

Andrew J. Spano
County Executive

Department of Health

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

**TRI-COUNTY RYAN WHITE HATMA
PART A STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, May 14, 2008
Nyack Hospital**

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: T. Aliotta, V. Alvarez, C. Archbald MD, C. Ardizzone (for B. Ilardi), R. Birchard (for C. Brazil), L. Butler (for R. Schiffrin), C. Carroll, R. Cestone (for S. Wayne), D. Garcia Egan H. Jones, R. Maher, R. Nathan, A. Otisi, J. Park, J. Ruiz-Perez, H. Sherwin, A. Shurin, S. Sullam (for M. Donoghue), and G. Yarn

Members Absent: M. Bannister, L. Beal, C. Burwell, D. Capasso, H. Fitzgerald, D. Kittell, R. Leandre, S. Levine MD, M. Littles, J. McGovern, A. Paige-Bowman, T. Payne, S. Pemberton, M. Piazza, G. Schmits, D. Scholar, K. Scott, K. Slade, L. Tackley, and M. Velazquez

Guests Present: B. Bennett (Part B Network) and M. Fede (Nyack)

Staff Present: J. Lehane and T. Petro

I. Approval of March 12, 2008 Steering Committee Minutes

A motion (C. Carroll, R. Birchard) to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

II. Announcements

- Basil Reyes accepted a position at City Harvest in NYC. Basil has been working for WCDH, specifically with the Ryan White Part A programs for 5 years. Among his other responsibilities, Basil was the facilitator for the Housing Committee as well as support for the Case Management Committee. He also was a resource to providers who had questions about the URS and new AIRS systems of which he attempted to become an expert. His last day was May 2, 2008. The Department immediately started recruiting to fill the vacancy.
- The next Steering Committee meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 11th at ARCS. Ms. Lucy Redzeposki of the Yonkers-based NADAP branch will present on a new initiative whose goal is to assist PLWHA in finding employment. She is interested in feedback from providers and consumers regarding the project.

- Committee members' outstanding financial disclosure forms need to be completed and returned to Westchester County Human Resources as soon as possible. Every voting, voting alternate, and ex-officio member of the Steering Committee is required to submit these forms which ultimately could be used to determine if funding decisions were affected by a possible conflict of interest, should such an inquiry be made through a FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) request.
- A flyer was distributed announcing a new training funded by the AIDS Institute and co-sponsored by ARCS on "Understanding Clinical Trials." The training will take place on May 22, 2008 and is presented by ACRIA (AIDS Community Research Initiative of America).

III. Update Reports

Living Together (V. Alvarez/G. Yarn)

- At the April 17th meeting of Living Together (LT) Mary Mahoney and other representatives from Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV) answered questions about how to access and use legal services, highlighting the topical areas of housing and credit. Several LT members stayed after the meeting for a clinic wherein they were able to have individual consults with an attorney.
- Many of the LT members have questions about federal policy changes recently made regarding HIV/AIDS housing services. A meeting is being planned to which Barbara Bento-Fleming from Grace Church Community Center will be invited to address the issue. The date and location TBD.
- Victor Alvarez was appointed to the National Quality of Care Committee and attended a nationwide quality assurance meeting on March 14th in San Francisco. The Committee reviewed the definition of "quality care" and what it means to consumers. The next meeting of the National Quality of Care Committee will be in Washington, DC on August 22, 2008.
- The first LT "Men's Group" met on May 2nd and was well attended, with many of those participating as newly diagnosed LT members. They were so excited about the group that they want to add an additional meeting day during the month. Currently the group is meeting the first Friday of the month. It has been suggested that the group also meet the third or fourth Friday of the month.
- The treatment adherence group is still meeting after the regularly scheduled monthly LT meeting. Maintaining a medical regimen continues to be difficult for many PLWHA. Missed medical appointments and inconsistent medication adherence remain problems. The treatment adherence group addresses barriers to taking medications and ways to talk to your doctor.
- The next LT meeting will be on Thursday, May 22nd at ARCS following the ACRIA training on "Clinical Trials." The topic of the meeting will be in the quality of medical care.

Part B (B. Bennet)

Barbara Bennet has joined the ARCS staff in the position of Network Coordinator for the new Hudson Valley Network. The Network is composed of representatives from each of the seven counties in the lower and mid-Hudson valley. ARCS is exploring the use of teleconferencing systems for some of the regional-wide meetings. The new mandated Network structure includes the following four committees: Executive, Care Coordination, Consumer Input and Policy/Education. These replace the Steering, Case Management (CM) and Community Awareness Committees. The Mental Health/Substance Use (MHSU) Committee was never mandated by the AI. It was noted that the new Care Coordination Committee (there may be two --- Lower Hudson & Mid-Hudson)

might take up the same issues as the CM Committee. WCDH will still support the Health and Housing Committees which the Department originated to complement the Network. The Department is considering facilitating a new Medical Case Management Committee which could take the place of the MHSU and former CM committees in the Tri-County region. In addition, ARCS is proposing two consumer advisory boards: Living Together in the Lower Hudson and a separate Mid-Hudson group.

Barbara is reviewing the former Network's bylaws and contacting agencies regarding their participation on an interim executive committee whose first meeting is tentatively planned for July.

For more information contact Barbara Bennet at bbennet@arcs.org or 914-785-8275.

