



Membership & Awareness Committee  
May 20, 2020 Meeting Summary



**Date:** May 20, 2020  
**Location:** Virtual Meeting      **Time:** 11:05 a.m. – 11:48 a.m.  
**Attendance:** MAC Members: Stephen Feathers, Carl Ferris, Corey Gerena, Blaise Gilchrist, Clara O’Quinn  
Public Participants: None  
CHPC Staff: Michael Nogelo

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**Meeting Accomplishments**

1. Each participant shared challenges and unexpected benefits coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The group reviewed a draft of the June 2020 newsletter and recommended several changes.

**Identified Tasks**

1. Staff will draft the May MAC meeting summary.
  2. Staff will make the agreed-upon changes to the newsletter, will have the final newsletter translated into Spanish, and will disseminate the newsletter electronically on June 2
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**A. WELCOME AND SHARING**

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) co-chair Stephen Feathers called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. and welcomed committee members. Mr. Feathers asked participants to share something about the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing that has been personally challenging, as well as examples of unexpected benefits coming out of the pandemic. Participants shared several challenges:

- Struggling to connect with clients due to not being able to shake their hands or see their faces
- Being a people person and being uncertain about how to stay safe when near people
- Knowing that you will likely not be able to go to the hospital even when you are sick
- Staying sane despite conflicting information and changing guidelines
- Taking care of elderly and/or vulnerable family members
- Witnessing people who you care about dying
- Having to work while taking care of and home-schooling children

Participants shared the following positive results of the pandemic:

- Re-connecting with old friends online
- Having an increased appreciation for connections with friends and family
- Increasing communication with friends and family
- Being able to be with family
- Seeing people find innovative ways to come together
- Delivering necessities to people who need them
- Realizing that you really like your spouse even when spending 24 hours a day with them



## **B. REVIEW JUNE NEWSLETTER DRAFT**

Mr. Feathers asked the group to review a draft of the June newsletter – a special COVID-19 edition.

- Mr. Feathers noted that it would be interesting in a future edition to hear how people living with HIV (PLWH) are coping with the pandemic and memories of the early days of the AIDS epidemic.
- Corey Gerena said a future edition should include advice for PLWH (and others) on how to cope with the pandemic. Carl Ferris suggested a clinician could provide tips for dealing with stress.
- Mr. Feathers recommended that the How We Feel article should make it clearer that people can use the app for less than one minute per day and help with the pandemic response in the process.
- Mr. Nogelo said he would check with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) about the availability of an up-to-date resource with information about the availability of HIV care and prevention services.
- The group discussed including in future newsletters information about COVID disclosure questions and the surveillance and privacy issues (e.g., drones taking people's temperatures).
- The group agreed that a link to up-to-date information about COVID testing should be included in the current newsletter, space permitting.

Mr. Feathers said Mr. Nogelo would make the agreed-upon changes to the newsletter, have the final newsletter translated into Spanish, and disseminate the newsletter electronically on June 2.

## **C. MEMBER ATTENDANCE & RETENTION**

The group asked about how member absences would be treated for CHPC attendance purposes while meetings are held virtually.

- Mr. Feathers said he would raise this question during the CHPC Executive Committee meeting.
- The group suggested that the attendance policy should be more lenient for virtual meetings given access issues.

## **D. PROCESS CHECK**

Mr. Feathers asked the group to evaluate the meeting.

- The group agreed that the virtual meeting had gone smoothly and that it had been good to re-connect with everyone.

## **E. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. O'Quinn thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 11:48 a.m.