

Research & Evaluation Committee

MEETING SUMMARY

Monday, September 21, 2020 at 10:00AM

Video-Conference via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/97965443375>
 Teleconference: (929) 205 6099 / Meeting ID: 979 6544 3375#

PRESENT	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED
1. Ann Bagchi, Ph.D. (Chair)	7. Corey DeStefano (Vice-Chair)	10. Natalie Brown
2. Summer Brown (Secretary)	8. Debbie Mohammed	11. Travis Love
3. Kasny Damas	9. Patricia Moore	12. Warren Poole
4. Karen Ehiri (Non-Voting)		
5. Sharon Postel (Consultant Non-Voting)		
6. Providencia Rodriguez		

Guests: N/A

PC Support Staff: Tania Guaman

1. Welcome and Moment of Silence

Dr. Bagchi called this meeting to order at 10:05 AM. A moment of silence was observed for all those living with, those who are affected by, and those who have passed from HIV/AIDS, as well as for those affected by Covid-19.

2. Roll Call

Summer Brown conducted the roll call. Quorum was not established. Dr. Bagchi asked for an update on REC members' attendance to determine whether any members have missed more than 3 consecutive meetings. There were some members with two consecutive absences but none with three.

3. Public Testimony

There was no public testimony at this meeting.

4. Review Action Steps

Action Steps	Responsible Party
1. Complete the Assessment of the Administrative Mechanism Survey	Recipient
2. Review of Survey Findings	S. Postel
3. Send the REC workplan for the committee's review and feedback	Support Staff

The Assessment of the Administrative Mechanism was finalized. The review of the survey findings was completed. Support Staff sent the REC workplan for the committee's review, no feedback was received.

5. Approval of the Meeting Summaries from August 17, 2020

The June and July meeting summaries were approved last month as presented.

The August 17th meeting summary was sent electronically for review. Due to lack of quorum, the August 17th meeting summary will be approved at the next meeting.

6. Updates from other Committees

- **COC** – Support Staff provided the COC report. The last Continuum of Care Committee meeting was held on Thursday, September 10, 2020. The following occurred at the meeting:
 - The COC had a brief discussion about the feedback from our HRSA project officer regarding changes that can be made on service definitions and program guidance. The guidance we received was that the committee can make modifications so long as we cite the policy clarification notices and noting that this is only relevant to the Newark EMA.
 - The committee finalized the update of the Psychosocial Support Service Standard, which is pending approval.
 - The committee also started reviewing the Medical Nutrition Service standards. The committee recommended that agencies or staff who provide this service give feedback for this service standard for the next meeting.
 - Portilla resigned from his position as COC Chair and member of the Planning Council. At the last Planning Council meeting, members were asked to recommend a new chair. Dr. Bagchi added that the Planning Council Chair (Dr. Johnson) appoints committee chairs. However, committees can vote on vice-chairs and other positions within the committee. Support Staff stated that once a new chair is appointed, the REC will be informed.The next COC meeting will be held on October 8, 2020 at 10am via Zoom.
- **CPC** – Support Staff reported that the CPC did not meet in September. The FY 2021 Priority Setting and Resource Allocation Report was finalized and approved by the Planning Council and it is now available on the Newark EMA Website. The next CPC meeting will be held on October 9, 2020 at 9:30am via Zoom.
- **CIA/CC** – Support Staff reported that the CIA did not meet in August. The next CIA meeting will be held on September 24, 2020 at 5 PM via Zoom which includes a presentation on Weight Gain and HIV.

7. Old Business

- 2020 Assessment of Administrative Mechanism Update – Dr. Bagchi stated that Postel, PC Consultant presented an overview of the Assessment of the Administrative Mechanism Report and discussion of findings at the Planning Council last Wednesday. Reports are usually presented in one meeting, then approved in the next. However, due to imminent deadlines, the Planning Council approved the report.
 - The survey was prepared by the REC and sent to the recipient on July 13th with a due date of the 31st to allow time to write up the report, to review and approve the draft by the Research Committee, and then forward to the Planning Council for review and approval.
 - The response was received on August 27th, which is about a month late, and the Planning Council had to review and approve the document in the same meeting so the report could be included in the grant application.
 - Last year, HRSA met with the City of Newark and provided an award estimate letter based on the formula funding amount to start the contracting process earlier. With this process in place, a similar outcome was expected for 2020. However, COVID impacted the

availability the Ryan White Unit, City Hall, and the Municipal Council staff to process the documents. Last year 100% of contracts were adopted by April 30. Due to COVID, the contracts for 2020 were adopted by the end of August and the execution will occur by the end of September.

- The Assessment of the Administrative Mechanism found no deficiencies in the recipient's allocation or contracting processes since the recipient followed the new process. Everything is proceeding and services are being delivered.
- The recipient also received feedback at the last HRSA Site visit with their HRSA Project Officer that the Newark EMA had more than enough provider agencies for Ryan White Services for an EMA of similar size. Therefore, the recipient does not have to reach out to other agencies, but certainly the option is available.

