have the newsletter translated into Spanish, and disseminate the newsletter electronically in early September.

## D. MID-YEAR MENTORING CHECK-IN

MAC co-chair Stephen Feathers stated that MAC runs a mentoring program that matches experienced CHPC members with new members. Mentors are expected to contact their mentees each month to offer support. Mr. Nogelo contacted new members to learn about unsuccessful mentoring matches in time to fix them. New members were asked if contact was being made between the mentor and new member, and if the new member felt they were getting the support they need.

- Mr. Nogelo contacted five of the six new members. All five confirmed they have been in consistent contact with their mentors and that they are getting the support they need. One new member who was not contacted has been lightly engaged in the CHPC. This individual's mentor made Mr. Nogelo aware of the limited contact between the new member and the mentor.
- The group concluded the program continues to operate well. No need exists to change the program at this time.

## E. PLANNING FOR SEPTEMBER PANEL DISCUSSION

Mr. Feathers reported that the main presentation at the September CHPC meeting will be a panel discussion about personal experiences related to HIV prevention and care during the pandemic. The CHPC Executive Committee asked MAC to help plan the panel.

MAC participants discussed how to frame four panel topics.

- Topic #1: *Tell us how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed access to prevention and care services.*



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- Ms. Alvarez suggested asking the panelists what prevention or care services they were receiving before the pandemic and how their access to those services has changed.
- *Topic #2: Tell us your experience with innovations such as at-home HIV testing or virtual empowerment or intervention groups.*
  - Mr. Feathers suggested asking what new services have been introduced since the COVID-19 outbreak.
  - Mr. Gerena recommended asking the panelists how they have been able to cope with challenges without physically being around their brothers and sisters in the struggle.
  - Mr. Nogelo suggested asking panelists about their access to technology and their ability to access virtual services using the technology they have.
  - Ms. Alvarez noted that she has been spending a lot of time trying to help people understand technology; many older clients who are highly literate in other ways may have lower levels of technological literacy.
  - Ron Lee stated that it is a challenging time to be going through any kind of personal struggles because of the difficulty connecting with other people for support, especially for people who do not have the technology or technological literacy to connect in a mostly virtual world.
  - Mr. Feathers suggested asking panelists how technology has made it easier to connect to others, and how it has put up barriers to connecting, and how not being able to meet in person has changed the panelists' support systems.
  - The group recommended making the topic of technology and technological literacy a stand-alone panel discussion topic.
- *Topic #3: Tell us your perspective about the level of stigma (higher, lower, or the same) in the current climate of COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter.*
  - Mr. Gerena suggested asking how the stigma of HIV may have changed due to the surrounding events of COVID and Black Lives Matter.
  - Mr. Nogelo recommended asking panelists if, in the current environment, stigma is more of a presence in their daily lives, less of a presence, or no different.
- *Topic #4: Tell us what you have been doing to cope or to reduce stress and anxiety during stay-at-home periods and other safety precautions associated with COVID-19.*
  - Mr. Gerena stated that the question is fine in its current form.
  - Mr. Feathers noted that this question could connect back to the previous topic of how technological changes have made it easier or more difficult for people to cope.

Mr. Feathers said the Executive Committee asked MAC for ideas on how to recruit approximately four panelists.

- Corey Gerena volunteered to serve as one of the panelists.



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- The group agreed that the panel should be limited to consumers of HIV care and/or prevention services.
- Mr. Gerena suggested sending an email to CHPC members who are living with HIV inviting them to volunteer as panelists.
- Mr. Nogelo encouraged each MAC meeting participant to think about people at their agency or in their community who might be interested in volunteering.
- Mr. Feathers asked if the CHPC could provide a tablet to a panelist who might not have a way to participate in the September (virtual) meeting. Mr. Nogelo said staff would check on this possibility if lack of a connected device presented a barrier to participation.

#### **F. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

Mr. Feathers reported that all five CHPC members whose first terms will end at the end of 2020 said they want to continue for a second two-year term. Their terms will renew automatically. Of the six members whose second terms will end at the end of the year: a) one has submitted an application; b) two have said they intend to re-apply; c) one is retiring and has had someone from their agency apply; and d) two have not responded. Current member Lauren Gau got a new job and resigned as a CHPC member, effective after the August meeting. The CHPC will have 21 active members after the members whose second terms will end at the end of the year rotate off – leaving approximately nine openings for new members.

Mr. Feathers said that the September newsletter includes a text box calling for applications from needed populations. The CHPC website will feature similar message. Mr. Nogelo recently emailed several Fairfield County agencies to invite applications from agency staff and clients.

- Ms. Alvarez will identify a Project TLC staff member who can apply to represent the prisoner re-entry membership category.
- Ms. Lombardo asked if members who are unable to participate in virtual meetings due to access issues are penalized because of their absences.
- Mr. Feathers responded that all absences are being excused in 2020, and that the goal is to have a solution in place for all members to participate by January 2021.

The September MAC meeting will include a review of the current membership and an overview of the applicant pool. MAC participants will discuss any final member recruitment activities, and will make a recommendation for how many new members to invite.

#### **G. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Feathers thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m.