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County Executive

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**TRI-COUNTY RYAN WHITE
HIV/AIDS TREATMENT EXTENSION ACT (of 2009)
PART A STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, November 11, 2010
Nyack Hospital, Rockland County**

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: T. Aliotta, V. Alvarez, B. Bennet, S. Carey (for R. Schiffrin) E. D'Aquino (for M. Shelley), H. Jones, R. Nathan, T. Otisi, J. Ruiz-Perez, M. Piazza, H. Sherwin, A. Straus, S. Sullam (for M. Donoghue) and G. Yarn

Members Absent: M. Bannister, B. Bento-Fleming, C. Brazil, L. Bucknor, C. Douaihy, A. Hardman, B. Ilardi, D. Kittel, R. Maher, J. McGovern, R. Meyer, M. Piazza, L. Reid, S. Riordan, A. Ruggiero, D. Scholar, K. Scott, K. Slade

Guests: D. Bell (CHAIN), R. Blain (MVNHC), M. Diaz (LT), K. Espino (FCIC RDOH), M. Fede (FCIC Nyack Hospital), J. G. Paulino (ECHO Specialty Pharmacy)

Staff Present: F. Avellanet, L. Hakim, J. Lehane, and T. Petro

I. Introductions/Announcements

- Rockland County AIDS Consortium will be holding an annual World AIDS Day (WAD) event at Rockland Community College on December 1, 2010 between 10 am and 3 pm.
- Barbara Bennet, Part B Network Coordinator (ARCS), will send out a list of World AIDS Day events in the Hudson Valley.

II. Review of the October 13, 2010 Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

A motion (H. Jones, V. Alvarez) to accept the minutes of the October 13, 2010 meeting with corrections to pages 3 and 4 were unanimously approved.

- Page 3: Due to NYS and federal funding cuts in the past several years, the AI has made the painful decision to defund all Part B Networks effective *December 31, 2010*, not December 23.
- Page 4: The plan for the WAD conference at Locust Grove Museum in Poughkeepsie *is moving forward, however, without a presentation by Dr. Mary Ann Elbert* from the Veteran's Administration Substance Abuse Program in Castle Point..
- Page 4: An objective of the *Policy Advocacy and Education Committee (PAE)*, not (APE) was to inform and promote a coordinated response regarding HIV/AIDS issues.



III. Presentation: National HIV/AIDS Strategy

Jan Park, Government Co-Chair, HIV Planning Council, NYCDOHMH

The purpose of a *National HIV/AIDS Strategy* (NHAS) is to develop a plan for a coordinated approach to achieve key goals to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS, increase access to care, and reduce racial disparities.

The vision of the NHAS is that “The U.S. will become a place where new HIV infections are rare and when they do occur, every person, regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or socio-economic circumstance, will have unfettered access to high quality, life-extending care, free from stigma and discrimination.”

The NHAS goals, which align with the NY EMA (Eligible Metropolitan Area) Comprehensive Strategic HIV/AIDS Plan for 2009-2012, are:

- Prevention: Reducing New HIV Infections
- Care: Increasing Access to Care and Improving Health Outcomes for People Living with HIV
- Reduce HIV-Related Health Disparities and Health Inequities
- Coordination: Achieving a More Coordinated National Response to the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.

The strategies to achieve these goals are:

- Engage communities to affirm support for people living with HIV, e.g., media, CBOs, faith communities, social networks and businesses.
- Promote public leadership of people living with HIV.
- Promote public health approaches to HIV prevention and care, including making state criminal statutes consistent with knowledge of HIV transmission.
- Strengthen enforcement of civil rights laws.
- Ensure coordinated program administration.
- Promote equitable resource allocation.
- Streamline and standardize data collection.
- Promote rigorous evaluation of current programs and re-direct resources to the most effective programs.
- Provide regular public reporting by the Federal Government on progress of NHAS.
- Encourage States to provide regular progress reports.

