**Date:** February 20, 2019

**Location:** Chrysalis Center, Hartford **Time:** 12:30 p.m. – 1:41 p.m.

**Attendance:** MAC Members: Kat Auguste, Carmen Cruz, Stephen Feathers, Carl Ferris, José Figueroa, Blaise Gilchrist, Ana Gonzalez, Juan Gonzalez, Clara Langley, Ron Lee, Waleska Mercado, Glenn Scott

Public Participants: Martina de la Cruz

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 reviewed drafts of several March newsletter articles.
3. The group brainstormed a range of ideas to improve CHPC member attendance, with a particular focus on supports for new members.

# Identified Tasks

1. The CHPC co-chairs will select a new MAC co-chair to start their leadership term in March.
2. Staff will create the February MAC meeting summary.
3. Staff will make the approved changes to the newsletter, and will then ask a graphic designer to compile the newsletter.
4. Staff will disseminate the final newsletter electronically and by U.S. mail on March 5.
5. Carmen Cruz and Ron Lee will call CHPC members who missed the February meeting.
6. Staff will send warning letters to two CHPC members who missed their second meeting of 2019 in February.
7. Staff and MAC co-chairs will share MAC’s ideas for improving CHPC member attendance with CHPC leaders.

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) co-chair Clara Langley called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and welcomed committee members and guests. Ms. Langley reported that Kat Auguste decided to step down as the other MAC co-chair, thanked Ms. Auguste for her leadership and passion, and said Ms. Auguste will complete her term as a CHPC member. All participants introduced themselves. Ms. Langley reviewed the meeting agenda and described the ground rules and processes used by MAC.

# January Meeting Summary

Ms. Langley asked members to review the January MAC meeting summary.

* The meeting summary was approved by consensus with no changes.
1. **Review March Newsletter DRaft**

Ms. Langley stated that MAC produces a newsletter three times per year, and referred the group to drafts of most of the March newsletter articles. Ms. Langley explained that some of the articles were completed after the deadline for submitting drafts to the graphic designer, so the group would need to review individual unformatted articles rather than a formatted draft of the complete newsletter.

* The group discussed the draft article submitted by Tom Evans. Some participants said that a reference in the article to a Facebook post by an author should include the author’s name and the title of her book. Others reasoned that Mr. Evans’ intent in the article was to make a point about the trustworthiness of various sources of information about health.
* Ms. Auguste stated that newsletter readers look to the newsletter for facts and substantiation.
* Mr. Nogelo noted that he had spoken with Mr. Evans about shifting the focus of the article towards his feelings about the possibility that a cure for AIDS will exist in the near future, and said he would consult with Mr. Evans about including the referenced author’s name and book title.

Ms. Langley said Mr. Nogelo would make the changes discussed and send the final articles to the graphic designer. The newsletter will be translated, printed, and sent out by email and U.S. mail on March 5.

1. **Member Application Update**

Ms. Langley said MAC spent time in 2018 looking at CHPC membership policies, and provided an update on a policy discussed in August 2018 and again in January 2019. In 2018, MAC twice recommended adding a question related to high-risk heterosexual behaviors to the CHPC membership application to allow the CHPC to identify “high-risk heterosexuals.” The CHPC Executive Committee felt that the question should not be added to the application. MAC re-opened this discussion again in January, but the Executive Committee has since asked MAC to respect its decision and focus on its other tasks.

* The group agreed that the decision and directive from the Executive Committee was clear.
* Ms. Auguste asked about the suggestion made in January that everyone look at the membership application before the February MAC meeting in order to inform MAC’s continued discussion of the topic. Mr. Nogelo replied that this could be done at a future date if MAC revisits this discussion.
1. **Member Attendance and Retention**

Ms. Langley stated that MAC is responsible for member retention and selection. MAC sometimes calls members who have missed meetings to encourage them to come to the next meeting. Carmen Cruz and Ron Lee typically make these calls, but other MAC members are welcome to volunteer to help.

