



# Continuum of Care Committee MEETING SUMMARY

Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019, from 10AM-12PM  
Willing Heart Community Center  
555 Martin Luther King Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102

Present	Excused Absences	Unexcused Absences
1. Ann Bagchi, PhD. 2. Richlyn Burnham 3. Kasny Damas 4. Cezar Dumago 5. Maisel Guzman 6. Imad Ibrahim 7. Viesha Morales 8. Mario Portilla 9. Lauro Rocha 10. Nancy Scangarello	11. Kendall Clark	12. Wanda Figueroa, MD 13. Pat Moore 14. Dominga Padilla, MD 15. Sharon Postel

**1. Welcome and Moment of Silence**

Mario Portilla, COC Chair, welcomed all in attendance and called for a moment of silence to be observed for all those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

**2. Roll Call**

Ann Bagchi, COC Secretary, conducted the roll call. Quorum was established later in the meeting.

**3. Public Testimony**

No public testimony

**4. Approval of Meeting Summary for March 14, 2019**

The meeting summary from April 11, 2019 was reviewed. Mario Portilla, COC Chair, asked for a motion to approve. Nancy Scangarello moved to accept. Viesha second the motion. The motion was passed, and the summary was approved with edits.

**5. Standing Committee Updates**

**- Comprehensive Planning Committee:**

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.

The next CPC meeting will be held on April 11, 2019 at the Willing Heart Community Care Center located at 555 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102. All are encouraged to attend.

- **Research and Evaluation Committee:**

The REC last met on March 18, 2019. A presentation on Test and Treat by NJCRI was held by Ms. Ilene Skerintzy. 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. Ms. Skerintzy explained that recently 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 then completed their lab work, 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 NJCRI also included HIV testing. He then became aware of his HIV positive status and received treatment the same day.

The REC finalized its FY 2019 Needs Assessment Questions and Methodology. These questions will focus on the gaps and barriers to achieving a better integration between prevention and care services for people living with HIV/AIDS, with a focus on mental health and substance abuse. One question was taken out of last year's needs assessment. Another question will compare the State Behavioral Health integration Project (B-HIP) versus agencies who are not participating in BHIP. A discussion ensued suggesting that the HIV cascade is changing since better viral load suppression has led to fewer providers' visit. Yet, for patients with co-morbidities outcomes seemed worse. No surveys or questionnaires will be used for this year's needs assessment. 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.

The Next REC meeting will be held on Monday, April 15, 2019 at the Willing Heart Community Care Center located at 555 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102.

- **Community Involvement Activities/Community Conversations Committee:**

Tania Guaman, Support Staff provided a report for the CIA. The last CIA meeting was held on March 27, 2019. Attendees were asked to think and share some of the challenges that may prevent them from managing their HIV condition adequately. Some of the issues mentioned during the discussion included: utility assistance that runs out quickly, stigma from medical providers, legal counseling rights for PLWHA, nutrition services, transportation to and from medical appointments, and the rising costs of housing in the Newark area.

Mr. Warren Poole distributed a survey to participants which asked attendees to rank support and core services from extremely important to least important. Of the core medical services, the majority of respondents rated AIDS Pharmaceutical Assistance, AIDS Drug Assistance Program Treatments, and Outpatient/ Ambulatory Health services as extremely important. Of the support services, the majority of respondents rated housing, legal services, emergency financial assistance, Food bank/home delivered meals, and referral for health care and support services as extremely important.

In the write-in question, consumers ranked the following additional categories as important in the top three priorities: housing, Drug Assistance Programs, Mental Health, transportation, oral healthcare, substance abuse, and health insurance & premium cost assistance. The full survey report was shared with members for review.

The next CIA meeting will be held on April 24, 2019 at the Willing Heart Community Care Center located at 555 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102.

## **6. Old/New Business**

- Review of the FY 2019 Workplan – Mario Portilla, COC Chair asked that everyone review the committee’s calendar for FY2019. Several presenters have been scheduled. Members were asked to voice their suggested topics or presenters for future presentations. Telemedicine was mentioned as a tentative topic for the COC.
- Announcement of new COC Vice Chair – Through a majority of votes from COC members, Ms. Richlyn Burnham was appointed as the new Vice-Chair.
- Prioritization of Service Standards – COC members were asked to help prioritize the order in which service standards will be updated in the upcoming meetings. The following was the order in which the standards of care will be reviewed during FY2019: 1) Housing, 2) Emergency Financial Assistance, 3) Medical Transportation, 4) Psychosocial Support, 5) Substance Abuse (Residential), 6) Substance Abuse Outpatient Services 7) Other Professional, 8) Legal Services, 9) Medical Nutrition Therapy. During the prioritization process, it was suggested that legal services and other professional services were placed into one category in the past. Mario Portilla, COC Chair, was asked to confirm.
- Review of Oral Service Standards – A discussion of barriers to care for PLWHA to received oral health care was held. Various barriers were listed including patient fear of a dentist and long wait times for up-to-30 days for dental appointments (acute appointments can be seen faster, but much longer times are expected for non-acute). Language barriers were also listed as a barrier to care, but language lines were mentioned as an aid to serve diverse individuals in the community. There was a suggestion that a staff member attend the oral health care appointment with the patient to ensure that the service is provided faster.
- The Oral Health Standards were reviewed partially, and the rest was postponed for the next meeting. Both Mario and Support Staff will confirm if the HRSA definition of ‘oral health’ has changed recently. A discussion was held about the accountability of patients in missing

appointments vs. the agency responsibility to use every appointment available. More conversations are needed on Item 8: Client Right and Responsibilities, Letter I: No client can be permanently barred from services, and the rest of the Oral Health Standards.

- Aliya Onque noted that sub-recipients are notified of all changes in Health Service Standards. These are usually sent to sub-recipients at the release of the grant or in the beginning of the contract year. Program Monitors from the City of Newark also verify compliance in accordance to the Health Service Standards of sub-recipients during site visits. In addition, HRSA monitors the Health Service Standards closely.

**7. Administrative Issues:**

- Interviews for the administrative Assistant position for NEMA were conducted. One candidate received an offer letter. If the candidate accepts, she will start in early May.

**8. Announcements:**

Ann Bagchi provided an update on the taskforce; a report is due on May 2019. – On World AIDS Day 2018, Governor Murphy announced that New Jersey is taking the necessary steps to end the HIV epidemic by 2025. At the Governor's direction, the New Jersey Taskforce to End the HIV Epidemic was formed. This taskforce is responsible for developing a set of recommendations in how to achieve this goal to end the epidemic. The Taskforce has identified the following goals in testing, prevention, and care as follows:

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

Within the Taskforce, a committee has been assigned to develop 3 objectives to address each goal. A survey was created through which the Taskforce is requesting feedback from stakeholders to inform the plan and how it will be carried out. Please share your perspective by completing the attached survey and submitting it to [NJEndsHIV2025@doh.nj.gov](mailto:NJEndsHIV2025@doh.nj.gov) as soon as possible. Use the hashtag #NJEndsHIV2025 to share this on social media. There will be upcoming social media town halls and in-person listening sessions in Newark, Camden, Trenton, and Atlantic City.

The Department of Health has a FQHC, the Mary Eliza Mahoney Health Center, located at 394 University Ave, Newark, NJ 07102. The center has always provided medical care, but most recently the center received the FQHC designation. Ambulatory and specialty care services are available on site. Oral health is also available.

**9. Next Meeting:**

The next Continuum of Care Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 9, 2019 at 10AM, at Willing Heart Community Center located at 555 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Newark, NJ 07102.

**10. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am.