**Date:** May 15, 2019

**Location:** Chrysalis Center, Hartford **Time:** 12:42 p.m. – 1:46 p.m.

**Attendance:** MAC Members: Carmen Cruz, Stephen Feathers, Carl Ferris, José Figueroa, Ann Galloway Johnson, Clara Langley O’Quinn, Ron Lee, Waleska Mercado, Glenn Scott

Public Participants: Melanie Alvarez, Corey Gerena, Debra Lombardo, Pamela Studley

CHPC Staff: Michael Nogelo

# Meeting Accomplishments

1. The group approved the April Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) meeting summary with no changes.
2. The group reviewed a draft of the June newsletter.
3. The group reviewed CHPC member attendance and agreed on member retention activities.
4. The group agreed on initial plans to recruit new CHPC members from needed populations.
5. The group agreed on an approach to address incomplete CHPC membership applications.

# Identified Tasks

1. Staff will create the May MAC meeting summary.
2. Staff will make final changes to the newsletter, have it translated into Spanish and printed, and distribute the newsletter electronically and by mail on June 4.
3. MAC staff and co-chairs will discuss with other CHPC leaders and staff the possibility of taking professional head shots of CHPC members for the newsletter and other purposes.
4. Carmen Cruz and Ron Lee will call selected CHPC members who missed the May meeting.
5. Staff will send a warning letter to one CHPC member who missed their second meeting of 2019 in May, and discharge letters to three CHPC members who missed their third meeting of 2019 in May.
6. Staff will draft an informal member “exit interview” process for review at the June MAC meeting.
7. Staff will update the CHPC membership diversity chart.
8. MAC staff and co-chairs will work with other CHPC leaders and staff to incorporate CHPC member recruitment into needs assessment focus groups.
9. Staff will change the letter sent to CHPC applicants confirming receipt of their applications to include a line explaining that an incomplete application could hurt their chances of becoming members, and inviting them to contact MAC staff to fill in any blanks in their application.

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) co-chair Stephen Feathers called the meeting to order at 12:42 p.m. and welcomed committee members and guests. All participants introduced themselves. Mr. Feathers reviewed the meeting agenda and described the ground rules and processes used by MAC.

# April Meeting Summary

MAC co-chair Clara Langley O’Quinn asked members to review the April MAC meeting summary.

* The meeting summary was approved by consensus with no changes.

1. **Needs Assessment Focus Group Update**

Ms. Langley O’Quinn said the CHPC will run focus groups in 2019 to build on the results of the 2018 needs assessment survey with more detailed feedback from people living with HIV (PLWH) who are ages 18-34 and people who have been newly diagnosed with HIV. The CHPC Needs Assessment Projects (NAP) Team drafted a list of focus group topics and questions. MAC provided feedback on the questions at its April meeting. The CHPC co-chairs agreed to include all of MAC’s feedback into the final focus group questions.

1. **Review June Newsletter Draft**

Ms. Langley O’Quinn stated that MAC produces a newsletter three times per year, and referred the group to a draft of the June newsletter in their packets.

* Melanie Alvarez said she liked the content and the layout, which features more text boxes and graphics than a typical newsletter.
* Mike Nogelo asked if professional headshots of article authors or all MAC members should be taken by CHPC member Dante Gennaro.
* Mr. Feathers suggested that authors have the option to use a headshot or another picture they like.
* Carl Ferris said he appreciated the memorial for Omar Morrison.
* Mr. Nogelo asked the group for guidance on including memorials for former CHPC members who have passed away.
* Ms. Alvarez suggested that the June newsletter each year include remembrances for all former CHPC members who have recently passed away, along with information about the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial, which takes place each May.
* Ann Galloway Johnson said it shakes her when she hears that someone passes away, as she has gotten used to people living longer thanks to advances in medications. She added that she likes the idea of including articles to remember people.
* Debra Lombardo noted that including remembrances runs the risk of missing someone who has passed away. Glenn Scott stated that missing someone would likely just be seen as an oversight.
* Corey Gerena suggested just listing names, as MAC cannot obtain consent from people who have passed away. Mr. Feathers said that the photo release signed by current members should suffice.

Ms. Langley O’Quinn stated that Mr. Nogelo would make the agreed-upon changes and would tell CHPC leaders and Mr. Gennaro that MAC likes the idea of taking head shots for use in the newsletter. The newsletter will be translated to Spanish, printed, and sent out by email and U.S. mail on June 4.

1. **Member Attendance**

Mr. Feathers stated that MAC supports member attendance and retention. The CHPC has a goal of an 85% attendance rate by CHPC members. For the first four CHPC meetings of the year, the member attendance rate was 80%. MAC members Carmen Cruz and Ron Lee sometimes call members who have missed meetings to encourage them to come to the next meeting.