Nationally, a coordinated effort is needed and not a quick fix. There will be challenges ahead and ways to address them include:

- Insisting on accountability.
- Choosing among competing priorities.
- Allocating resources effectively.
- Being strategic without infringing on autonomy.

IV. Part B Updates (B. Bennet)

- The Hudson Valley HIV Care Network General Membership meeting was held on October 29, 2010. Due to funding cuts made by NYSDOH, this was the last Part B Network meeting. Plans to transition functions and activities of the Part B Network to other entities are underway.
- The Hudson Valley HIV Care Network is trying to work with other agencies to assume responsibility for some of the Network activities. Rob Maher (TOUCH) is working on a draft proposal (distributed today) outlining steps necessary for the Network to continue to function as a non-profit IRS 501(c)(3) without NYS funding. Of concern is the lack of resources among agencies in the Mid-Hudson Valley to coordinate multi-county meetings and events. These issues will be discussed at the Network’s Executive Committee meeting (open to all) to be held on November 19th. Westchester County Department of Health (WCDH) will send out the monthly calendar starting in

2011 and include activities for the Tri-County region (TCR) only. Annual NYS legislative visits and related advocacy issues cannot be coordinated by WCDH staff, therefore, organizations such as Living Together working with Voices Of Community Activists & Leaders (VOCAL) or the New York AIDS Coalition (NYAC) might be better situated to coordinate these events and collaborate with the counties in the Mid-Hudson Valley.

- The Faith-based initiative at Westchester Medical Center was held on November 8 and another is scheduled for November 17 in Newburgh. Interfaith collaborations may continue, to be addressed on some level through linkages with local CBOs, AIDS task forces, and other venues.
- The Yonkers DSS forum (50+ attended) was held on October 27 and the White Plains forum is scheduled for November 18th. The staff of WCDH is working to schedule a forum with the Mount Vernon DSS office to be held in early 2011. Rockland and Sullivan DSS forums may also be scheduled.
- A draft of the Network's *Regional Strategic Plan* describing the HIV epidemic and developing local and regional strategies for the next five years is currently under review and will be submitted to NYSDOH before the end of the year.

V. Living Together Updates (V. Alvarez)

- The 2011 Living Together (LT) picnic will likely be the last since the Janice Burns Foundation, which had funded the picnic for many years, is being dissolved. Alternate funding is being sought, but without financial support the picnics cannot continue.
- Support groups are doing well with more PLWHA attending regularly and working towards positive health outcomes, though, Victor noted, that due to mental health issues, recent or past substance abuse, and other co-morbidities, some PLWHA will never take their medications as prescribed. Recently, group members expressed concern about their ability to self-advocate, especially during hospital stays at non-Designated AIDS Centers. Clients reported frustration over the lack of knowledge on the part of some hospital staff about HIV medication regimens. They decided that the best strategy was to contact and work with their own health care providers and have them deal directly with the hospital staff. This topic will become an ongoing agenda item.

VI. Part A Updates (T. Petro)

- The CHAIN Study (D. Bell) is currently recruiting participants at Westchester Medical Center and looking to increase the number of participants who live in Putnam County.
- The September 1st wave of Part A budget modifications resulted in almost \$14,000 being returned to WCDH, i.e., several programs voluntarily lowered their contracted budgets in anticipation of not being able to spend the entire amount (most often due to staff vacancies). The next round of budget modifications will be submitted on December 1st. Unspent funds will be able to be carried over into next year if not re-allocated to current-year priorities.
- Ryan White funding for the TCR is based on the number of PLWHA in the NY EMA as determined by the NYS Bureau of HIV/AIDS Epidemiology. A spreadsheet was distributed indicating that the percent of living HIV/AIDS cases in TCR has decreased from 4.9% in 2007 to 4.7% in 2008. Even though the actual numbers of living HIV/AIDS cases has increased in TCR, NYC's rate of increase surpassed TCR's, thus reducing the overall proportion of cases within the EMA as of 2008. The lower percentage of living HIV/AIDS cases will likely result in a reduction in funding next year. The actual funding amounts will be announced in March 2011.
- A spreadsheet was distributed indicating the level of "unmet need" in the TCR. Unmet need – defined as the percent of those PLWHA showing no evidence of receiving HIV primary care (i.e., viral load and CD4 lab tests) in a calendar year – is data required to be reported to HRSA in the annual Part A funding application. NYSDOH compiles the data based on those reported to be living with HIV/AIDS (in this case as of 12/31/08) who did not have a viral load or CD4 test (which are

