

Andrew J. Spano
County Executive

Department of Health

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Commissioner

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

Thursday, February 22, 2007
Planned Parenthood – White Plains

APPROVED MINUTES

- Members Present:** D. Anderson (for K. Scott), M. Bannister, B. Bento-Fleming, H. Blecher, C. Brazil, D. Capasso, C. Carroll, G. Diaz, A. Hardman (for C. Burwell), M. Littles, R. Maher, J. McGovern, M. Piazza, T. Saari, S. Sampson (for R. Nathan), R. Schiffrin, A. Shurin, K. Slade, P. Taddeo (for S. Levine, MD), M. Velazquez, S. Wayne, Y. Yehudah (for C. Archbald, MD) and G. Yarn
- Members Absent:** V. Alvarez, L. Beal, L. Bennett-Rodriguez, H. Fitzgerald, B. Ilardi, D. Kittell, R. Leandre, A. Paige-Bowman, S. Pemberton, M. Piazza, D. Scholar, L. Tackley, and O. Young
- Guests Present:** Y. Bairan (GHS), S. Gray (UL), M. Hodgson-Vargas (CCSNYS), H. Jones (MVH), J. Kraus (ARCS), M. Mahoney (LSHV), R. Meyer (NYSDOH/AI), A. Otisi (VOA), G. Schmits (LSHV), H. Sherwin (LASR), and S. Sullam (RCDOH).
- Staff Present:** R. Recchia, T. Petro, and B. Reyes
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I. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded (K. Slade, D. Capasso) and unanimously approved to accept the minutes of the January 10, 2007 meeting with one change to the attendance section indicating Muriel Hodgson-Vargas as present.

II. Announcements

- Mark Velazquez was introduced as a new voting member of the RWTI Steering Committee representing consumers living in Rockland County.

- Westchester County Department of Health (WCDH) has released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to award a total of approximately \$75,000 to expand rapid testing in Westchester County by funding lead agencies representing a collaborative partnership capable of outreaching to and testing high-risk populations. Proposals are due by April 16, 2007. To download the RFP, see www.westchestergov.com/rfp/
- The August 8, 2007 Steering Committee meeting has been relocated to ARCS in Hawthorne. The meeting will most likely include discussion of the MAI (Minority AIDS Initiative) awards for 2007 to be issued in early August.
- Muriel Hodgson-Vargas of the Council of Community Services of New York State, Inc. (CCSNYS) announced that there will be a workshop on “Human Resource Issues: What You Should Know” on February 27, 2007 at the Yonkers Public Library, Riverfront Branch. The workshop will be held in the community room from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. For more information contact Natasha Tucker at ntucker@ccsnys.org or 914-667-6752. A flyer about the forum was distributed.
- A flyer was distributed regarding the New York AIDS Coalition-sponsored February 27, 2007 Albany AIDS Awareness Day.
- A flyer was distributed regarding the 2007 Northern Manhattan HIV/AIDS Profile Conference to be held on March 29, 2007 at the New York Academy of Medicine.

III. Additional Epi Data (T. Petro)

Two handouts requested in previous meetings were distributed. The first presented a one-page table – using 2004 data (latest year available) – of cumulative AIDS, living AIDS, and living HIV cases by county, both including and excluding inmates. In the Tri-County region as a whole, inmates comprise 9.2% of cumulative AIDS cases; 12.43% of living AIDS cases; and 23.36% of living HIV cases.

The second handout was a set of tables – using 2003 data – summarizing cumulative AIDS, living AIDS, and living HIV cases, excluding inmates, by local area of diagnosis for Rockland County. R. Maher had obtained the data by special request to NYSDOH and advised he made a subsequent request for data through 2004. J. Lehane drafted the tables using the same format used previously to present epi data. Besides a county-wide summary page, the Rockland tables were presented on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and risk exposure category. Nyack and Spring Valley stood out as the cities most affected. H. Blecher commented that there were no surprises, as the Rockland County Department of Health and other county HIV/AIDS service organizations already knew the communities most at-risk, and that Rockland’s cases largely followed the demographic patterns of Westchester, but on a smaller scale given Rockland’s population size is only about one third of Westchester’s.

P. Taddeo noted that the data was old and could not be used to analyze trends. T. Petro advised he would e-mail to all members the trend tables for data through 2004 that J. Lehane had presented at a previous Steering Committee meeting.

