

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, July 13, 2005

Planned Parenthood – White Plains Center
175 Tarrytown Road

APPROVED MINUTES

- Members Present:** C. Archbald, MD, F. Avellanet (for R. Schiffrin), L. Beal, H. Blecher, C. Brazil, E. D'Aquino, B. Cauthen, R. Cestone (for S. Wayne), G. Diaz, K. Everett, H. Fitzgerald, D. Frantzen, L. Hilton, B. Ilardi, M. Littles, M. Lopez-Squillini, R. Maher, Jr., D. Marlowe, J. McGovern, A. Paige-Bowman, T. Payne, S. Pemberton, D. Scholar, K. Scott, A. Straus, G. Yarn
- Members Absent:** V. Alvarez, L. Bennett, C. Burwell, D. Capasso, J. Ganapol, R. Leandre, , S. Levine MD, J. Levy, M. Piazza, K. Slade, M. Sosne, S. Wayne, O. Young
- Guests Present:** D. Bell, B. Bento-Fleming, K. Brennan, S. Gray, M. Hodgson-Vargas, H. Jones, D. Kittell, J. Maldonado, Y. Yehuda
- Staff Present:** J. Lehane, T. Petro, R. Recchia, B. Reyes
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I. Approval of June 8, 2005 Minutes

The June 8, 2005 minutes were approved as presented.

II. Announcements

World AIDS Day (Tom Petro)

World AIDS Day (WAD) 2005 will be celebrated the week of December 1 with many events in the Tri-County region. Please hold Friday, December 2 open for a Westchester County Department of Health-sponsored all-day conference with outreach as the theme. The Westchester AIDS Council has appointed a WAD subcommittee facilitated by Owen Borda to develop an agenda. Others interested in participating should contact Owen at 914-813-5338 or by email to omb1@westchestergov.com. Again, a calendar of WAD events for the entire EMA will be compiled by Basil Reyes whose contacts are 914-813-5119 and bar3@westchestergov.com.

WAVE – War Against the Virus Escalating (Yedidah Yehudah)

On June 27, 2005, National HIV Testing Day, there were several events around the Tri-County region at which over 250 people were tested, including at the Kensico Dam. Danielle Scholar reported that 70 were tested in Mount Vernon and 33 in New Rochelle and that more people could have been tested if incentives had not run out. Gladys Diaz reported that over 100 people were tested at the Chicken Island health fair in Yonkers and another 10 at local soccer games. Harriet Blecher reported that about 50 individuals were tested at various sites in Rockland County and Barbara Ilardi said that several people were tested in Putnam.

Yedidah reminded all to start planning early for other events. The Sister to Sister organization is beginning a campaign to get women tested. Their “Sisters Beating the Odds” initiative will be launched in September working with Westchester Women’s Health Partnership, in association with the Health Department and the Office for Women, to get local physicians to offer testing to women on a routine basis. Westchester County legislator Andrea Stewart-Cousins will be the keynote speaker for the launch of a “Request the Test” initiative on September 22, 2005 at the YWCA in White Plains.

III. Update Reports

Living Together (Gerald Yarn)

- Gerald reported that the one-day health symposium that was held in June in Yonkers was a big success. Victor Alvarez presented a workshop on treatment adherence and Owen Borda gave a great session on prevention with positives.
- The LT picnic will be held on July 30, 2005 at FDR (section 5A). All are invited to join in the fun. To make reservations, please call Gerald at 914-937-2320 ext. 129.
- There will be no LT meeting in August.

Title II (Trevor Payne)

- On June 29, Dr. Harold Horowitz, Director of HIV/AIDS Services at Westchester Medical Center, presented an update on new HIV medications and treatment strategies at the General Network meeting. The meeting was well attended and Dr. Horowitz answered many questions about changes in HIV treatment strategies.
- On July 27, Christine Rivera (NYSDOH AIDS Institute’s ADAP) and Laura Caruso (GMHC) will present information on the new Medicare reform regulations at the General Network meeting. The new regulations will become effective on January 1, 2006. This is a very important topic for both consumers and providers. For more information contact Kelli Everett at 914-428-6300 x230 or lhrcarenetwork@gmail.com. A flyer was distributed announcing this and another forum titled “The Secrets of a Healthy Work Environment” which will be held the same day at ARCS.
- Members are being recruited for the Title II Network and PLWHA are encouraged to join. For information about becoming a Network member, contact Kelli Everett.
- Interns from colleges in the area are being recruited to work with the Network. If you know of anyone who would like to obtain work experience as an intern, please contact Kelli Everett.

