



Planning Council

MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, August 18, 2021 from 1:39 PM to 3:00 PM
 Video-Conference via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/94744802916>
 Teleconference: (929) 205 6099 / Meeting ID: 947 4480 2916#

Present	Excused Absences	Unexcused Absences
1. Ann Bagchi, PhD 2. Cynthia Cocagee 3. Cezar Dumago (Secretary) 4. Wanda Figueroa, MD 5. Juanita Howell 6. Dr. Robert L. Johnson (Chair) 7. Elizabeth Kocot 8. Tamerla Lawrence 9. Joann McEniry (Co-Chair) 10. Patricia Moore (Treasurer) 11. Vieshia Morales 12. Natalie Muhammad 13. Walter Okoroanyanwu, MD 14. Dominga Padilla, MD 15. Warren Poole 16. Sharon Postel (Non-Voting) 17. Providencia Rodriguez 18. Aliya Roman (Non-Voting) 19. Ricardo Salcido 20. Calvin Toler	21. Janice Adams-Jarrells 22. Ketlen Alsbrook (Recipient) 23. Wali Bradley 24. James Carrington 25. Thomas Johnson 26. Gloria Jones 27. Rev. Don Ransom 28. Debbie Morgan	29. Kendall Clark 30. Jeremiah Cohen

Guests: Claudia Ortiz, Delia King, Dorsey L. Woods, Gabrielle Ferrigno, Jaimele Wineglass, Jermaine Way, Judith Lacinak, Jose Avila, Kathleen O'Brien, Pearl Akwaja, Wayne Cleveland, M Brown.

PC Support Staff: Tania Guaman, Vicky Saguy

1. Welcome & Moment of Silence

Dr. Johnson welcomed all attendees and called the meeting to order at 1:39 PM. A moment of silence was observed for those affected, those who have passed, and those living with HIV/AIDS.

2. Roll Call

Dumago conducted the roll call for this meeting. Quorum was established.

3. Public Testimony

There was no public testimony.

4. Approval of the Meeting Summary from July 21, 2021

At the previous meeting, the June 16th meeting summary was approved as presented.

The July 21st meeting summary was sent electronically in advance for Planning Council review. Dr. Johnson asked for a motion to approve the meeting summary as presented. Poole motioned. Morales seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

5. Report from the Recipient

Roman provided the following report:

- As of today, 35 out of 38 contracts have been adopted. The remaining 3 contracts are in registrar targeting the September 1st meeting.
- The recipient is working on the FY'22 Ryan White Grant Application with the grant writer. The recipient is also preparing the FY'22 RFP Manual to coincide with the HRSA Application of a 3-year grant cycle, FY'22 – FY'24.
- The EIRC Case Studies were introduced to the EIRC Chairs on August 13th for the completion of the Integrated Health Plan deliverables. The findings are expected by November 2021 and a presentation of results to the Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) by January 2022.
- The recipient has not received the HRSA Site Visit findings. More information will be available to the council once this information is received.

6. Standing Committee Updates

- **Continuum of Care (COC): Vieshia Morales** – provided the July 8th COC report.
 - o At the July meeting, the committee introduced the Outpatient/Ambulatory Health, Housing, and Emergency Financial Assistance Standards for a 30-day review. No questions or comments were received during this review period. The Planning Council can approve these 3 standards today. The next COC meeting will be held on September 9, 2021, at 10am via Zoom.

Motion: Dr. Johnson asked for a motion to approve the Outpatient/Ambulatory Health, Emergency Financial Assistance and Housing Service Standards as presented. Morales motioned. Toler seconded. The vote was passed unanimously.

- **Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC): Joann McEniry** – provided the CPC report.
 - o The committee did not meet in August.
 - o The committee will review the 2022-2026 Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan guidance at the next CPC meeting on Friday, September 10, 2021, at 9:30am via Zoom.
- **Research and Evaluation Committee (REC): Ann Bagchi, Ph.D.** – provided the August 16th report.
 - o The committee approved the 2021 Final Needs Assessment Update Report. The Planning Council was asked to approve this report without the 30-day review period to allow the recipient to use this report for the Ryan White Grant Application.
 - o The committee is waiting for state data for the 2021 Annual Epidemiologic Report.
 - o The committee had a presentation on the National HIV/AIDS Strategy by Debbie Mohammed. The next REC meeting will be held on September 20, 2021, at 10am via Zoom.