IV. Update Reports

Living Together (G. Yarn)

- LT members expressed concern at the February 15th meeting after B. Reyes announced updated information on the proposed amendment to HRSA/HAB (Health Resources & Services Administration/HIV-AIDS Bureau) Policy 99-02. The amendment proposes to limit short-term and emergency housing assistance to a retroactive lifetime maximum of 24 months for households inhabited by people living with HIV/AIDS. It was not clear if the policy is aimed only at rental assistance or is applicable to utility bills. Because so many comments were received nationally on the draft policy, HRSA has delayed implementation of the amendment until September 1, 2007 in order to conduct a more comprehensive review. Congressional representatives such as Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) have been working with advocacy groups such as the NYAC (New York AIDS Coalition) and the CAEAR (Cities Advocating Emergency Aid Relief) Coalition to re-work the draft policy. (B. Bento-Fleming of Grace Church Community Center advised that the policy would affect 65% of the agency's clients, i.e., 65% of clients are already at or over the 24-month lifetime cap and, with no federal section 8 vouchers available, would be seriously at-risk for becoming homeless.)
- The next LT meeting will be held on March 22, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM, at TOUCH in Rockland, followed by a one-hour treatment adherence group led by a peer educator.

Title II (S. Sampson)

- The Network Mental Health/Substance Use Committee's forum on stigma was held on January 24 at ARCS. The presentation by Dr. Richard McCarthy was so well-received that the forum may be repeated later this year.
- The next Network forum "Up in Smoke: Cigarettes and HIV," also sponsored by the Mental Health/Substance Use Committee, will be held on Thursday, March 22, 2007 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Urban League in White Plains. Dr. Alvaro Carrascal from the NYSDOH/AI will present.
- The next Title II Steering Committee meeting will be held on Friday, March 16, 2007, from 9:30 to 11:30 AM at ARCS in Hawthorne.

HATMA Implementation (T. Petro)

A one-page summary of the highlights of the February 13, 2007 HRSA national Title I conference call was reviewed. The most significant issues for implementation are: 1) HRSA plans to make the Year 17 (3/1/07 – 2/29/08) award in three installments over the next 6 months (formula, March 1; supplemental, May 1; and MAI, August 1), and that the MAI fiscal year will run from August 1, 2007 thru July 31, 2008; 2) the MAI grant will be awarded on a competitive basis with a new application soon to be issued; 3) there will be no 75%/25% core/non-core waiver issued in Year 17; and 4) program support initiatives (i.e., non-direct-client services) can no longer be supported with program service funding, but must now be included within the (newly increased) 10% administrative cap.

V. Year 17 (3/1/07 – 2/29/08) Spending Plan (T. Petro)

Tri-County currently has three program support initiatives: CCSNYS' technical assistance project, CHAIN study, and Living Together. Given that the 10% admin cap will likely only be enough to cover WCDH salaries, CCSNYS was advised that its technical assistance program must be defunded on March 1. The CHAIN study may continue to be funded by NYC, but for city residents only. WCDH staff were in discussions with Family Services of Westchester regarding having Living Together merged with FSW's Title I mental health program, since LT's strength has been in facilitating support groups and educational forums which contribute to mental wellness. (WCDH subsequently entered into discussions with NYCDOH on how to close out, i.e., fund, CCSNYS and CHAIN over the next month or so, as both initiatives had unfinished tasks to wrap up, and their terminations came so abruptly.)

[In response to comments at the January meeting that the CHAIN study might warrant being cut since it may be duplicative of the new Medical Monitoring Project (MMP) sponsored by CDC (Centers for Disease Control), NIH (National Institutes of Health) and HRSA, a general information pamphlet about the project was distributed. It was noted that there are more differences than similarities between CHAIN and MMP. Nationally 26 states and cities were chosen to participate in the MMP with 44 upstate (outside NYC) medical provider sites designated for sampling only 200 patients. The project will survey patients on met and unmet needs and barriers to care, perform risk factor assessments, and conduct medical record reviews. Tri-County sites are limited to Hudson River HealthCare, Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center, Rockland County DOH, Westchester Medical Center, White Plains Medical Associates, and the offices of two private physicians. (With no funding now available for CHAIN, further MMP discussion became a moot point.)]

A revised Year 17 contingency funding spreadsheet was presented with funding for CCSNYS and CHAIN (total = \$520,000) removed. The draft spending plan indicated that, using the worst-case scenario (i.e., an overall cut in the award of 15%), that all current direct client service programs could be carried with a minor reduction of only \$17,300 necessary. (Actually, all programs would be continued with no reductions at all at an award decrease of 14.8%.) This contingency plan was predicated on all Year 16 MAI providers being carried in Year 17 with base funding for the first five months until August 1 when the MAI award will be known and the Year 17 spending plan will need to be revised. There was consensus from the Steering Committee to accept the 15% worst-case contingency plan, as presented, and carry the MAIs with base funding starting March 1.

Next Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 11, 2007
10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Nyack Hospital - Rockland