



CHPC

CONNECTICUT HIV
PLANNING CONSORTIUM

MARCH 2019

The CHPC is an integrated, statewide prevention and care planning group comprised of diverse partners—including persons living with HIV.



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MISSION STATEMENT:

To create a coordinated statewide prevention and care system in which the rate of new HIV infections is reduced, and those who are living with and affected by HIV/AIDS are connected to appropriate care and support services.

HIV/AIDS Planning News & Notes



AIDS CONNECTICUT



ROLLS OUT THE

Red Carpet



On February 24, AIDS Connecticut (ACT) celebrated the 91st Academy Awards with its annual "Red Carpet Experience" event at Spotlight Theaters in Hartford. This event - over 20 years and running - gives guests and local celebrities an opportunity to walk the red carpet in evening attire and costumes from their favorite nominated films, and to enjoy delicious cuisine, musical entertainment, and a fashion show with items created by local designers. Numerous local businesses and food vendors contributed silent auction items and sponsored the event. Attendees watched the Oscars on the big screen, providing the ultimate "Red Carpet Experience." A wonderful time was had by all, and all proceeds benefited ACT in its mission to increase Connecticut's capacity to ensure that all people impacted by HIV/AIDS and related health issues have access to health, housing, and support services.



CT HIV PLANNING CONSORTIUM UPDATE



The Connecticut HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC) welcomed nine new CHPC members in January: Stephen Feathers, Lauren Gau, Ana Gonzalez, Juan Gonzalez, Angel Medina, Waleska Mercado, Omar Morrison, Nadine Ruff, and Jeffrey Snell. Each new member benefits from being matched with their own CHPC mentor to help them learn about the CHPC and support the new member's participation. Two current CHPC members stepped into new leadership roles in January, as Barry Walters became a CHPC Community Co-Chair and Nilda Fernandez became a CHPC Data and Assessment Committee (DAC) co-chair.

In 2018, the HIV Funders Group, Connecticut Department of Public Health, and CHPC Needs Assessment Projects (NAP) Team worked together to conduct a statewide survey of people living with HIV (PLWH) to identify their needs, challenges, and barriers to services. In February 2019, the CHPC co-chairs shared preliminary survey results with the CHPC. The NAP Team and Membership Awareness Committee (MAC) are now planning needs assessment focus groups meant to supplement the quantitative survey results with more in-depth input from PLWH. Focus groups will allow PLWH to provide clarification or support on survey themes such as stigma.

In 2019, the CHPC will also focus on monitoring and updating Connecticut's Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan for 2017 to 2021. The CHPC completed the Plan in 2017, and typically completes an annual update that includes big-picture information about the providers that offer a diverse array of prevention and care services. As we approach the halfway mark for the 2017-2021 Plan, however, the CHPC will look more closely in 2019 at the specific activities occurring across Connecticut. The HIV Funders Group, led by the CHPC co-chairs, will create a mechanism to more closely monitor the performance of providers and progress towards meeting the Plan goals and objectives.

MY STORY by Ana Gonzalez

I was diagnosed with HIV in 2002. I am now a 3rd-year law student living in Waterbury. I am an advocate for people who are living with HIV/AIDS. I am a passionate, team-oriented person who guides people who are infected into treatment, housing, and also medical care.

I know people (without naming them) who laugh about people with HIV or think they are saying something very important, but they don't know anything about it. They have no knowledge of it.

Too many people with HIV/AIDS are homeless. We cannot forget about them because they are human as well. This is why I'm trying to stand up and help them for once. Everyone should get a fresh chance. Give them a chance to stand up and respect themselves. They should at least have a stable place so they can grow and understand that the world wasn't made in 1 day. So let's do things to help those who never have anything to at least have a home. This will be a big blessing.

For the people who have HIV/AIDS, life isn't over. The journey has just begun.

Visit the CHPC website at www.cthivplanning.org!

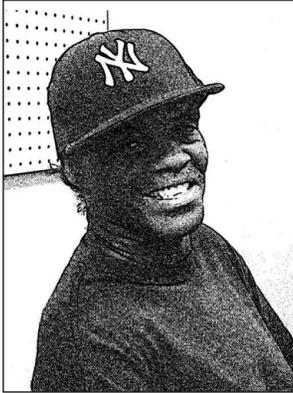
The website has information about upcoming CHPC meetings; shares links to relevant news and events; stores archived meeting documents; features information about resources and partners; and provides access to the Integrated Plan, CHPC Charter, and the CHPC membership application.



I WATCHED YOU COME,

Now I Will Watch You Leave...

By Thomas Evans



My name is Thomas Evans. I am a self-ordained advocate who tested positive 34 years ago. I've chosen to forfeit my confidentiality in a quest to help others adjust to and accept being afflicted with this virus once called AIDS.