Motion: Dr. Johnson asked for a motion to approve the 2021 Needs Assessment. Poole motioned. Morales seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

Discussion on Epidemiological Data: NJDOH's FY'20 HIV surveillance data is delayed due to COVID-19. As soon as the data is received, the Recipient will report it to the Planning Council.

- However, the 2018 to 2019 data comparison available on the 2020 Epidemiological report was briefly reviewed during the meeting.
- The Consultant added that two new diagnoses were found among the immigrant population, Brazilian and Centro American in the last 3 months at the Newark Department of Health. These MSM individuals came to the Department of Health with syphilis concerns. There are concerns that people who are taking PrEP and/or those taking anti-retro viral medication may assume that they are undetectable and not use protection. However, they might not be aware of their viral loads and might be spreading the virus.
- The Research and Evaluation Committee (REC) can find out how many STIs (syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, etc.) are Ryan White Clients. This can be helpful since the REC is looking for topics for the next Needs Assessment. This population could be included with STI testing as part of the EHE and also the Integrated Health Plan.
 - People who receive HIV treatment are less likely to get tested for STIs.
 - The health insurance requirement of prior authorization, result in delays or on people not taking the medication.
 - The Rutgers Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine will publish a paper about Youth and Viral Load Suppression. This paper shows that despite social determinants of health such as health insurance status, a tailored approach to each adolescent and young adult can mitigate a negative impact on viral load suppression. Ending the Epidemic Funding can be used to tailor an approach for youth for services not funded through Ryan White. The EHE fund is available for Essex County until 2025.
- **Community Involvement Activities (CIA): Warren Poole** – Poole provided the July 28 report.
 - War Talley presented about Ending the Epidemic.
 - 20 attendees provided input on how to address the HIV Epidemic in Essex County and the Newark EMA.
 - There was a speaker bureau in New Jersey. The EHE fund can be used to reopen the speaker bureau to educate youth about HIV and STI, and break stigma.
 - The CIA will not meet in August. The Committee will discuss about Aging with HIV in September. The next CIA meeting will be held on September 22, 2021, from 5pm to 7pm via Zoom.

Motion: Dr. Johnson asked for a motion to accept the committee reports. Morales motioned. Kocot seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

7. State & National Updates -

- **Report from the NJ Department of Health (NJDOH)** – Delgadillo excused himself from the meeting but sent the following updates to Support Staff:
 - The anticipated RFA for Prevention and Care will be released in September. Notice via email will be sent out upon the release of the RFA. Grant awards will start on 1/1/22. There will be a presentation of this RFA on September 13 at the NJHPE Issues Committee meeting. Those who are interested in applying can also expect several changes and requirements to qualify for state funding. One of the main changes is for agencies to have non-traditional work hours. There will be additional sessions to discuss and break down this RFA in more detail. Another key requirement is the use of social marketing with cultural sensitivity to reach those populations through non-traditional channels.

- The DOH HIV, STD Division is currently hiring temp positions with the possibility of becoming permanent. We have various positions available in the Newark and Trenton Offices. If you know of anyone or would like more information, go to the DOH website for announcements or reach out to K’aleef Morse for more info: Kaleef.morse@doh.nj.gov (DOH would like to hire asap)
- **Report from the Governor’s Advisory Council (GAC)** – Dr. Johnson reported that the Governor’s Council met on July 22nd.
 - There were concerns about the closure of the needle exchange program in Atlantic City. The Needle exchange program was closed the day after because of the location of the program. There have been other issues regarding other needle exchange programs. The Governor’s council is discussing ways to advice the governor on continuing the needle exchange program to prevent the spread of HIV among intravenous drug users.
- **Report from the NJ HIV Planning Group (NJHPG)** – Guaman provided the following report:
 - K’aleef had a meeting with the governor to approve the Ending the Epidemic State Plan in late July. The plan had been on hold but there are conversations about holding an event to release this plan in the near future.
 - There have been conversations about changing insurance providers contracts to remove the prior authorization requirement for PrEP, which has been a long-standing challenge mentioned by many NJHPG members.
 - At the state level, the process to report an STI is by fax or on paper. However, STI reports done by one agency are not accessible by other agencies. Therefore, the state is reviewing their process to help control the spread of STIs.
 - The approach of STI screenings through PrEP is working well to catch other STIs. The goal is to find ways to track a client’s health, potentially through data sharing. A new potential data system is being developed by looking at best practices and models that exist throughout the nation.
 - The protocols for Rapid Start are being reviewed. There would be potential meetings with local planning bodies, including Part As.
 - The Transgender Days of Learning are happening on Wednesday this month. This information was shared via email for reference.

