

# Research & Evaluation Committee

## MEETING SUMMARY

**Monday, January 13, 2020, 10AM-12PM**  
 Willing Heart Community Center  
 555 Martin Luther King Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102

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

**Guests:** Kevin Zeeland, Luis Ulerio  
**Staff:** Tania Guaman, Vicky Saguary

**1. Welcome and Moment of Silence**

Ann Bagchi, Ph.D. (Chair) called this meeting to order at 10:05AM. A moment of silence was observed for all those living with, those who are affected by, and those who have passed from HIV/AIDS.

**2. Roll Call**

Summer Brown (Secretary) conducted the roll call. Quorum was established later during the meeting.

**3. Public Testimony**

There was no public testimony at this meeting.

**4. Review Action Steps**

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
1. Policy analysis research: what policies have other states established to address housing issues?	Ann Bagchi, Ph.D., and all Committee Members
2. The following tasks should be followed up on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consumer Questionnaire; Secure a Speaker on Housing for Jan REC meeting; List of key informants</li> <li>▪ Share Dr. Bagchi's research on dissemination practices</li> </ul>	Support Staff
3. Develop research questions for key informant interviews	Sharon Postel

Dr. Ann Bagchi (REC Chair) reviewed the action steps and mentioned that the housing policy analysis will be looked at next month. Sharon Postel (Consultant) developed and sent the research

questions for key informant interviews to Karen Ehiri. Karen Ehiri provided these questions to the REC committee.

Dr. Ann Bagchi added that Support Staff created a Consumer survey and sent it to the Executive Committee who advised the REC to review it, keeping in mind their recommendations. Dr. Bagchi mentioned that the wording of the questions is not appropriate for the purposes of the survey. Kasny Damas mentioned that these questions might help determine which service categories need increased funds. Damas stated that the Planning Council applied for the core service waiver, which allowed the Council to distribute the funds in a non-75/25 split. Damas recommended to change the first question to: "Would you like to provide feedback on how funds are distributed in the Newark EMA area?" Damas also recommended to combine questions #9 and #5.

Action Item: Dr. Ann Bagchi will review the consumer survey and provide recommendations. Then, Support Staff will send the survey with the recommendations to the REC committee for review.

#### **5. Approval of the Meeting Summaries from December 16, 2019**

The November 18th meeting summary was approved last month without edits.

The December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting summary was reviewed. Ann Bagchi, Ph.D. (REC Chair) asked for a motion to approve the meeting summary. Kasny Damas motioned to approve. Natalie Brown-Muhammad seconded the motion. There were no oppositions or abstentions.

#### **6. Updates from other Committees**

- **COC** – Support Staff provided the COC report. The last Continuum of Care Committee meeting was held on Thursday, January 09, 2020. The following occurred at the meeting:
  - In December, the COC approved the new format for the Standards of Care proposed by the Recipient which separated category specific and universal standards of care. This month, the COC reviewed and approved the Housing Standards of Care in the new format. And the committee agreed to review the Universal Standards on an ongoing basis as they continue to reformat other Standards.
  - A new member, Warren Talley, was inducted as a voting member of the COC committee.
  - The committee also started the review of the COC's Operational Policies and Procedures. The review will be finalized at the February meeting.

The next COC meeting will be held on February 13, 2020 at the Willing Heart Community Center located at 555 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102. All are encouraged to attend.

- **CPC** – Support Staff provided the CPC report. The last Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting was held on Friday, December 13, 2019. The following occurred during the meeting:
  - The meeting summary from December was approved.
  - Committee members continued the in-depth review and update of the HIV Integrated Prevention and Care Plan. The CPC will submit the updated Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan for review of the full Planning Council on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

The next CPC meeting will be held on February 14, 2020 at the Willing Heart Community Center located at 555 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102. All are encouraged to attend.

- **CIA/CC** – Support Staff provided the CIA report. The last Community Involvement Activities Committee meeting was held on Friday, December 20, 2019 at the St. Medical Center. The following occurred at that meeting:
  - The CIA had a Holiday Party in collaboration with the Peter Ho CAB. There were almost 60 attendees from Union and Essex County at the event.
  - The event began with a moment of silence for all those living with, those who have passed, and those affected by HIV/AIDS.
  - Support Staff provided an introduction of the Planning Council.
  - The Peter Ho CAB provided sweaters and jackets for everyone interested.
  - The CIA invited all attendees at the next meeting discussion on HIV and Decriminalization. Flyers were provided to all attendees.