IV. Part A Updates/Issues (T. Petro)

Future Ryan White and HOPWA Awards

A copy of a letter dated April 29, 2008 to Tom Petro from Monica Sweeney, MD, Assistant Commissioner of the NYCDOHMH Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention & Control, was distributed. The letter stated that, effective March 1, 2009 for Ryan White, and effective this year for HOPWA, the percentage of the EMA's (Eligible Metropolitan Area) Tri-County funding will be based on the latest NYSDOH published epidemiological data. The Ryan White award up until now has been based on preliminary (duplicated) data whose total is higher than the "cleaned" data, therefore over-awarding Tri-County; the HOPWA award was based on (older) published data which under-funded Tri-County. The practical effect will likely be a reduction of Ryan White Part A funding next year from 5.1% of the award to closer to 4.8%. It was suggested that, since the HOPWA award is increasing, the housing services line in the Ryan White budget may be the logical one to reduce should there be a deficit next year. The issue will need to be addressed once next year's Part A award is made in March 2009.

Year 17 (3/1/07-2/29/08) Base Carryover

The fiscal year closed out with an underspending total of \$135,598 being reported to NYCDOHMH as \$73,071 formula carryover and \$62,527 supplemental underspending. In accordance with the new HATMA legislation, an EMA can carryover no more than 2% of its formula award (which equates to the \$73,071 for Tri-County). Supplemental funding must be returned to HRSA (Health Resources & Services Administration) for national re-distribution. Tri-County's underspending ultimately will be added to NYC's to determine if the EMA will have to give up any of its unexpended supplemental award. There would be no such penalty were the EMA as a whole to underspend less than approximately \$1.5 million (i.e., about 2% of the EMA's formula award). NYC will be closing out later this month.

Year 18 (3/1/08-2/28/09) Base Reprogramming Plan

A distributed spreadsheet of the current year's approved spending plan showed an unallocated amount of \$97,451 in award funding temporarily "parked" in the ADAP budget line. It was noted that additional dollars will certainly become available later in the year when providers traditionally reduce their budgets in September when their first budget modifications are due and they analyze spending for the first six months of the fiscal year. The Committee discussed options for reprogramming these unallocated funds, largely focusing on increased costs for gasoline and food affecting the medical transportation and food bank/home-delivered meals categories. Housing services may not need an enhancement this year given the anticipated increase in the HOPWA award, though the Housing Committee recently moved to raise the amount of a Ryan White short-term monthly rental subsidy given the new 24-month lifetime assistance cap imposed by HRSA. (The housing providers declined enhancements last year.)

The WCDH staff recommended against opening up enhancement eligibility to other categories lest the total available funding be divided into very small amounts with the Health Department having to amend almost every contract, a huge burden especially difficult to carry out in the latter part of the fiscal year. Last year mental health and legal services received enhancements. (It was noted that one legal services contract was awarded years ago at the lowest of any Ryan White contract, an issue that may warrant revisiting.)

No conclusions were reached about how to reprogram available funds, but WCDH hopes to finalize decisions by the July Steering Committee meeting in order to get an earlier jump on the contract amendment process.

Year 19 (3/1/09-2/28/10) Base Application Spending Plan

The Steering Committee reviewed the approved Year 18 “base” budget, as a Year 19 budget must be approved by the June meeting for the EMA’s annual application to HRSA. It was noted that, once again, Tri-County might request \$400,000 for the ADAP program. In recent years the region has only been able in the end to allocate less than half of that amount from carryover funds for ADAP.

Fee-For-Service Training

The day-long fee-for-service training for WCDH staff and all Part A-funded providers took place on April 16th at ARCS. A team from Fiscal and Infrastructure Technical Assistance (FITA), a unit of Public Health Solutions (formerly Medical and Health Research Association-MHRA), conducted the training. Many questions about how this fee-for-service approach will work in the Tri-County region were answered and many more questions and concerns were raised. A second training session (half-day training) addressing methods for developing service rates and pay-points (the exact service triggering payment) is being planned to take place in the late summer or early fall (location and date TBD).

2009 Federal Appropriations (J. Park)

The 2009 federal appropriations for Ryan White funding is moving slowly through the House and Senate. There have been multiple delays in getting approval for appropriations. This is not necessarily a problem, since delays might benefit the appropriations if the process can be pushed over into next year and possibly a new and more sympathetic administration. An increase in the Ryan White award next year is unlikely.

[In NYC the Integration of Care (IOC) committee reviewed the definitions of services as a prelude to setting new priorities. They also examined the needs of the community and determined where gaps in services exist. The Priority Setting and Resource Allocation (PSRA) committee is in the process of revising and improving the tool used by the HIV Planning Council to review all service categories currently in the EMA. These activities are in preparation for ranking services and setting priorities for the next planning cycle.

HRSA will hold its annual Ryan White “all titles” meeting in August and Jan sent in an abstract, proposing to present a paper comparing HIV/AIDS service utilization in urban versus suburban areas. The CHAIN study has been collecting data from consumers in NYC for 13 years and in the Tri-County region for more than five years. Jan will highlight the similarities and differences experienced by PLWHA receiving services in the city and the Tri-County region.]

Ryan White Reauthorization (J. Park)

The three-year Ryan White HIV/AIDS Modernization Act (HATMA) will be expiring in 18 months. A political statement developed by GMHC, the “2008 Federal Policy Agenda,” was distributed. This paper summarizes the issues surrounding the needs of the HIV/AIDS community and the President’s policy. In preparation for activities

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surrounding reauthorization, there will be a “town hall forum” in the Bronx and other places in the NY metropolitan area (locations and dates TBD) to gather information about what works best for PLWHA. These data will be used to formulate a new Ryan White HIV/AIDS Act to be presented to Congress. Tri-County discussions should also begin about issues that directly affect PLWHA in this region, as the end of Year 19 budget period (technically 7/31/10, the last day of the Year 19 MAI fiscal year) approaches.

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 11, 2008 at ARCS.