8. New Business

- **Discuss preliminary findings of the 2020 Epidemiological Profile** – Dr. Bagchi stated that Epidemiological Profile data from the State of New Jersey was received today. Postel added that the Epidemiological profile is usually done in July, but the data was not available until the end of August and some were just received on Thursday.
 - Postel provided a comparison chart of last year's (2018) and this year's data (2019) regarding People Living with HIV in the Newark EMA.
 - The number of People Living with HIV in the Newark EMA increased from 13,826 to 13,830 – an increase of 4 people residing in the EMA.
 - The epidemic continues to increase among males living in the EMA. There is an increase of 27 males and a decrease of 23 females.
 - People are living longer and the EMA is serving more individuals. Seventy-two percent of People Living with HIV in the EMA are aged 45 and older.
 - There are slightly more Hispanic/Latino People Living with HIV while the number of African Americans went down slightly. The number of White people went down slightly as well. Other/Unknown increased slightly. Ethnic minority groups remain 87% of People Living with HIV, excluding the other Unknown.
 - The number People Living with HIV is increasing among men who have sex with men, and decreasing for those with ID use, as well as among heterosexual.
 - The new data goes back three years and it has information about new diagnoses, although it does not have much information regarding the transgender population.
 - In terms of geographic distribution, Essex County still has 70% of PLWHA although the number has declined slightly. Union County increased slightly but remains at 21% and Warren is still at 9%.
 - The five cities with the largest number of PLWHA are: Newark, East Orange, Plainfield, Irvington, and Elizabeth. While the numbers decreased slightly in Newark, they increased in Elizabeth. These five cities make up 70% of the total People Living With HIV residing in the EMA.
- **Update the REC's Workplan for FY 2021** –Support Staff reported that the Updated REC Workplan was sent to the committee for review, but no feedback was received. The update of the Integrated Health Plan is still pending. This item is needed so that all committee Workplans can be updated.

- Discuss topics for the 2021 Full Needs Assessment – Dr. Bagchi stated that a Full Needs Assessment is required for 2020 and asked the committee to suggest topics. Dr. Bagchi proposed that this year's Needs Assessment focus on Telehealth to explore the effects of COVID on NEMA partners. Postel agreed with the topic suggestion for a survey of both agencies and clients. Dr. Bagchi reminded the committee about her presentation at the Planning Council meeting about telemedicine, which was based on the Rutgers School of Nursing's Needs Assessment in Newark and Atlantic County as a "rural area". This project started before COVID and was not completed. Once the staff can get back into the field a comparison on pre and post COVID responses will be done. The tools from this project might be of use for agency surveys, key informant interviews, and client surveys or focus groups, if adapted for the Full Needs Assessment. The surveys do not have specific questions about how people access the internet, and if they do, what technology they have access to, but these questions can be included. Brown agreed with the topic idea and the focus on telemedicine. Brown is also interested in finding out whether there were any changes in attitudes or resistance to providing telehealth services prior to, and during, the pandemic, even though providing telehealth services can continue to be helpful after the pandemic.

Dr. Bagchi added that the federal government made policy changes that allowed for expanded use of telehealth services and provided more cost coverage. The following factors were mentioned to keep in mind during planning for the Full Needs Assessment:

- It is unclear what will happen with telehealth when the COVID crisis is over. After COVID, some policies are still going to be in place and others will not. For example, health care providers currently get reimbursed for telephone calls with clients but it is unclear whether this policy will remain in place after the pandemic. This is important since a large number of people do not have access to smartphones, broadband internet, or even internet on their phones. Therefore, if the option to contact patients by telephone is not there, the risk of increasing disparities in health care access will increase.
- Postel added that the telehealth data from CHAMP could be helpful. She added that CIA participants did not have access to participate in CIA meetings. The questions on technology access would have to be included in the consumer survey.

Support Staff asked about the difference between a full Needs Assessment and an update. According to Postel, a full Needs Assessment is based on a new topic relating to common issues faced by People Living with HIV and it is larger in scale (e.g., consumer and agency-based data collection and CHAMP data analysis), whereas a Needs Assessment Update derives from topics from the previous Full Needs Assessment.

Dr. Bagchi will forward all the tools used for Rutgers needs assessment study to Support Staff to share with the committee for consideration. But, the full Needs Assessment Topic will be voted on at the next REC meeting.

9. Administrative Issues

Support Staff reported that the FY 2021 Needs Assessment phase 1 payment must be completed before the end of February. This payment will be for the work completed between now and the end of February, which will move the contracting process a little bit earlier.

10. Announcements

Dr. Bagchi stated that the REC will review and approve the August and September summaries and discuss the Full Needs Assessment topic at the next meeting.

11. Next Meeting

The next REC meeting will be held on Monday, October 19, 2020 at 10AM via Zoom.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43AM.