There have been so many stories talked

and written about this virus: who has it and who doesn't, where it came from, and the sort. Well I'm here to touch base on some of the stories. The things I mention are true stories, but I have made the decision not to include names to spare myself the drama. Plus, my point here is not to fact-check, but rather to make you think about where you get information.

I recently came across a woman on Facebook who shared that she was the author of a book about her journey, which included a positive test and a time on meds which rendered her undetectable to the point that she tests as being HIV-negative. Yes, she says she doesn't have the virus anymore. She has a picture of herself on Facebook with her (said to be) test results. I did my own micro investigation about it and was told it wasn't possible.

In my advocacy I have also become involved with a lot of help and information groups. While attending a monthly Ryan White meeting, a doctor (who is very well-respected in her field) shared that a cure is due to be released at this time next year. I was so welcome to hear that from the doctor - someone whose word I feel I can trust - as opposed to the skepticism I felt when I heard the Facebook author's story.

I share this with you just to tell you to be careful with your trust. As for me, I'm going with the doctor.

KNOWLEDGE THE BEST CURE FOR FEAR

By Marc Rozyn



My name is Marc Rozyn. I take pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) because my wife Theresa is positive.

I am from Hartford, and I have spent my whole life living in state. I was working in emergency medical services when the HIV/AIDS scare

went through the medical community in the state in the early 90's. Even back then, I found knowledge to be the best cure for fear. I now dispatch for public safety and I am a co-leader of The Underground - a ministry against sex trafficking.

My wife told me she was positive shortly after we met in 2015. I knew we were going to be together, and rather than reacting with fear or trepidation, I thought this will just need some adjustments to go ahead. After telling her I was fine with her status and that a person should not pay a price forever for their past, I decided to do research about the state of HIV treatment, and I learned about PrEP. It seemed like a good idea, with studies showing a 99% reduction in transmission with the use of PrEP. When I brought up the subject with Theresa after we were married, she was more worried about PrEP than I was because of her concern about powerful medicines and their side effects.

About two years ago, I started PrEP with support from the team at HRA Wellness Resource Center. As a 44-year type 1 diabetic, my only concern was the fact that Truvada can have effects on kidney function, but I have had absolutely no side effects. It is simple to take 1 pill a day - much easier than what I have done for diabetes my whole life. I believe it has made our intimate times a bit more relaxed as it is another layer of protection (in addition to Theresa being undetectable) and it takes some of the responsibility to prevent transmission off of her. I would recommend PrEP for anyone in an HIV positive/negative relationship. It is an easy way to prevent transmission and to take some pressure off of the person you love.

FENTANYL TEST STRIPS

A Harm Reduction Approach for People at Risk of Fentanyl Exposure

Pharmaceutical fentanyl is a powerful, synthetic opioid medication approved for the treatment of severe pain. Recently, there has been a sharp, nationwide increase in overdose deaths involving illicitly manufactured fentanyl which has contaminated heroin and other drug supplies. In 2017, there were 677 confirmed fentanyl-involved overdose deaths in Connecticut - 65% of the opioid overdose deaths in the state. Connecticut Accidental Drug Related Deaths data revealed that the number of fentanyl-involved overdose deaths in Connecticut increased 40% from 2016 to 2017.

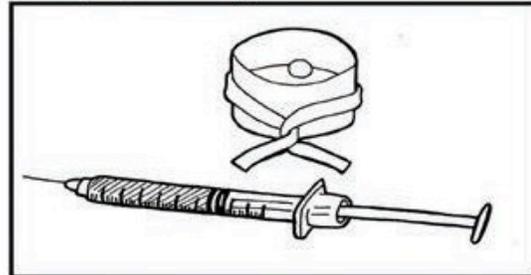
Fentanyl test strips (FTS) are an inexpensive drug-testing technology that effectively detect the presence of fentanyl and fentanyl-analogs in drug samples prior to ingestion. The figure at right shows how to use FTS. Because FTS are highly sensitive, a minimal amount of drug residue is sufficient to obtain a result. A 2018 study found that FTS accurately detect fentanyl when it was present in samples of street drugs, and are unlikely to produce false negative results.

FTS have some known limitations. They do not measure the quantity or potency of fentanyl present in a drug sample. Because FTS have an extremely low detection threshold, they may detect incidental contamination of a drug sample that does not represent a clinically significant quantity of fentanyl. There is also emerging evidence that FTS may be cross-reactive with methamphetamine and that when methamphetamine drug samples are tested for fentanyl contamination, the sample should be diluted in a greater amount of water (about half a cup) to produce accurate results.