The next CIA will be held on January 22, 2020 at the Willing Heart Community Center located at 555 MLK Jr. Blvd., Newark, NJ 07102. All are encouraged to attend.

## 7. Old Business

- Discuss research on best dissemination practices (Consumer Questionnaire)  
Dr. Bagchi (REC Chair) shared the summary of her research regarding Methods for Dissemination in Community-Based Participatory Research based on the textbook *Methods for Community-Based Participatory Research for Health*, a textbook that gathered different case studies. Committee members noted that some of these dissemination practices may not be appropriate for the Newark EMA. One member noted that websites are used as a method for disseminating information and asked for an update on the Newark EMA website. Members noted that the Executive Committee needs to approve the content of the Newark EMA website; therefore, the website has not been published yet. Natalie Brown-Muhammad suggested that the information could be shared internally with all Newark EMA agencies and that participation from different agencies could increase. Dr. Bagchi suggested to REC members to keep in mind creative ways to share the information in the Newark EMA. Postel (Consultant) suggested that Support Staff could share the Needs Assessment findings with the CIA committee, emphasizing how their input impacted the work and what was found through the Needs Assessment. Dr. Bagchi suggested that infographics could be used to share this information at Newark EMA agencies and inform consumers about the findings. Members added that infographics could also be used as visual cues when doing surveys.
- Draft 2020 Needs Assessment Update tools  
Sharon Postel (Consultant) reminded the committee that, as a response to EHE funding, the Recipient requested funds to provide housing financial assistance. Postel mentioned that the research questions for the Housing key informant interviews were developed with some input from the Recipient. Postel added that the October CIA meeting provided some insights on how housing is a barrier to viral load suppression and retention in care. Postel reviewed the research questions with the committee. Postel explained that the questionnaire was intended for key informants, a list of housing experts which was provide by Support Staff for the

meeting. However, Postel suggests that all agencies providing housing services, case managers (medical and non-medical) agencies making housing referrals, and other services providers (i.e., Emergency Financial Assistance) could be included.

Dr. Bagchi (REC Chair) requested that the questionnaire be sent to the EMA agencies with a follow up to those who do not respond. Postel stated that there are 38 agencies funded in Newark EMA and probably 30 who provide housing and case management (medical and non-medical) services. Dr. Bagchi suggested that the questions asked from key informants be different than those for agencies. Postel agreed that the housing experts could provide information for the program development piece of Housing.

Action Items: Dr. Bagchi also suggested that the Consultant develop questions for a consumer focus group, as well as separate questions for the already identified key informants. In the meantime, Dr. Bagchi will conduct the policy analysis research.

Dr. Bagchi asked for a motion to accept the research questions for key informants provided by Sharon Postel (Consultant). Summer Brown motioned to accept the questions. REC members agreed. There were no oppositions or abstentions.

## **8. New Business**

- Presenter/Speaker Expert on Housing – By Mr. Kevin Zealand and Luis Ulerio from the AIDS Resource Foundation for Children.

The presentation started with the introduction of all attendees. Luis Ulerio provided the presentation which included the following topics:

- Background on the AIDS Resource Foundation for Children and its services
- Overview of statics regarding New Jersey Residents Living with HIV, including NJ rank in rates of HIV diagnosis (#13), Hotspots (Essex and Hudson), PLWHA in NJ prisons (220), MSM (1 in every 3 PLWHA), Women (33% all person aged 13 and older) and Latinx (increased 7.5% in new diagnosis)
- A list of subcommittees that were formed as part of the New Jersey's Plan – End the Epidemic by 2025. Also, NJDOH launched 12 care and prevention initiatives including 3 for housing and the New Jersey HIV Housing Collaborative.
- Structural factors that are contributors to new HIV cases and poor health care engagement. Therefore, Housing is being looked as a Structural Intervention to EtE.
- There are four Pathways for Housing and Health, including housing stability, quality and safety, affordability, and neighborhood.
- The HIV Care Continuum consists of diagnosis, linked to care, retained in care, prescribed ART to achieve virally suppression. Housing status is a stronger predictor of HIV health outcomes than individual characteristics.
- As part of the HIV Housing Care Continuum, HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing released the white paper in 2014. Also, HIV Housing providers track, evaluate, and demonstrate improvement in HIV Care Continuum outcomes to advocate for continued and expanded housing resources. NYC created their Housing Care Continuum by matching NYC HOPWA enrollee information with NYC HIV surveillance registry. The Housing Care Continuum was presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on HIV Treatment and Prevention Adherence in 2015. However, New Jersey does not have a Housing Care Continuum yet, but it is at early stages of development by different organizations.

