

## Research & Evaluation Committee

### MEETING SUMMARY

**Monday, April 15, 2019 at 10AM**  
 Willing Heart Community Center  
 555 Martin Luther King Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102

PRESENT	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED
1. Summer Brown 2. Natalie Brown-Muhammad 3. Kasny Damas 4. Corey Destefano 5. Debbie Mohammed 6. Patricia Moore 7. Sharon Postel 8. Travis Love	1. Ann Bagchi, PhD 2. Sandra Haim	1. Larry Mayers 2. Warren Poole 3. Providencia Rodriguez 4. Joseph Vereen

**1. Welcome and Moment of Silence**

Summer Brown, Secretary 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**

Summer 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**

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
- 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

Summer Brown reviewed the action steps from the previous meeting. Tania Guaman, Support Staff, reported that the roster is up to date and it shows the current membership for the REC.

Travis Love had submitted a membership application for the REC. Due to staff changes, his application may have been misplaced. Tania Guaman will follow up.

**5. Approval of the Meeting Summaries from March 18, 2019.**

The approval of the meeting summary from March 18, 2019 was postponed for the next meeting.

## 6. Updates from other Committees

### - **COC – Continuum of Care Committee**

Tania Guaman, PC Support Staff, provided an update. The last COC meeting was held on Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. Through a majority of vote from COC members, Ms. Richlyn Brunham was appointed as the new Vice-Chair. COC members reviewed the committee's calendar for FY2019. Several presenters have been scheduled. Members were asked to voice their suggested topics or presenters for future presentations. At the meeting, COC members also prioritized the order in which service standards will be updated in the upcoming meetings.

In addition, 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 service is provided faster.

The Oral Health Standards were reviewed partially during the March meeting, 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. The next standard to be reviewed housing. The COC also reported that The Mary Eliza Mahoney Health Center is a FQHC located at 394 University Ave, Newark, NJ 07102. The center recently received the FQHC designation and it provides ambulatory and specialty care service, including Oral health care. Also at the COC meeting, Ann Bagchi provided an update on the ETE taskforce, a report is due on May 2019. The next COC meeting will be held on May 9, 2019.

### - **CPC – Comprehensive Planning Committee**

Joann McEniry, CPC Chair, provided the report for the CPC committee. The last CPC meeting was held on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019. McEniry reported that the committee is preparing to start the resource allocation and priority setting process for FY'20. At the April meeting, the committee discussed the process from last year to review and re-orient members on how priority setting, and resource allocation is done every year. The committee then talked about how the process can be improved for this year. The committee also reviewed the existing service category definitions to ensure these align well with HRSA's definitions. The definitions align well, so those will be included on the report.

McEniry reported that the primary focus of the CPC meeting was the Core Service Waiver. Given the application deadline, the CPC is working on a tight timeline to submit the application post-grant application. So, at the May meeting, the CPC will develop a recommendation for FY'19 Core Service Waiver split – a resource allocation outside of the required 75/25. The recommended resource allocation will be sent to all in advance and presented for a vote at the

Planning Council meeting in May. At the next CPC meeting, the team will be reviewing data in order to make funding recommendations for the next Planning Council meeting. The next CPC meeting will be held on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

- **CIA/CC – Consumer Involvement Activities/Community Conversations**

The CIA last met 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.

At the CIA meeting, 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.

It was reported that 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 recipient stated that they will explore co-pay and out of pocket costs for health care because HIPCSA, one of the core services of the Ryan White Program, has been underutilized. The use of this service will be emphasized to agencies specially because both insured and uninsured patients are expected to incur out-of-pocket costs either with co-pays or sliding scale fees. The next CIA meeting will be held on April 24, 2019.

## 7. New Business

- 2019 Needs Assessment Discussion

The REC committee developed three questions for the needs assessment. The questions included for the needs assessment are as follows:

1. What are the current gaps and barriers to achieving better integration between prevention and care services for PLHIV in the Newark EMA (the latter with a focus on current needs for substance abuse and mental health)?
2. How do behavioral health outcomes compare for consumers being served by NEMA-funded agencies participating in the State's Behavioral Health Integration Project (B-HIP) versus those agencies not participating in B-HIP? (NOTE: Analyses will be limited to agencies providing primary medical care services.)
  - a. Sub-questions: (a) How does housing status compare across these two groups of agencies? (b) What is the association between housing and viral load across the two groups of agencies? and (c) Are behavioral health outcomes better for those with more stable housing?

