



Membership & Awareness Committee
April 21, 2021 Meeting Summary



Date: April 21, 2021

Location: Virtual Meeting **Time:** 11:03 a.m. – 12:32 p.m.

Attendance: MAC Members: Victor Acevedo, Gigi Chau, Taylor Edelmann, Stephen Feathers, Carl Ferris, Dante Gennaro, Clara O’Quinn

Public Participants: Joyce Boone, Luis Irizarry, Alyssa Ramos

CHPC Staff: Michael Nogelo

Meeting Accomplishments

1. The group approved the March Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) meeting summary.
2. The group discussed strategies for engaging more community members in CHPC and MAC meetings.
3. The group agreed on article topics and possible authors for the June CHPC newsletter.
4. The group discussed the concept of organizing local awareness day events with a common statewide theme, and began to plan for a pilot effort on National HIV Testing Day on June 27.
5. The group discussed opportunities for MAC to collaborate with Positive Prevention CT (PPCT).
6. The group reviewed the attendance of the CHPC membership.

Identified Tasks

1. Staff will draft the April MAC meeting summary.
 2. Dante Gennaro will talk with Laura Aponte from Ryan White (RW) Part B and Tom Butcher and Angelique Croasdale from RW Part A about changing forms to share information about the CHPC with individuals who are newly-diagnosed with HIV.
 3. MAC leaders will reach out to agencies that convene medical case manager (MCM) groups to ask about the possibility of a group discussion about the CHPC and community engagement.
 4. Dante Gennaro will follow up with staff at A Place to Nourish your Health (APNH) to schedule a time for MAC representatives to meet with APNH consumer support groups.
 5. Staff will work with the identified newsletter authors to pull together a draft of the June newsletter for review at the May MAC meeting.
 6. MAC participants will invite community members to submit their personal stories for the newsletter.
 7. Dante Gennaro will email agencies interested in planning a statewide National HIV Testing Day event to schedule a planning meeting.
 8. Staff will send CHPC membership applications to two MAC participants.
 9. Staff will contact Clara O’Quinn to identify any member retention calls that should be made.
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A. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) co-chair Clara O'Quinn called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. and welcomed committee members. All participants introduced themselves. Ms. O'Quinn announced that long-time MAC member Ron Lee had passed away in early April, and invited participants to share remembrances of Mr. Lee. Several participants shared their memories of Mr. Lee. Ms. O'Quinn announced that former MAC member Pamela Parks had recently passed away, and invited participants to share their remembrances of Ms. Parks. Several participants shared memories of Ms. Parks.

B. MARCH MEETING SUMMARY

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

C. COMMUNITY OUTREACH DISCUSSION

Ms. O'Quinn said that 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 to virtual meetings because of the pandemic. MAC has been discussing ways to increase community engagement in the CHPC. In March, Dante Gennaro agreed to reach out to the Aging Positively support group at A Place to Nourish Your Health (APNH) in New Haven to schedule a time for MAC to talk with the group.

- Mr. Gennaro reported that he had emailed the facilitators of two APNH support groups. Both facilitators expressed excitement about the opportunity to collaborate with the CHPC.
- Carl Ferris noted that APNH has another consumer support group that accepts frequent visits from providers. Mr. Ferris suggested Chris Cole as the contact person for this group, and said they may be interested in a quick presentation about the CHPC.
- Stephen Feathers said asking support group members open-ended questions may take too much time, so MAC may consider asking specific questions of support group members via Zoom polls.
- Victor Acevedo recommended mailing questions to support group members who cannot participate by Zoom.
- Mr. Feathers suggested asking members how they first learned about their support groups to find out how the CHPC can better reach people newly-diagnosed with HIV.
- Luis Irizarry recommended reaching out to Melanie Alvarez at AIDS CT, who convenes monthly meetings of a group of Hartford-area medical case managers (MCM).
- Mr. Ferris noted that Nick Boshnack convenes a similar MCM group in New Haven, and Taylor Edelmann added that the Bridgeport Consortium runs a similar group in the Bridgeport area.
- Mr. Edelmann asked about the possibility of adding a question about interest in the CHPC to the case management 6-month intake form.
- Mr. Feathers said MAC has talked in the past about adding a step to the outreach, testing, and linkage (OTL) process informing people about the CHPC following a positive HIV test result.
- Mr. Gennaro said he would talk with Laura Aponte from Part B and Tom Butcher and Angelique Croasdale from Part A about these ideas, but cautioned that changing forms is often challenging.



- Mr. Gennaro suggested creating business cards promoting the CHPC to MCMs.
- Mr. Edelmann said many MCMs may not share information with clients that they are not required to share, and added that QR codes (on business cards) tend to be more effective for younger people.
- Mr. Gennaro suggested asking MCMs at their group meetings how it would be easiest for them to share information about the CHPC with their clients.