8. Planning Council Administrative Issues

- **Report from Executive Committee** – Dr. Johnson reported that there was no issue.
 - The Executive Committee reviewed, approved, and wants to recommend some modifications to the Planning Council Bylaws. The revised document will be sent to the council 5 days prior to the meeting for review so that the council can approve the Bylaws at the next meeting. Members were asked to review the Bylaw changes before voting for approval at the next meeting. The NEMA Operating Policies will be reviewed next since these have not been reviewed in years.
 - Poole, Toler and Adams-Jarrells participated who participated on the HRSA learning collaborative are recommending the creation of an ad-hoc committee to continue this work. One of their ideas is to recruit and increase representation of some population to the Council including youth. This will be discussed at the next Executive Committee meeting.
- **Report from Treasurer** – Moore provided the Treasurer’s report. As of July, we are within budget amounts except the utilities, which were over the budgeted amount. This line will be looked at to see if a budget modification will be needed.

- **Report from Planning Council (PC) Support Staff** – Guaman reported the following:
 - Saguay will no longer work as a Planning Council Support Staff as of August 27th. United Way of Greater Union County has started the hiring process to find a replacement soon. Meeting calendar invitations for Planning Council meetings sent previously will be cancelled and new calendar invitations will be sent for everyone.

9. Old/New Business

- **Reframing the Focus: Communities Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) by War Talley**
 - Talley provided a comprehensive overview of the Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative, including the EHE goals for the Newark EMA. This presentation will be available on the Planning Council website for future access.
 - Feedback was gathered from attendees throughout the presentation, the following questions were asked:
 - **How do we ensure people living with HIV have equitable access to HIV treatment?:**
 - Improve access to transportation, particularly focusing on barriers for rural counties such as the Warren, Sussex, and Morris counties. For instance, some people receiving care at Zufall Health Center are far from the site. Those who have Medicaid have travel mileage restrictions, and some specialists are not within that milage parameter which is a barrier for patients who need adequate care.
 - Simplify the ADDP application process.
 - Have more agencies with vans transport patients to and from agencies, medical visits, their pharmacy, and other appointments when needed.
 - Educate people about HIV at school and within the school system, particularly youth who become sexually active early on. Educate the youth about HIV and STIs.
 - Provide funds for the NJ Speakers' Bureau since funds were cut.
 - Have medical mobile units (Vans) in key areas of the community to provide HIV testing.
 - Create comfort to use Telehealth since both providers and patients might not be used to this new practice yet, and this can be a great way to address transportation barriers.
 - Increase awareness on how and where to access services through social media, signage, radio, etc.
 - **What can the Essex County Community, as a whole, do to lessen the health disparities faced by its residents?**
 - Make rent affordable in Newark, taking into consideration the cost of living and the income of Ryan White clients. Transitional Rental Assistance (TRA) helps clients pay for housing costs so they can save money to live on their own; however, this is not possible since rent in New Jersey rent is very high. It is also difficult to find fair market value apartments in Union County, especially for people who have section 8 vouchers. Affordable rent apartments have limits and max income and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) clients do not meet that requirement.
 - Review requirements – for instance apartments require a record or credit checks and most low-income people do not have a good credit.
 - The Housing Problem also relates to low living wages, home affordability, overcharging for units, and other barriers for affordable housing that exclude the most vulnerable populations. A Plan to target all those areas is needed throughout New Jersey.

- **What role does the NEMA Planning Council have on the EHE Planning?**
 - The Planning Council should using EHE at the front forth of all planning activities and continue having consumer engagement to ensure Ryan White Clients voices are heard.
- Tally encourages attendees to participate in the Culture of Health Conference on December 9 and 10, 2021 to network with others who are working on policy changes that will improve health outcomes in the community in general and not only for people living with HIV.

10. Announcements

NJCRI has a Health Fair on Saturday, August 21, 21 from 10AM to 3PM.

11. Next Meeting

The next Planning Council meeting will be held on Wed. September 15, 2021, at 1:30pm via Zoom.

12. Adjournment

Dr. Johnson had to step out of the meeting. On his behalf, McEniry asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lawrence motioned to adjourn. Toler seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.