- Data from 2018 showed that retention in care and viral load suppression varies if the person is in stable, temporary, or unstable housing. The percentages drop when in temporary or unstable housing.
- The New Jersey's Point in Time (PIT) Count showed that 22 out of 178 homeless PLWHA surveyed were living on the streets. The presenter emphasized the need for HIV providers to participate on the NJ's PIT count. The PIT count occurs every year and different providers survey the homeless throughout the United States to know how much funds are needed to serve the homeless in each state. The HOPWA Performance Report found that 1 in 5 PLWHA who were newly placed in housing by HOPWA providers were homeless.
- The Housing GAP in New Jersey shows that NJ's shelter capacity is only for 50%-69% of homeless individuals as of 2018. The Emergency Housing has a shortage of beds and long waiting lists. It requires self-pay or a sponsor (Voucher). Admission is restricted for single fathers. Some are not ADA accessible or LGBTQ-Inclusive.
- As part of the New Jersey HIV Housing Collaborative, there is a Hotline for PLWHA in need of emergency housing assistance working with 23 emergency shelters and 20 Housing Ambassadors (HA) providing Short-Term Emergency housing. It was found that 25% of clients were living on the streets the night before the phone intake. The Housing Ambassadors review and discuss the Housing Plan, work on housing solutions for the client, and connect to HIV care, if needed. The Resource Development are working groups led by Regional Community Partner Specialist to develop a statewide housing strategy to meet the housing needs of PLWHA.
- The Collective impact was emphasized to develop affordable housing statewide. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with RPM Development, LLC for five set-aside units in Keansburg NJ that serve PLWHA and the MOU WITH Hyacinth AIDS Foundation and Middlesex County to administer four voucher that serve PLWHA in that county were mentioned.

Dr. Bagchi asked about the agencies responsible for the oversight of the shelters and about the requirements to participate. Luis Ulerio mentioned that these are run by non-profit organizations and regulated by the cities and state, except for the shelters that are run by a mission, such as the Jersey Shore Mission.

Natalie Brown-Muhammad asked if any progress has been made to include LGBTQ in the shelters since she encountered some issues a couple of years ago. Ulerio mentioned that people are placed based on how they identify themselves and are accepted in the shelters. Kevin Zeeland added that some progress has been made to be LGBTQ-inclusive but there is still room for development, especially the struggles faced by the person during the process. Brown-Muhammad thanked all the work provided by the AIDS Resource Foundation for Children. Sharon Postel asked what supportive services includes and if housing occupancy could be determined. Ulerio mentioned that Permanent Supportive Housing includes supportive services from a Case Manager to remain stable and keep housing arrangements. Also, the case manager can offer in-house intervention to find housing stability. Kevin Zeeland added that supportive services includes periodic visits from case manager to discuss physical health issues, eating habits, how to maintain job stability, or to negotiate with landlord in case of job loss or neighbor conflicts. Ulerio stated that there is data to know the housing occupancy. but it needs to be pull out. However, there is a high supply and demand for housing units in Newark. The rents are going up because there is a high demand for

apartments in the city of Newark. Also, Newark has a lot of abandon buildings and houses that could be activated and used as housing resources for people in need.

Dr. Bagchi asked if AirBnB could be used for housing. Kevin Zeeland mentioned that he thought about using AirBnB and vacant hotel units as housing resources before starting the Housing Collaborative. However, the trauma, mental health, and substance use experienced by the clients and the inexperience by landlords or hotel administration to deal with these scenarios make it difficult to use these as housing resources.

Luis Ulerio asked REC members and their agencies to attend the Housing COC meetings to emphasize the housing needs that the HIV community face and how it affects their health.

**9. Administrative Issues**

There were no administrative issues discussed at this meeting.

**10. Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**11. Next Meeting**

The next REC meeting will be held on Monday, February 10, 2020 at 10AM at Willing Heart Community Center at 555 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102.

**12. Adjournment**

Ann Bagchi, Ph.D. (REC Chair) asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. All members agreed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:26AM.