To the committee's knowledge, there are 14 agencies providing medical care services. Only 7 of those participate in BHIP. The analysis will review mental health status, retention in care in comparison with viral load suppression.

3. What are the numbers along the behavioral health (BH) cascade among clients served by the Ryan White Program? How does viral load compare across clients by stage in the BH cascade? Components of the BH cascade include the following:
  - Number of clients screened for behavioral health needs
  - Number of clients who screen positive for behavioral health needs
  - Number of clients who screen positive for behavioral health needs for whom there is a referral documented
  - Number of clients for whom a referral is documented with documentation verifying at least one visit to a behavioral health provider (where the provide could be within the same agency, to another Ryan White-funded agency, or an agency outside the Ryan White system)

Issues postponed for future consideration

- Insurance lapses and how they are handled
- Retention in care gaps by age (particularly for young MSM), income, and drug use

These three questions will be used to prepare this year's needs assessment. The first will use last year's survey. The second will investigate BHIP agencies. And the third will analyze the mental health treatment cascade.

Sharon Postel, Esq. shared a report of tabulations of data collected last year from 246 consumer survey participants. This survey had a focus on mental health and substance abuse. Sharon Postel asked the REC committee to suggest possible cross-tabulations. Members noted that consumers in transitional housing have low viral loads, which was attributed to the ongoing support of medical case managers. A cross-tabulation was suggested to compare the type of drug being used by the consumers' age. The suggestion asked to look at people who use substances and their unique demographics (i.e. age). Committee members noted that when compared substance users with age, users were mostly over age of 45. Another suggestion was made to cross tabulate county of residence, substance use, and viral load suppression.

A recommendation was made that the COC investigate "best practices" based on what grantees are working on and prepare recommendations about processes, procedures and protocols that can benefit Ryan White service delivery. It was also suggested that these 'best practices' be added as an addendum to the standards of care.

- Discuss REC's responsibilities for the Integrated Plan - The discussion about the REC responsibilities from the Integrated Health Plan was postponed for the next meeting.
- Presentation: Regional Needs Assessment by Allison Delcalzo-Berens  
Allison Delcalzo-Berens, Chair of the HIV Advisory Council, presented the Tri-County (Morris, Sussex, Warren) needs assessment. Given that the gaps, barriers, needs, funding and resources are different in the tri-county than in Essex and Union counties, the Advisory Committee determined that it would complete its own needs assessment. The question that the

needs assessment aimed to address was “*How are case managers communicating information about mental health and behavioral risks to consumers?*”. There were 40 consumer surveys and 6 provider surveys completed.

The questions in the survey focused on barriers to care and to following through with referrals. In the survey, consumers and providers identified 1. Lack of transportation, and 2. Lack of health insurance as barriers to care. Consumers also identified Mental illness and Stigma as barriers, but consumers did not.

Additional findings of the survey included:

- Consumers in the region place a large amount of trust in their MCM,
- Lack of referral to non-RW provider agencies.
- Providers are screening and assessing in line with or better than NEMA standards of care,
- Need for additional interagency collaboration and communication

#### **8. Old Business**

None.

#### **9. Administrative Issues**

None at this time.

#### **10. Announcements**

Debbie Mohammad announced that Passaic TGA has funds available for housing services. For more information, you can contact CAPCO or Buddies of NJ.

Corey DeStefano made an announcement about the NJ AIDS Walk scheduled for May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Flyers were passed around to committee members.

#### **11. Action Steps**

None.

#### **12. Next Meeting**

The next REC meeting will be held on Monday, May 20, 2019 at 10AM at the Willing Heart Community Center located at 555 Martin Luther King Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102

#### **13. Adjournment**

Corey DeStefano asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Summer made a motion to adjourn. Corey DeStefano seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50am.