D. PLAN JUNE NEWSLETTER

Ms. O'Quinn said MAC needed to plan the articles and possible authors for the June newsletter. CHPC and Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH) staff will draft the two regular articles (the CHPC Update and the DPH Corner), and Positive Prevention CT (PPCT) will provide one page of content for the Provider's Corner. Ms. O'Quinn asked the group to talk about what should be in the remaining five or six articles, and reminded the group that CHPC participants polled in late 2020 said they were most interested in seeing more articles on mental and emotional health tips and personal stories.

- The group agreed:
 - To include remembrances of Mr. Lee and Ms. Parks.
 - To include an article about COVID safety for PLWH as restrictions are lifted. The article could feature answers to frequently asked questions.
 - To reserve space for an article about the statewide National HIV Testing Day statewide event MAC will help CTDPH to plan.
 - To include an article about new HIV prevention methods, including injectables and an HIV vaccine. Mr. Irizarry recommended asking Seja Jackson from Burgdorf Health Center about writing this article.
 - To incorporate information about new PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) injectables into the article about new HIV prevention methods, or to include a separate article about PrEP injectable, if space permits.
 - That MAC participants should consider inviting community members to submit their personal stories for the newsletter.
 - To include a cheap, easy, immune-boosting recipe if additional content was needed.
- Mr. Edelmann said the PPCT Providers Corner would likely feature information about the PPCT superhero anti-stigma campaign and best practices for organizing an in-person community event.

Ms. O'Quinn said MAC staff person Mike Nogelo would work with the identified authors to pull together a draft of the newsletter for review at the May MAC meeting.

E. STATEWIDE EVENT PLANNING

Mr. Feathers said CTDPH will pilot an effort to coordinate local agencies to celebrate an upcoming HIV/AIDS awareness day or other important day. The goal will be to provide resources and technical assistance to agencies to help them organize and promote local events with a common statewide theme. The hope is that the pilot effort will target National HIV Testing Day on June 27, if time permits to



coordinate a statewide event before then. PPCT and the state Distribution Center can produce and provide resources to support local events. Planning discussions will happen at monthly MAC meetings. Mr. Feathers said Mr. Gennaro had invited local agencies to designate a representative involved in event planning and promotion to participate in MAC meetings.

Mr. Gennaro said the intent of this effort is to give people a similar experience no matter where they attend an event for a particular awareness day by: a) having agencies share best practices; b) asking pharmaceutical companies to sponsor events statewide (the same giveaways at all events); and c) using the same name and theme, and similar marketing materials, across all agencies. Mr. Gennaro added that Snapchat filters could be used to track people's locations. Mr. Gennaro said he would email all interested agencies to schedule a follow-up planning meeting.

- Alyssa Ramos recommended that Mr. Gennaro's email be a personal email.
- Mr. Feathers suggested a theme for 2021 related to a 21st birthday celebration.
- Mr. Gennaro said messages may be "we've missed you" and "welcome back to the world." Mr. Gennaro added that he is expecting to see a spike in HIV cases soon, and said it would be important to make people feel safe coming out the get tested, including by giving them the option to get tested on the days leading up to the event and then coming to the event to socialize.
- The group reviewed the calendar of awareness days for 2021.

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 anti-stigma, superhero-themed video campaign is deep into the planning stages. Someone to play the role of the Intergalactic Prophylactic character (preferably a non-binary person of color) still must be identified.
- Mr. Irizarry said Angelique Croasdale-Mills may be able to refer someone suited for the Intergalactic Prophylactic role.
- Mr. Edelman said the PPCT Pulse social media survey is still live. Mr. Edelman offered to mail out business cards with a QR code to the survey. People who complete the survey can get a \$5 Dunkin gift card.
- Mr. Edelman added that the PPCT has been pushing out campaign information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) via the PPCT social media platforms.

G. MEMBER ATTENDANCE & RETENTION

Mr. Feathers said MAC is responsible for member retention. Ron Lee used to call members who have missed meetings to encourage them to come and to let them know the CHPC is thinking of them. Mr. Feathers asked for volunteers to help with this task.

- Clara O'Quinn volunteered to make these calls.
- Mr. Acevedo requested a mailed copy of the CHPC membership application for his fiancée.



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- Mr. Irizarry requested an emailed copy of the CHPC membership application.

Mr. Feathers announced that Jeffrey Snell had resigned from the CHPC due to work scheduling conflicts. Mr. Feathers asked the group to look at the attendance summary. The group did not identify any members who had missed their second or third meeting of 2021 in April, meaning no warning or dismissal letters would be issued. Mr. Nogelo said he would follow up with Ms. O'Quinn to identify any member retention calls that should be made.

H. PROCESS CHECK

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

- Mr. Acevedo said everything had gone well, particularly the discussion about community outreach.
- Mr. Gennaro noted that he had appreciated the conversation.
- Ms. O'Quinn added that it had been a good meeting.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Feathers thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 12:32 p.m.