

Andrew J. Spano
County Executive

Department of Health

Joshua Lipsman, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

**TRI-COUNTY RYAN WHITE TITLE I
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday, June 8, 2005

Westchester Medical Center/Cedarwood Hall Boardroom
Valhalla, NY

APPROVED MINUTES

- Members Present:** V. Alvarez, C. Archbald MD, L. Beal, H. Blecher, C. Brazil, E. D'Aquino, B. Cauthen, R. Cestone (for S. Wayne), G. Diaz, D. Dominguez (for R. Maher), K. Everett, J. Ganapol, B. Ilardi, S. Levine MD, M. Littles, M. Lopez-Squillini, D. Marlowe, A. Paige-Bowman, R. Schiffrin, A. Straus, G. Yarn, Y. Yehuda
- Members Absent:** L. Bennett, C. Burwell, D. Capasso, H. Fitzgerald, D. Frantzen, L. Hilton, R. Leandre, J. Levy, R. Maher, J. McGovern, T. Payne, S. Pemberton, M. Piazza, D. Scholar, K. Scott, K. Slade, M. Sosne, S. Wayne, O. Young
- Guests Present:** D. Abramson, B. Bennet, R. Birchard, O. Borda, K. Brennan, M. Haithcox, K. Henry, M. Hodgson-Vargas, W. Morel, M. Simon, S. Sullam, E. White
- Staff Present:** J. Lehane, T. Petro, R. Recchia, B. Reyes
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I. Approval of May 5, 2005 Minutes

The minutes were approved with several corrections. Under the Living Together Report, Victor clarified that: 1) he was hoping that Dr. Alvaro Carascal from the AIDS Institute's Education & Training Center would make a local presentation soon on HIV/AIDS treatment updates, and 2) at a recent meeting of the NYSDOH AIDS Institute's dental clinical advisory committee, members reported that front-line dental providers exposed to HIV who were taking antiretrovirals were not able to maintain the regimen due to side effects. David Abramson made the third correction under the CHAIN report: that the CHAIN study has been collecting data from consumers for 11 years, not 8.

II. Announcements

- Muriel Hodgson-Vargas of the Council of Community Services of NYS announced that Odell Mays will present a seminar on “How to Build a Community Advisory Board” on June 9, 2005 at Greyston Health Services.
- Melissa Haithcox reported that she is leaving Bailey House. Her replacement as program director of the TA Clearinghouse will be Jennifer Carmona. Clearinghouse staff will be coming to the Tri-County area to do some focus groups and trainings on how to sustain programs in times of dwindling funding and how to develop an employee handbook. A special Clearinghouse Community Focus Group on the capacity-building needs of HIV/AIDS service agencies will be held at Planned Parenthood in White Plains on July 13 immediately after the next Title I Steering Committee meeting.
- Owen Borda reported that there were several WAVE-supported events scheduled around National Testing Day, June 27th. There will be HIV testing done in Yonkers at Lincoln Park; as well as in New Rochelle and Mount Vernon on June 25th and 26th.
- Scott Sullam announced that Rockland County Department of Health will be conducting half-day counseling and testing sessions on June 27 at the Haitian American Cultural Social Organization and at TOUCH.
- The Westchester Women’s Health Task Force is starting a project called “Request a Test” to encourage women to request HIV testing from their primary care providers. This program is in response to the new NYS guidelines for counseling and testing. Contact Owen Borda for more information.
- Human sexuality training including topics on bi-sexuality, the down-low, and heterosexuality, will be offered on site for CBO’s in the Tri-County region. Contact Trina Hiemcke at ARCS to schedule training.
- On June 18th the Yonkers Task Force is hosting a noon to 6 PM HIV prevention fair at Chicken Island in Yonkers. Rapid testing will be offered and food and entertainment will be provided. Contact Gladys Diaz at Sharing Community for more information.
- On June 24th the Yonkers HIV Providers’ Task Force will host the first annual symposium on HIV prevention and care at the Royal Regency Hotel in Yonkers. As part of the day of training and planning, Victor Alvarez will present on treatment adherence issues, Owen Borda will present on prevention with positives, and Tracy Swan will present on HIV/Hep-C co-infection. All are invited to attend. Contact Jose Rivera at Sharing Community for more information.
- A flyer was distributed about “Enhancing Provider/Client Communication” trainings for case managers and social workers to be held on June 16 at Greyston and June 22 at ARCS by Cicatelli Associates, Inc.
- A flyer was distributed regarding Joel Levy’s retirement party on July 13, 530 PM-930 PM at Greentree Country Club in New Rochelle.

III. Update Reports

Living Together (V. Alvarez)

- Victor reported that LT met in May at ARCS and discussed prevention with positives, how to disclose, harm reduction, and taking healthy risks.

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- Linda Beal has been officially appointed to the NYSDOH/AIDS Institute's Quality of Care Committee.
- Some members of LT express that the CHAIN interview is long and repetitive, often re-requesting information that providers already ask. There are also many CHAIN questions about sex and other very private matters that may appear to threaten confidentiality. LT will be discussing these issues further.
- The Living Together picnic will be held on Saturday, July 30, 2005 at FDR Park (section 5A) in Yorktown. All are invited to join in the fun!
- There will be no LT meeting in August.

