



**Research & Evaluation Committee  
MEETING SUMMARY**

**Monday, September 16, 2024, from 10:00 AM to 11:23 AM**  
Videoconference via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89756434893>  
Teleconference: (929) 205 6099 / Meeting ID: 897 5643 4893

PRESENT	EXCUSED	UNEXCUSED
1. Ann Bagchi, PhD/DNP (Chair) 2. Corey Destefano (Vice-Chair) 3. Kasny Damas (Secretary) 4. Lynette Abduwaliyy 5. Warren Poole 6. Sharon Postel (Non-Voting)	7. Natalie Muhammad	

**Guests:** Ashanti Simpson-Little

**PC Support Staff:** Roberto Benoit, Richell Garcia

**1. Welcome and Moment of Silence**

- Destefano called this meeting to order at 10:02 AM. A moment of silence was observed for all those living with, those who have passed, and those affected by HIV/AIDS.

**2. Roll Call**

- Support Staff conducted roll call. Quorum was established.

**3. Public Testimony**

- There were no public testimony

**4. Approval of the Meeting Summaries from August 19th, 2024**

The meeting summary was sent out electronically ahead of the meeting. Destefano called for a motion to approve the meeting summary. Abdulwaliyy made a motion to approve the meeting summary, and Poole seconded the motion.

**5. Standing Committee Updates**

- **Continuum of Care Committee (COC) – Support Staff provided the report.**
  - The committee met on Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 10 AM via Zoom.
  - The COC committee approved the substance use outpatient and Medical Nutrition Therapy for 30-day review.

- The September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting was canceled. The next COC meeting will be held on Thursday October 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM.
- **Comprehensive Planning Committee – Support Staff provided the update.**
  - The committee last met on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10 AM via Zoom
  - The committee amended and re-voted on the FY 25 PSRA. The committee added .20 percent to the Home and Community based health service category.
  - During the meeting during the meeting, the committee received an update on the 2022 through 2026 integrated prevention and Care Plan report.
  - The next CPC meeting will be held on Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30AM
- **Consumer Involvement Activities Committee (CIA) – Support Staff provided the update.**
  - The committee last met on Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, at 5PM via the Zoom.
  - Cynthia Gomez from the Rutger Cancer Institute presenting a workshop on Nutrition for Cancer Prevention
  - The next CIA meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 5 PM via Zoom.
- **Nominations committee (NC) – Support Staff provided the update.**
  - The committee last met on July 25<sup>th</sup> 17, 2004, at 12pm via zoom.
  - During the meeting, the nomination committee selected a candidate to serve as NEMA Treasurer. Viesha Morales was selected as the new treasurer.
  - The Planning Council approved the nomination.
  - The nomination committee has been tabled until further notice.

## 6. Old Business

### Need Assessment Findings

- Postel informed the committee that the full need assessment is sent to all agencies on the first year. Then year two and three there is a focus on specific topic. Some highlights from the reports are as follows:
  - Postel mentioned that the needs assessment survey received 30 responses from agencies.
  - 93% of the agencies provided services to undocumented individuals.
  - The two agencies that noted they did not service undocumented were legal services and housing for homeless.
- The needs assessment survey listed services provided directly or indirectly by Newark EMA. The agencies identified the following Non RWHAP funded agencies and services:
  - Social Services
  - Religious Services
  - Statewide legal and advocacy organizations
  - Food pantry
  - Bilingual Mental Health Service
  - Government agencies
  - Uber Health
  - The City of New York Municipal ID program
- The number of newly diagnosed PLWH receiving RWHAP services in the Newark EMA has increased by 17 % or 31 individuals from 187 as 12/31/22 to 218 as of 12/31/23. This trend continued in 2024.

- The number of RWHAP clients is steadily increasing mostly due to undocumented PLWH – who accounted for 86% of the increase in the Newark EMA RWHAP clients 2023.
- Some highlights of the demographics:
  - 2/5 (43%) are Hispanic/Latino and 50% Black/ African American
  - 2/3 are Male, age 25-44
  - 70% are uninsured
  - 77% have incomes <100% FPL and 85% < 139% FPL (Medicaid Expansion Limit)
  - Nearly all live in Stable Permanent or Temporary Housing
  - 1 in 6 (16%) reside outside of the EMA
  - 11% are newly diagnosed with HIV.
- Postel mentioned that Mental Health counseling or similar counseling was identified as top priority need by members of the CIA at the Newark EMA.
- The undocumented clients need language-specific services (example: Creole speaking staff and Spanish speaking mental health specialist)
- The newly diagnosed clients appear to have a gap in linking medical care and ART while awaiting approval for charity care or ADDP.
- The newly diagnosed clients continue to have delays in linkage to care within 30 days following the diagnosis. Postel mentioned that fear and denial following HIV diagnosis can be a reason client are not engaging in medical care immediately following diagnosis.
- Postel informed that agencies can use Ryan White funds while the client is waiting for approval of charity care.
- Postel recommended coordination within agencies to help the client.