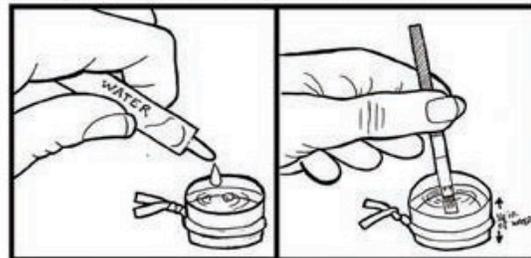
FTS are a reliable, common-sense means of providing people at risk of fentanyl exposure with more information that may increase their safety. Several recent studies have produced evidence that those with access to FTS routinely tested their drugs before use and that FTS promote increased fentanyl awareness and lead people to take safety precautions to prevent overdose.

Directions

1. Prepare drugs in a fresh, clean cooker
2. Set prepared drugs aside:

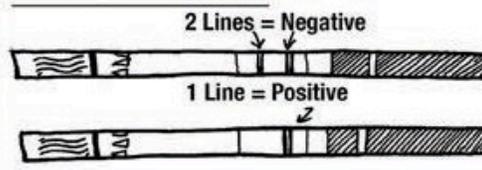


3. Add 1/4 inch clean water to drug residue
4. Dip end of test strip in water for 15 seconds



5. Check the strip after 5 minutes. One line means fentanyl, 2 lines means no fentanyl

After 5 Minutes:



*Test may also be used with baggie residue.

*Check any street drug, benzos, crack, meth, etc, as well as all opioids.

*If test doesn't result in 1 or 2 lines it's invalid

FTS are now available through the **Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) HIV Prevention Program.**

For more information, contact CT DPH Drug User Health Coordinator

Ramon Rodriguez-Santana

at 860-509-7849 or

ramon.rodriquez-santana@ct.gov

OR VISIT:

tinyurl.com/fentanyltestct





Connecticut Department
of Public Health

GETTING TO ZERO COMMISSION Releases Report, Website, and Marketing Video Aimed at Ending HIV



The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) issued a report with statewide and city-specific recommendations for implementing Getting to Zero (G2Z), a campaign to get to zero new HIV infections, zero HIV-related deaths, and zero HIV-related stigma. The report calls for G2Z activities to be launched statewide and in the five cities with the highest number of people living with HIV: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury and Stamford.

On December 17, 2018, the G2Z Commission delivered the report to DPH Commissioner Dr. Raul Pino. The report includes six recommendations which provide a framework for implementing G2Z activities. While the Commission's work has ended, the report sets the stage for new opportunities for community engagement to end the epidemic. The full report, campaign video and other resources - including information on how to join G2Z efforts - can be accessed on the G2Z website at www.gettingtozeroct.org.

"I am extremely proud of the work done over the last six months by the G2Z Commission to focus on the population groups and the areas in Connecticut where HIV continues to have a disproportionate impact, specifically the state's five largest cities and among young men having sex with men (particularly in communities of color), Black women, and transgender individuals," said Dr. Pino.

"While great strides have been made to curb HIV infections and improve health outcomes for people living with HIV in these communities, there's more that can be done, and I am proud to launch the G2Z campaign to continue that work in a more focused, community-centered way," added Dr. Pino.

The Commission - appointed by Dr. Pino and comprised of advocates from the at-risk populations in each city, AIDS service organization representatives, local health advocates, individuals living with HIV, and researchers from New Haven and Hartford - collaborated with city health directors to plan and implement community listening sessions in each of the cities with each affected population. The report includes themes from participants' responses to questions about HIV testing, HIV treatment, PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and HIV stigma in their communities.

The G2Z Commission's recommendations are: 1) Form a working group to develop a model for implementing recommendations at the state level and to drive and monitor G2Z activities; 2) Form a working group in each of the five cities to implement G2Z activities locally; 3) Develop and launch a statewide PrEP and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) education and access program; 4) Develop and execute population-specific HIV education campaigns at the state and city levels to educate/re-educate providers and community members about HIV prevention, care, and stigma; 5) Engage stakeholders to develop legislation in accordance with recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for routine HIV testing for all persons ages 15-64; and 6) Implement standardized medical care for people living with HIV.

DPH is committed to working with partners and stakeholders to leverage resources to move these recommendations forward.