reportable episodes under NYS public health law) in the following year. In 2009, of those living with HIV (non-AIDS), it was reported that 39.9% were not “in care” (i.e. they have “unmet need”), and for those living with AIDS, it was 40.1%. Note that when the variable for race/ethnicity is calculated, 46% of blacks with HIV (non-AIDS) are not in care. The highest percent of persons living with AIDS is for whites of whom 42.5% are not in care. Of people who are black and Hispanic with AIDS, 40.9% respectively are not in care. A cautionary note about these data: the actual number of PLHWA may be less than that reported by NYSDOH because some individuals may have died or moved out of the region, so the percent out of care correspondingly may really be less. This is common for large metropolitan areas like NYC with long-standing HIV epidemics.

- Two spreadsheets (one including and the other excluding inmates) were presented with the latest available data (2008) from NYSDOH regarding those PLWHA in the TCR. As of 12/31/08, including inmates, there were 4,835 Tri-County PLWHA (4,076 excluding inmates). Males represented 61.1% of those living and females 38.9%. Blacks comprised 46.1% of living cases, Hispanics 27.6%, and whites 20.7%. Those age 40-49 made up 37.1% followed by the 50-59% age group at 30.4%. Regarding risk exposure, IDU (inject drug users) represented 28.5% of the living, followed closely by heterosexual contact at 27.2%, and MSM (men-who-have-sex-with men) at 22.1%. Spreadsheets for each individual county by the same demographic variables were attached. Westchester was home to 81.3% of PLWHA in 2008, Rockland 16.1%, and Putnam 2.6%.

Health Committee Report (T. Petro)

At the next Health Committee meeting to be held on January 26, 2011, Dan Belanger from the NYSDOH/AIDS Institute (AI) will present an overview of the State’s quality management program for HIV primary care providers and explain how HIVQual evaluations are conducted.

EIS Social Networking Strategy (SNS) Working Group (T. Petro)

The next EIS/SNS working group meeting will take place on November 30th. At that meeting there will be a presentation on the social networking model used by programs operated by Harlem United Community AIDS Center in NYC.

Medical Case Management Committee Report (J. Lehane)

A Webinar session for the MCM Quality Improvement (QI) Learning Network was held on October 25th. The next regular MCM meeting is scheduled for November 22, 2010. Providers are obligated to participate in the MCM Learning Network in the TCR. There are QI Learning Networks for other service categories that meet regularly in NYC and providers are obligated to attend those meetings as well. Data from the 2009 evaluation of TCR MCM programs will be presented at the January 26, 2011 MCM Learning Network meeting.

Housing Committee Report (F. Avellanet)

Beginning in January 2011 Westchester County Department of Social Services will no longer administer the federally funded Section 8 housing program. Administration will revert back to NYS which may procure a provider to take it over. Regardless, the program will continue for eligible Westchester residents. The release of funding for Westchester County’s Eviction Prevention and Housing program has been delayed.

VII. Legislative Updates (J. Park)

Midterm Congressional elections will likely affect the appropriation of Ryan White funding in 2011. The federal government is currently operating under continuing budget resolutions which appropriate funding for federal agencies for a month or so at a time based on the previous year’s funding level. Though all federal appropriations may be concluded for the current federal fiscal year (10/1/10 – 9/30/11) by December, it’s more likely that the newly elected Congress will complete the process early next year at which time a clearer picture of the direction of future HIV/AIDS funding will emerge.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 12, 2011, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm at Planned Parenthood, White Plains. (The meeting was cancelled due to yet another snow storm.)