* Ms. Cruz said she called several members and invited participants from a Waterbury support group.
* Mr. Lee reported that he called two members who had missed the January meeting.

Ms. Langley stated that members receive a warning after their second absence and are dismissed after their third absence in a calendar year, and asked if MAC should reach out to any members who missed the February meeting.

* The group identified four members who missed the meeting and should receive a phone call.
* José Figueroa asked staff to change his committee affiliation on the attendance summary to MAC.

Ms. Langley said the CHPC co-chairs asked MAC to think about anything else that can be done to improve CHPC member attendance, and asked the group to brainstorm ideas.

* Stephen Feathers suggested that tracking the reasons why members stop coming to the CHPC could help MAC determine the problems and inform possible solutions. MAC may also learn that members stop coming for reasons that are outside of MAC’s control.
* Ms. Cruz said that when she calls people after they have missed meetings, she tries to motivate them and lift their spirits.
* Ms. Auguste suggested that mentors should assume some responsibility for reaching out to new members when new members are absent.
* Martina de la Cruz asked if members can receive transportation to CHPC meetings. Mr. Nogelo replied that members are eligible for transportation support.
* Ms. Langley said members should look forward to coming to CHPC meetings and that attending meetings should be a priority for them.
* Carl Ferris suggested adding a question to the membership application asking how important the CHPC is to the applicant.
* Mr. Nogelo stated that attempting to determine an applicant’s level of commitment to the CHPC during the application process moves the new member selection process away from being a purely objective process and brings judgment and opinion into the process.
* Glenn Scott noted that “life happens” and one person can never know what another person is going through. He added that members can also show commitment by giving rides to meetings to other members who live near them.
* Mr. Nogelo noted that he asks applicants to confirm that they can attend at least six CHPC meetings per year before they are accepted as new members.
* Ms. de la Cruz suggested using a “probationary period” of roughly three months for new members. At the end of the probationary period, MAC could look at the new member’s attendance and the new member could decide if they wish to keep coming.
* Ms. Auguste said the CHPC only meets eight times per year and new members really need to attend.
* Blaise Gilchrist noted that the attendance policy serves a similar purpose to a probationary period because members who miss two meetings receive a warning and members who miss three meeting are dismissed with the option to appeal.
* Mr. Feathers recommended offering incentives for new members to come to meetings.
* Mr. Nogelo noted that eligible members receive a $25 stipend for attending meetings.
* Ms. de la Cruz said she likes the concept of incentives but disagrees with paying people to participate in a process that will empower and benefit them.
* Mr. Ferris stated that people who work in the field get paid by their employer to attend CHPC meetings, and that people who do not work deserve to get paid as well. A stipend can help give someone a sense of purpose.
* Ms. de la Cruz clarified that she does not agree with an additional incentive beyond the stipend.
* Ana Gonzalez reiterated Mr. Ferris’ point that people who have a job get paid to attend meetings, and added that knowledge is power.
* Ms. Langley said she started as a brand-new CHPC participant, and she has since grown into a dedicated member and a leader. She said she does not come for the stipend but it does help her.
* Mr. Scott noted that committed individuals can attend meetings as public participants even if they are not members. He added that the CHPC will not “fold” because a few members do not come.
* Mr. Ferris recommended holding at least two meetings per year in New Haven to allow more public participants to attend from different parts of the state.
* Mr. Feathers clarified that an incentive for new members would not have to be additional money, but rather something to help integrate new members and to make them want to come to meetings.
* Mr. Nogelo stated that new members given an “out” at the end of a probationary period may take the opportunity to leave due to the overwhelming nature of the CHPC for new members. Using Ms. Langley as an example, Mr. Nogelo said new members often need more time to get comfortable, and may end up growing into leaders if they stick through the early months.
1. **Process Check**

Ms. Langley asked the group to evaluate the meeting.

* Ms. Cruz said the meeting went well, and stated that she particularly liked talking about how to retain CHPC members. She added that CHPC members and members of the public had participated.
1. **Adjournment**

Ms. Langley thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 1:41 p.m.