**DPH is an equal opportunity provider.
Call 860.509.7801 if you require aid/accommodation
to participate fully and fairly.**

**Visit www.ct.gov/dph for requests for
proposals and other DPH information.**





Upcoming HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Planning Meetings

See last page for contact information for planning meetings.



march

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

- Kat Auguste
- Carmen Cruz
- Thomas Evans
- Stephen Feathers
- Carl Ferris
- Jose Figueroa
- Ann Galloway Johnson
- Blaise Gilchrist
- Ana Gonzalez
- Juan Gonzalez
- Clara Langley
- Ronald Lee
- Waleska Mercado
- Glenn Scott

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4	5 • 10 Danbury Consortium • 1:30 Hartford Planning Council (PC) Continuum of Care Committee	6 • 9:30 Bridgeport HIV/AIDS Consortium • 9:30 Hartford PC Membership Committee • 12 Hartford Planning Council	7 • 9:30 New Haven/Fairfield Planning Council (NH/FF PC) Strategic Planning & Assessment (SPA) Committee • 12 NH/FF PC Quality Improvement (QI) Committee	8
1 • 10 Positive Prevention CT 1 • 1:30 Hartford PC Multicultural Care Team	1 • 1 Norwalk/ 2 Stamford Consortium	1 3	1 4	1 • 9:30 NH/FF PC Executive Committee 5 • 10:30 NH/FF PC Membership/Finance (MF) Committee • 12 NH/FF Planning Council
1 8	1 • 12 New Haven Mayor's Task Force on AIDS (MTFA)	2 <i>National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day</i> • 9:30-2:00 CHPC & Committees (Hartford)	2 1	2 2
2 • 12 New Haven HIV Care Continuum 5	2 6	2 7	2 8	2 9



april

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1	2 • 1:30 Hartford PC Continuum of Care Committee • 10 Danbury Consortium	3 • 9:30 Bridgeport HIV/AIDS Consortium • 9:30 Hartford PC Membership • 12 Hartford PC	4 • 9 NH/FF PC SPA Committee • 12 NH/FF PC QI Committee	5
8 • 1:30 Hartford PC Multicultural Care Team • 10 Positive Prevention CT	9 • 12 MTFA • 1 Norwalk/Stamford Consortium	1 <i>National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day</i>	1 1	1 • 9:30 NH/FF PC Executive 2 • 10:30 NH/FF PC MF • 12 NH/FF Planning Council
1 5	1 6	1 • 9:30-2:00 CHPC & Committees (Hartford)	1 <i>National Transgender HIV Testing Day</i>	1 9
2 • 12 NH HIV 2 Care Continuum	2 3	2 4	2 5	2 6



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A 2 9	A • 1:30 Hartford PC Continuum of Care Committee	1 • 9:30 Bridgeport HIV/AIDS Consortium • 9:30 Hartford PC Membership • 12 Hartford PC	2 • 9:30 NH/FF PC SPA Committee • 12 NH/FF PC QI Committee	3
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1 • 1:30 Hartford PC Multicultural Care Team	1 • 12 MTFA 4 • 1 Norwalk/Stamford Cons.	1 • 9:30-2:00 CHPC & Committees (Hartford)	1 6	1 7
2 0	2 1	2 2	2 3	2 4
2 • 12 NH HIV 7 Care Continuum	2 8	2 9	3 0	3 1



CONNECTICUT HIV
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866.972.2050



U=U BEING CALLED A GAME CHANGER



In 2016, the Prevention Access Campaign, a health equity initiative with the goal of ending the HIV epidemic as well as ending HIV-related stigma, launched the Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) initiative.

U=U means that individuals living with HIV who receive antiretroviral therapy (ART) and have achieved and maintained an undetectable viral load cannot sexually transmit the virus to others. In fact, in September of 2017, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed the science that people with an undetectable viral load have effectively no risk of transmitting the virus to an HIV negative partner.

Prevention Access Campaign's U=U is a growing global community of HIV advocates, activists, researchers, and over 800 community partners from nearly 100 countries uniting to clarify and disseminate the revolutionary but largely unknown fact that people living with HIV on effective treatment do not sexually transmit HIV.

A group of people living with HIV created a consensus statement with global experts to clear up confusion about the science of U=U. That statement was the genesis of the U=U movement that is changing the definition of what it means to live with HIV.

The concept, based on scientific evidence, has broad implications for the treatment of HIV infection from a scientific and public health standpoint, but also for the self-esteem of individuals living with HIV by reducing the stigma associated with HIV.

The Prevention Access Campaign invites others to join the movement and share the message to dismantle HIV stigma, improve the lives of people living with HIV, and bring us closer to ending the epidemic.

For information, visit <https://www.preventionaccess.org/>



CONNECTICUT HIV
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866.972.2050



Contact Information for Planning Meetings

Hartford Planning Council.....	860-667-6388
New Haven/Fairfield Planning Council	888-243-0464
New Haven Mayor's Task Force on AIDS.....	203-946-8351
Norwalk/Stamford Consortium.....	203-855-9535
Danbury Consortium.....	203-778-2437
Bridgeport Consortium.....	203-368-5575
Positive Prevention CT.....	860-247-2437 x315

More meeting information - www.guardianhealth.org/calendar/calendar.htm