

**RESEARCH & EVALUATION COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

Monday, March 18, 2019 at 10AM
Willing Heart Community Center
555 Martin Luther King Blvd. Newark, NJ 07103

PRESENT	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED
1. Dr. Ann Bagchi 2. Natalie Brown-Muhammad 3. Kasny Damas 4. Corey DeStefano 5. Debbie Mohammad 6. Patricia Moore 7. Warren Poole 8. Sharon Postel, Esq.	1. Summer Brown	1. Sandra Haim 2. Larry Mayers 3. Rev. Joseph Vereen 4. Providencia Rodriguez

1. Welcome and Moment of Silence

Dr. Ann Bagchi, Chair of the Research and Evaluation Committee, called this meeting to order at 10:00AM. A moment of silence was observed for all those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, and for those who have passed.

2. Roll Call

Dr. Ann Bagchi called the roll for this meeting and quorum was established later on during the meeting.

3. Public Testimony

There was no public testimony at this meeting.

4. Review Action Steps

Action Steps	Responsible Party
- Update the December and February meeting	Ann Bagchi
- Update March meeting agenda	Ann Bagchi
- Update Needs Assessment questions and methodology	Ann Bagchi
- Follow up on presentation for Mini Needs Assessment	Summer Brown

5. Approval of the Meeting Summaries from October 2018 and January 2019.

As quorum was established, Ann called for a motion to approve the meeting summaries from December 2018 and February 2019 meeting summaries. Pat motioned to approve the summary from January 2019. Natalie seconded. Warren abstained. The motion was passed. The December 2018 and February 2019 Summary was approved with revisions.

6. Updates from other Committees

- **COC** – Tania provided an update for the COC committee. She mentioned that a training Presentation was held during meeting sponsored by Gilead Sciences. The presentation was given

by Dr. Felipe Arias, an Infectious Disease Specialist from Philadelphia. Dr. Arias spoke about the correlation between the opioid epidemic and the spread of Hepatitis C via Intravenous Drug Use as well as the potential risk of undiagnosed HIV among these populations. Dr. Arias emphasized the need for a strategy to reduce the spread of Hepatitis through screening, treatment, prevention and risk reduction of Hepatitis C.

- Also, the Service Standards for Oral Health Care will be emailed to members for review prior to the next scheduled meeting on April 11, 2019. There were two persons nominated for the Vice-Chair position: 1) Vieshia Morales and 2) Richlyn Burnham. Prior to the next meeting, members will vote by email and the new Vice Chair will be announced at the next meeting in April.

CPC – In lieu of the Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) meeting, the CPC hosted a community education event on Friday, 3/08/19 from 10am – 2pm at the BF Johnson Community Center. The event was a deliverable of the 2017-2019 Integrated Health Plan. It was well attended with more than 45 people present.

Alison Modica and Marina Leonardos from Gilead Sciences presented on PrEP and attendees discussed barriers with access to the program. Knowledge among private providers, outreach and engagement with youth, ability to maintain youth confidentiality on insurance records, unawareness of financial assistance, maintaining the requirements of care (i.e.. bloodwork), lack of advertising for people outside the gay community (women, hetero-sexual discordant couples) and instability in housing were among the barriers identified.

Julio Roman from NJCRI presented on the syringe access program in Newark. Discussions focused on the legislative history, access to care, program success, participant requirements, and the need for continued support for Fentanyl testing kits. Barriers included, lack of funding, geographic limitations, homelessness and ensuring family engagement in care.

- **CIA/CC** – The CIA last met on February 27, 2019. Mr. Poole provided attendees with information on the Ryan White Program, Part A– what it covers for core medical vs. support (social services, food, and housing) services. A lively discussion followed where consumers shared challenges with internal stigma, access to medical care, and discrimination. One consumer in attendance shared a story where his podiatrist turned him away after looking through his chart and finding out about his HIV status. Consumers agreed that, too often, their fear of being turned away from medical services may prevent them from disclosing their HIV status.

Mr. Poole had the consumers in attendance take an anonymous survey regarding HIV related mental health services and consumers' ability to access them. Responses showed that:

- Not every consumer had been referred to mental health services.
- Some consumers wanted to be referred to mental health services and some didn't know if they needed to.
- Those who received mental health services felt that their personal issues were 'solved'.

7. **New Business**

Presentation: Test and Treat by NJCRI – Ilene Scarinzi

The 'Test and Treat' initiative at NJCRI presents a public health benefit through indirect effects of a decreased risk of HIV infection among newly diagnosed patients by offering same-day treatment.