### **Funding Stream Analysis.**

- Benoit presented the recent Funding Stream Analysis data for agencies in the EMA. Update from the Division of Mental and Addiction Services and NJDOH. Benoit is awaiting data from 2023 HOPWA data. Benoit informed that an amendment can be made when new information is received.
- Benoit called for a motion to approve the Funding Stream Analysis with the present changes. Abdulwaliyy made a motion to approve the Funding Stream Analysis and Poole second the motion.

### **2022-2026 Integrated Prevention and Care Plan**

- Postel presented an update on the Integrated Prevention and Care Plan. The presentation covered the period ending of June 2024. Some highlights from the reports are as follows:
  - Men who have Sex with Men account for ¼ (26%) of RWHAP clients in the EMA.
  - Black/ African Americans are nearly 2/3 of clients -36% men and 27% women
  - Youth are 2% and most of these are age 19-24
  - Nearly 1 in 6 are age 25-34
  - Nearly half (44%) are very low income (receiving Medicaid with income <139% Federal Poverty Level)
  - One 1 in 5 (20%) are uninsured, possibly low income and need RWHAP funded services especially medical care.
  - The individuals receiving Medicaid decreased from 44.7% to 44.0% from 2/29/24 to 4/30/24
  - The uninsured categories increased from 19.7% to 20.2% 2/29 to 4/30/24

- The number of newly diagnosed EMA increased by 8% from 2/29/24 to 4/30/24.
- The percentage of RWHAP clients in Medicaid was 43.6% and 21.1% for uninsured individuals as of 6/30/24.
- The linkage to care within 30 days decreased slightly from 79.8 to 79.4 percent
- The linkage to care within 7 days increased from 56.7 to 58.0 percent.
- The goal is to increase viral load suppression to 95% by 2026 Unfortunately, VLS declined slightly across the board.
  - The viral load suppression decreased from 89.5 to 89.3%
  - Durable viral load suppression one year decreased from 82.9 to 82.6%
  - The DVLS for two years decreased slightly from 73% to 72.8%.
- The measurement for durable viral load suppression for one year for subcategories decreased except for the youth and age 25-34 category.
  - The VLS for youth increased from 64.2% to 64.9%.
  - The VLS for age 25-34 increased from 72.8% to 73.4%.
- The measurements for durable viral load suppression for 2 years for sub-group decreased slightly with the exception of transgender individuals.
- Abdulwaliyy noticed that the time frame of Medicaid recertification is increasing. Abdulwaliyy noticed that individuals are not coming to the doctor or taking their medications. As a linkage to care coordinator, she links the patients to readiness to commit to their care and other social needs. Another barrier to care for the clients are the language barriers and need for social resources.
- Abdulwaliyy informed the committee that the Department of Human Services New Jersey has a list of all the resources for undocumented individual. Abdulwaliyy mentioned the Office of New Americans Welcome Booklet and the New Americans Integration Reports. Postel mentioned that the booklet be used as the recommendation of resources for undocumented individuals.

## 7. New Business

### 2024 Administrative Mechanism

- Postel informed the committee that the recipient and all agencies will complete a full administrative mechanism survey in year one. The recipient completes an administrative mechanism assessment in years two and three there. This year was a full assessment year. Postel mentioned the definition of the Administrative Mechanism:
  - Federal law requires councils planning to assess the efficiency of the administrative mechanism in rapidly allocating funds to areas of greatest need within the eligible area. To areas of greatest need within the eligible area and at the discretion of the Planning Council, assess the effectiveness, either directly or through contractual arrangements of the services order offered, in meeting the identified needs.
- 28 of the 30 agencies responded to the Administrative Mechanism survey.
- The responses from the providers/agencies showed continued satisfaction with improvement made to the RW Unit.
- Most agencies were pleased with CHAMP
  - Postel mentioned that CHAMP will be cloud base by FY25, and this will result in the system running faster. There will be more training required for learning Champ. Training in medical case management and training for all agencies will be provided. The training will be most likely virtual.

- Most agencies were satisfied with the new HRSA 3-year RWHAP grant award process. The agencies were pleased with the one full RFP and two years noncompeting continuation.
- In the recipient survey there was a non-competing continuation. The agencies were contacted directly to submit their contracts by certain deadlines.
- The City implemented DocuSign for contract execution. Destefano added that DocuSign makes the process easier.
- 100% of our sub-recipients received a fiscal site visit.
- The goal is to have CHAMP operational by the start of FY2025 March 1, 2025.
- Destefano called for a motion to approve the Administrative Mechanism Assessment report. Abdulwaliyy made a motion to approve the Administrative Mechanism and Poole second the motion.

## **8. Administrative Issues**

## **9. Announcements**

- The United Way of Greater Union County will hold a ribbon ceremony for the new building on September 19th from 10am to 12 pm
- Positive health is hosting Tuesday October 8 at Bella Halia Restaurant. This event is for positive and prep individuals.
- Abdulwaliyy is working on a coat and blanket drive and will be sending a flyer asking for donations.

## **10. Next Meeting**

- The next meeting will be held on October 21, 2024.

## **11. Adjournment**

- Destefano called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Abdulwaliyy made the motion to adjourn and Poole seconded. All were in favor, no abstentions, or objections. The meeting was successfully adjourned at 11:23 AM.