Title I (Tom Petro)

- The final newly revised guidelines for counseling and testing have been distributed by NYSDOH and a guidelines review is being planned for the September Title I Steering Committee meeting. NYSDOH is planning trainings in the fall on how to implement the guidelines. A flyer regarding a NYSDOH satellite broadcast to be held later today about the new C&T reporting requirements was distributed.
- At the last Steering Committee meeting David Abramson presented data from the CHAIN study on Hepatitis C. Several questions were raised about how well providers are responding to people with a co-infection of HIV and Hep-C. NYS's Quality of Care program reveals that for HIV primary care service provided in 2002 (the last year full data is available), 92% of client charts reviewed statewide indicated documentation of Hep-C status, with 38% documented as positive. A request will be made to NYS for the same data for the Tri-County region.
- At the September Steering Committee meeting D. Abramson will present an update on the operations and deliverables of the Tri-County CHAIN study and calculating unmet need for HIV primary care.
- In the fall, the Steering Committee will utilize a planning tool that was developed by a subcommittee of the NY HIV Planning Council by which services are scored according to set criteria. A copy of a research paper published in 2004 titled *Cost Effectiveness and Resource Allocation* was distributed which describes similar-type methodologies for priority-setting used in Canada and Great Britain.
- Two special client/provider communication trainings for social service providers were held in June by Cicatelli Associates, Inc. for some 30 case managers and supervisors. The trainings may be repeated later in the year.
- It was noted that a U.S. Senate subcommittee met on June 23 to discuss disparities in federal HIV/AIDS care programs which focused on perceived inequities in the distribution of funds provided under the Ryan White CARE Act. CARE Act reauthorization will be covered in more detail in the September or October Steering Committee meetings.
- There will be no Steering Committee meeting in August.

IV. Unit Cost Presentation (K. Harrison/American Express-Tax & Business Systems)

In 2004, NYCDOH contracted with American Express to determine how much each unit of service in certain selected service categories (food and nutrition, housing, mental health, case management, outreach, and harm reduction) was costing Title I agencies and how that compared with the amount of funding they actually received. The objectives of the projects were to:

- define the units of service provided by contracting organizations;
- measure the volume of services provided by the contracting organizations;
- calculate the global and individual organization costs by unit of service for all service types;
- determine the global and individual contract payments per unit of service for all service types; and
- develop a tool/methodology to re-run the unit of cost analysis with revised service and volume data

The methodology called for the development of Relative Value Units (RVUs) where a RVU scale assigns numerical values to the intensity of procedures taking into account overhead costs. Values are "relative" to one another so the actual value of an RVU is less important than its value compared to another service. RVUs represent resource allocation so that RVUs of a particular service or services in aggregate can be evaluated to make assumptions around which services or service categories are more resource intensive.

The methodology for unit cost analysis for each organization included the cost per RVU compared with the contract payment per RVU and the cost per service versus the contract payment per service.

Findings included that:

- Median agency cost per RVU exceeds the average cost per RVU for all service categories.
- Agencies with contracts in multiple service categories which had costs below the median in one category did not necessarily have below median costs in all categories.
- For outlier agencies with costs per RVU far above or below the median, the main driver of costs was volume of service, not intensity of service.
- The difference between agency costs and contract payment was greatest in the mental health service category.

In the future, additional data collection might determine if all of the agencies submitted complete and accurate data. These findings are based on an analysis of the information submitted as self-report data from the agencies. Further discussion will take place with NYCDOH and the NY HIV Planning Council to determine how these findings might be utilized. It is not being suggested at this time that the study's results be used for contracting purposes.

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

The Steering Committee was advised that the six treatment adherence proposals received earlier in the year were scored by a review panel. The panel had made some clear recommendations about funding several of the proposals, but recommendations about funding others only if revisions in the proposed service delivery models were to be made. A request by WCDH to double the treatment adherence allocation for next year to \$500,000 in order to begin negotiations to possibly fund all six (the current year budget has enough funds to start six programs since they will begin on the half-year, September 1) was rejected by the Committee. Some members stated that since the original RFP (Request For Proposals) only called for 2-3 programs to be funded, then some organizations may have refrained from applying and it would not be fair to now fund more. The Committee was also concerned with over-budgeting next year given that the CARE Act is due to be reauthorized which could mean a reduction of funding and/or restrictions in the use of Ryan White dollars.

A \$5,613,913 draft budget was reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee for inclusion in next year's Title I application to HRSA (Health Resources & Services Administration). In addition to carrying ongoing Year 15 services, the budget included an annualized total of \$225,000 for up to 3 treatment adherence grants and a \$400,000 request for the HIV Uninsured Care Pools. It was noted that the budget does not include a 3% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) due next year which is estimated to cost \$150,000, nor does it address what is expected to be another Westchester Health Department deficit of at least \$54,000.

The next Title I Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for September 14, 2005, 10:00 am-12:00 noon, Planned Parenthood – White Plains Center, 175 Tarrytown Road.