Just a week ago, NJCRI identified 5 newly diagnosed in one-week. The five newly diagnosed individuals were men between the ages of 18 and 34 years of age who completed labwork, received counseling, and applied for insurance and ADAP on the same day. An interesting finding was that one gentleman was taking Truvada that a friend had shared with him. After also being diagnosed with hepatitis C, providers noted that the medication had exacerbated his hepatitis C.

An 18-year-old was one of the newly diagnosed patients who did not think he was infected. He had only gone there for STD testing but NJRCI also included HIV testing. He then became aware of his HIV positive status and received treatment the same day.

8. Old Business

- REC Workplan Calendar FY 2019-2020
The updated REC workplan was distributed to all members.

- FY 2019 Needs Assessment Questions and Methodology One-Pager
 - i. Question 1 was taken out of last year's needs assessment. Providers will be added to this question.
 - ii. Question 2 will compare State Behavioral Health integration Project (B-HIP) versus agencies who are not participating in BHIP. The approach will be limited to primary medical service providers.
 - iii. Members discussed the new data trends showing that when people are virally suppressed, people may not see a doctor often, so retention in care is lower. The HIV cascade is changing – better viral load numbers = lower retention rates. However, outcomes seem to be worse, possibly due to co-morbidities because HIV then is the least of their worries.
 - iv. Question 4 what is the association between housing and retention in care? Information will be collected through analysis of CHAMP data.
 - v. A discussion ensued about the behavioral health cascade among Ryan White agencies where the cascade is: (1) # of people screened, (2) # of people who screen positive and need a referral, (3) # of people for whom a referral is documented, and (4) number of people who received a referral for whom attendance at the follow up visit is documented. A recommendation was made to write Question 3 as – What is the behavioral health Ryan White Cascade among clients served by Ryan White agencies?
 - vi. No surveys or questionnaires will be used for this year's needs assessment.
 - vii. Two items that were discussed will be postponed for a future conversation: (1) health insurance lapses and (2) retention in care related to age, income, and substance abuse.

- 2017-2021 Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan
Postponed for discussion at the next meeting.

9. Administrative Issues

Ann asked that Planning Council staff review the FY'18 REC attendance roster and reassess the membership list with regards to member absences – whether excused or unexcused. Letters will have to be sent out to members with outstanding absences. Planning Council staff were also asked to clarify whether Travis became a member.

Construction will be happening at the Willing Heart Community Center. Our meetings will continue to be held at the Sanctuary until further notice.

10. Announcements

Warren Poole shared information about two ongoing events. His agency is hosting three week-long educational sessions for long-term survivors. Participants will receive pre- and post-tests. Also, classes for those newly diagnosed are now open. Anyone who wants to register for the classes needs to call (973) 877 5642.

Ann Bagchi is working on a CDC funded randomized control trial investigating rigorous testing of models investigating the opioid epidemic. The proposal will focus on using academic detailing to address the syndemic of opioid misuse, HIV, and hepatitis C infection.

The end the Epidemic Taskforce: On Dec 1 the Governor announced plans to End the HIV Epidemic in New Jersey by 2025. The Taskforce was established to create an official plan for ending the epidemic. The Taskforce will be focusing on the following three:

- Reduce the rate of new HIV/AIDS infections by 75%;
- Ensure that 100% of persons living with HIV/AIDS know their status; and
- Ensure that 90% of persons living with HIV/AIDS are virally suppressed.

Membership to the taskforce is closed, but input from everyone is welcome.

A set of workshops on HIV related stigma will be held soon. One workshop per Rutgers campus will be held including that in Newark, New Brunswick, and the Camden area. The workshops intend to gauge people's perceptions of what stigma is and to empower them to speak up when they see potentially stigmatizing behavior. These workshops will be comprised of people living with HIV, friend/family/community member, and a healthcare worker. More information will be coming soon.

The NJHPG stigma committee is working to develop a set of tools and recommendations that agencies can use to measure stigma for quality improvement initiatives.

11. Action Steps

Action Steps	Responsible Party
Update the REC membership list	Tania Guaman
Print and bring sections of the IHAP related to REC	Tania Guaman
Update Needs Assessment questions and methodology	Ann Bagchi

12. Next Meeting

The next REC meeting will be held on Monday, April 15, 2019 at 10AM at the Willing Heart Community Center located at 555 Martin Luther King Blvd. Newark, NJ 07106

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 am.