* Ms. Cruz said that she called everyone from Waterbury, but Juan Gonzalez and Ana Gonzalez were absent from the May meeting and would be dismissed for missing their third meeting of the year.
* Mr. Lee reported that he had called Danny Huang, Angel Medina, and Nadine Ruff.
* Mr. Nogelo stated that Mr. Huang resigned the day before the meeting due to scheduling conflicts with his job. Ms. Ruff missed her third meeting of the year in May and would be dismissed.
* Ms. Langley O’Quinn noted that MAC repeatedly talks about member attendance, but it feels like some people don’t put enough effort into coming to meetings.
* Ms. Cruz responded that she does not see commitment as the problem. Sometimes members cannot attend for reasons that are out of their hands.
* Ms. Alvarez added that we should not make judgements about who attends and who does not. When a member leaves, it opens up a slot for a new person to join, which can be a good thing.
* Mr. Feathers said that Mr. Huang wanted to attend, but has to work instead to keep his job.
* Pamela Studley stated that she became a member at one point, but missed meetings because of a family emergency.
* Ms. Galloway Johnson said it is usually apparent when someone is committed. For example, she missed two meetings in 2019 for a family emergency, but she thinks people know she is committed.
* Mr. Gerena reported that he has used FaceTime to participate in another group meeting while he was away on vacation.
* Mr. Nogelo asked if it would be useful to attempt to conduct an exit interview with members who are discharged to find out why they stopped coming and to ask if anything could have been done to support their continued attendance.
* Mr. Ferris said Mr. Lee makes calls after a second absence, but the process could be strengthened.
* Ms. Alvarez stated that the focus of exit interviews should be to identify anything the CHPC might have done to offend the member or to make meetings less accessible to them.
* Ms. Cruz reported that some members do not like the attendance policy.
* Mr. Feathers said the attendance policy is explained well during new member orientation and is repeated at each CHPC meeting, and the appeal process is generous. He added that he likes the idea of asking discharged members what else could have been done to retain them.
* Mr. Scott noted that it is also important to thank people for their service.
* Mr. Nogelo explained that members who resign receive a certificate of appreciation, but members who are discharged do not currently receive a certificate.
* Ms. Alvarez asked if the letter sent to discharged members thanks them and encourages them to come to future meetings. Mr. Nogelo said the letter does include those elements.
* The group identified one member who had missed their second meeting and would receive a warning letter.

1. **Plan New Member Recruitment**

Mr. Feathers stated that MAC is responsible for new member recruitment and selection. At MAC’s August meeting, MAC participants will decide how many people to invite to join the CHPC from the applicant pool. Mr. Feathers explained how MAC uses a membership diversity chart to make sure it recruits from populations needed to fill gaps in membership, and walked the group through a copy of the diversity chart. Mr. Feathers asked the group to look at the biggest membership gaps – including men who have sex with men (MSM), males, people under 30, and people from Fairfield County – and asked for ideas to recruit people who can help close those gaps.

* Ms. Galloway Johnson noted that the membership goal for injection drug users (IDU) has decreased.
* Ms. Alvarez stated that the goals reflect the populations in the state that are living with HIV and that have recently been diagnosed with HIV. This has shifted from IDU to MSM in recent years as syringe services programs have reduced the number of infections through IDU risk behaviors.
* Mr. Feathers noted that the gaps in IDU and young people partially reflect that MAC changed the goals for these categories in 2018 and now needs to “catch up” on those categories.
* Ms. Alvarez said the Department of Social Services (DSS) should be removed from the “required partners” category since it no longer administers the Connecticut AIDS Drug Assistance Program (CADAP). Mr. Nogelo said he would make that change.
* Ms. Alvarez stated that the Community Health Center in Middletown is a Part C grantee. She asked if any MSM or empowerment groups occur in Fairfield County.
* Mr. Nogelo suggested piggybacking recruitment activities onto the needs assessment focus groups with young PLWH and recently-diagnosed individuals.
* Ms. Alvarez asked if the CHPC can provide transportation to one meeting to potential applicants. Mr. Nogelo responded that this may be possible if a group of potential applicants comes together.
* Ms. Alvarez said Xavier Day from Alliance for Living would be a great member.
* Mr. Nogelo stated that personal, one-to-one recruitment has historically been most effective.
* Mr. Nogelo asked the group for guidance on how to address applications that do not respond to questions about personal information (e.g., sexual orientation, HIV status).
* The group agreed that the letter sent to applicants confirming receipt of their applications should include a line explaining that an incomplete application could hurt their chances of becoming members, and inviting them to contact MAC staff to fill in any blanks on their application.
* Mr. Gerena said that applicants not wanting to answer all application questions relates to stigma, and urged the development of a plan to help people feel more comfortable with their HIV status.
* Mr. Ferris commended Mr. Gerena for his conviction, but explained that contracting HIV through sexual behavior or drug use may carry more stigma than being born with HIV.

1. **Process Check**

Ms. Langley O’Quinn asked the group to evaluate the meeting.

* Ms. Alvarez said the group had accomplished all of its tasks.
* Mr. Gerena asked if the CHPC can hold a gala to break stigma.
* Mr. Feathers noted that many AIDS service organizations hold big events, but this is not part of the CHPC’s purpose.
* Mr. Ferris alerted the group to a research study in New Haven in which HIV-positive men may earn $500. This opportunity may soon open up to HIV-positive women.

1. **Adjournment**

Ms. Langley O’Quinn thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 1:46 p.m.