Title II (K. Everett)

- On June 3rd Christine Rivera (NYSDOH's ADAP) and Laura Caruso (GMHC) presented information on the new Medicare regulations at the General Network meeting at ARCS. The new regulations will become effective on January 1, 2006. This is a very important topic for both consumers and providers. Since attendance was low on June 3, they will be presenting again on July 27th. It is vital that providers understand these changes so that they can be helpful to consumers. For more information on this presentation contact Kelli Everett at 914-428-6300 x230 or lhrcarenetwork@gmail.com.
- On June 13th there will be an information-sharing meeting between the Case Management Working Group and representatives of the Westchester Department of Social Services. The purpose is to provide a forum for case managers to network with members of DSS and to get answers to some questions that have been coming up about services for clients. For more information contact Kelli Everett at 914-428-6300 x230 or lhrcarenetwork@gmail.com.
- The next General Network meeting will be held on June 29th at ARCS. At this meeting Dr. Harold Horowitz, Director of HIV/AIDS services at Westchester Medical Center, will provide an update on new HIV medications and treatment strategies. For more information contact Kelli Everett at 914-428-6300 x230 or lhrcarenetwork@gmail.com.

Title I (T. Petro)

- The Year 14 (unspent) carryover funding total has been finalized at \$502,021. As previously approved, \$40,620 will be used to fill a deficit in the Year 15 budget since the award fell short, and \$54,047 will make the WCDH budget whole, leaving a \$407,354 balance. Though enhancing funds for treatment adherence had previously been mentioned as a carryover option, it was determined that the \$225,000 set aside from the Year 15 award would be sufficient even if all six of the treatment adherence proposals submitted qualified for funding. A motion, therefore, was made and seconded (V. Alvarez/G. Diaz) to allocate the carryover balance to the uninsured care pools (ADAP).
- The treatment adherence proposals are in review. The review committee will meet on June 30, 2005 to discuss scores and make funding recommendations. Awards will be announced in August for a start date of September 1st.
- At the next Title I Steering Committee meeting (July 13th), American Express will be presenting the results of the Unit Cost project. In addition, if available, the final revised NYS counseling and testing guidelines as well as the dates and locations for training on how to implement the new guidelines will be distributed.
- There will be no Title I Steering Committee meeting in August.

IV. CHAIN Report on Hepatitis C (D. Abramson)

At the last Title I Steering Committee meeting (May 11, 2005), questions were raised about the prevalence of hepatitis C infection among PLWHA in the Tri-County region. The CHAIN data were analyzed and the following findings by David Abramson provide an overview of Hep-C in the region:

- In the Tri-County CHAIN cohort, 42% of the participants reported ever having Hep-C. The variables that seemed related to Hep-C infection were being male, older age, and ever having used drugs.
- When individuals were asked if they had been tested in the previous year for Hep-C, in Wave 1 (2001-02) 83% reportedly were tested; Wave 2 (2002-03), 92%; and Wave 3 (2003-04) 72%.
- Few individuals (6%-10%) reported being in treatment for Hep-C. The Committee discussed reasons for the low number of individuals receiving treatment and those who were knowledgeable of Hep-C said that many people may not be at a stage that they are ready for treatment. Hep-C is difficult to treat and some strains of the infections do not respond well to the current treatments.
- After much discussion it was decided that the NYSDOH/AIDS Institute, through its subcontract with the Island Peer Review Organization (IPRO) might be the appropriate source to query as to what providers are doing to obtain information about Hep-C from patients and to provide quality care when they have the dual diagnoses of HIV and Hep-C.

V. Ranking Service Priorities for Year 16 (3/1/06-2/28/07) (T. Petro)

This year, facing a decrease in the Title I award, NYC had to consider cutting some of its programs. After much discussion it was decided that a system for ranking programs was needed to compare various services and to make fair and educated decisions about how to allocate dwindling funding awards. A task force was organized to develop a ranking and prioritization system. The task force developed a tool for ranking the programs and is applying the tool to the portfolio of NYC services. Weighted criteria for scoring priorities include: 1) the degree to which the service is also funded from other sources; 2) the degree to which the service contributes to access to, and maintenance in, primary care; 3) the degree to which the service fills a specific gap/need for a demographic or special population; 4) whether the service qualifies as a HRSA (Health Resources & Services Administration) "core" service; and 5) whether the service has been identified in consumer reports as a priority need. Some draft NYC examples were presented: of a total score of 58.5 points, buddy services received 17.5 points while case management scored 41. How the scores will be applied is the topic of the next series of NYC meetings. The intent is to use the rankings to prioritize for Year 16 priorities as well as making future cuts in services dictated by funding shortfalls.

The Steering Committee agreed to try out a similar ranking tool for Tri-County priorities later this year. It was noted that the Tri-County's Year 16 priorities for the HRSA application will have to be finalized at the July 13 Title I meeting, but that this was probably not the best year to add any new priorities that may not be allowed under a reauthorized CARE Act which hopefully will be passed by Congress and signed into law by the president by October 1, 2005 for implementation on March 1, 2006.

**Next Steering Committee Meeting: July 13, 2005, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM,
Planned Parenthood – White Plains Center, 175 Tarrytown Road**