

**Minnesota Council for HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention  
Community Voices Committee Meeting  
Monday, March 7, 2022  
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.  
Microsoft Teams Meeting  
Meeting Minutes**

<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	
Verneice Acevedo	Stephen Jensen
Danielle Brantley	Teresa Jones
Belinda Charleston-Green	James McMurray, co-chair
Cameron Dailey-Ruddy	Lesla Nelson
Emeral Hare	Sherry Outten
Lee Hertel	Jo Ann Vertetis, co-chair
Megan Higdon	Bruce Weihsmantel
Calvin Hillary Hylton	
<b>Hennepin County (Part A) Representative:</b>	<b>DHS (Part B) Representative:</b>
None	Thomas Blissett
<b>MDH (Prevention) Representative:</b>	<b>MCHACP Staff:</b>
None	Carissa Weisdorf, Coordinator
	Bryan Bick, Administrative Specialist (minutes)

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

- James McMurray called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and introductions were made.
- The proposed agenda was reviewed and approved as printed.
- The January 10 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as printed.
- James read the guiding principles of the Minnesota Council for HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention.
- James led the committee in observing a moment of silence for Destiny Holiday, who passed away last month. James mentioned that information about commemorations for Destiny is available on her Facebook page.

**II. Open Forum**

- Community questions and concerns: the committee discussed access to dental providers.
  - Danielle Brantley mentioned that a list of available dentists would be helpful. Carissa Weisdorf responded that Hank Jensen, the Program HH customer care representative, was at the last Community Voices Committee meeting to share information. There is not a list of dental providers specific to Program HH; rather, it is a list of dentists who accept Minnesota Health Care Programs. There is a searchable link by dentist or specialty, and the list can change frequently.

- Stephen Jensen mentioned that he contacted UCare to get a list of local dentists.
- Jo Ann Vertetis added that HIV physicians can make referrals to Hennepin Healthcare's dental clinic. She was not sure if they have to be HIV physicians at Hennepin Healthcare. They are not taking new patients and she had to wait a few months, but eventually was able to get in. They seem to have Ryan White funding to cover services that Program HH doesn't cover. Carissa confirmed that Hennepin Healthcare receives Ryan White Part F funds for oral health care.
- Carissa said the barrier many patients encounter is finding providers who will accept the current Minnesota Health Care Programs reimbursement rates for dental services. The state legislature just increased rates, so there is hope that more providers will begin accepting Minnesota Health Care Programs coverage. Carissa added a link to the chat for Program HH dental information and the searchable database of dental providers who accept Minnesota Health Care Programs. She also offered to send this information out to anyone who requests it.
- Provider updates and education: no updates for this meeting.

### **III. Connecting the Work**

- Carissa Weisdorf was asked to provide updates from the March meeting of the Executive Committee.
  - The Executive Committee discussed re-electing Pat Reymann as the council Parliamentarian. She guides the co-chairs and the council coordinator in the rules of parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules of Order.
  - The Executive Committee discussed electing a Grievance Committee, which will be needed if a grievance is filed against a process of the council.
  - The co-chairs reviewed the committee work plan and the council work plan.
  - Thomas Blissett from the Department of Human Services reviewed the policy clarification from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that eliminates the six-month eligibility requirement for Ryan White services. It will change to an annual process. That will be updated in the universal standards that all Ryan White providers must meet.
  - The Executive Committee discussed the use of the Hard Topics format, which has been used to facilitate have deeper conversations at the council and in committees.
  - Stephen Jensen and Calvin Hillary Hylton provided an update from the Membership and Training Committee about the council attendance policy.

- The Executive Committee reviewed the Collaborative Partner Understanding, which is the agreement between the four partners that convene the council.
- The Planning and Allocations Committee did not meet in February.
- The Disparities Elimination Committee did not meet in February.
- Stephen Jensen provided updates from the February meeting of the Membership and Training Committee.
  - There are currently eight vacancies on the council. Stephen encouraged attendees of today's meeting to apply if they meet the representation or reflectiveness criteria. The council has the following vacancies:
    - Representation:
      - Unaligned male and female consumers who are Black or Hispanic
      - Representative of/or formerly incarcerated person with HIV
      - State Medicaid representative
    - Reflectiveness:
      - Males
      - People who are Black or African American
      - People who are Hispanic or Latino
      - Person who is Asian or Pacific Islander
      - People in the TGA (13-county Metro region)
  - Jo Ann Vertetis asked for more information about the discussion of the attendance policy. Stephen Jensen reported that the attendance policy was not changed, and members cannot miss three consecutive meetings or six meetings in a 12-month period.
- The Needs Assessment and Evaluation Committee did not meet in February.

#### **IV. Focused Conversation**

- James McMurray facilitated a focused conversation about what participants want to get out of the Community Voices Committee.
- James explained that today's conversation has a head goal and a heart goal. The head goal is to clarify what participants want to get out of Community Voices Committee meetings, and the heart goal is to generate buy-in and commitment from the participants.
- James began with the "What?" portion of the conversation. He asked what the Community Voices Committee is currently doing.
  - He mentioned that the Community Voices Committee has been working to get more people engaged.
  - Stephen Jensen shared that knows what is going on because he is part of the council, but he would like to know if committee members who are not on the council get the same level of information.

- James asked committee members to name some things they recall or that stand out from previous meetings. Stephen Jensen mentioned the discussion of dental services from January as something that was helpful for everybody.
- James asked what we expect from the committee in terms of its roles and responsibilities. Jo Ann Vertetis said she thinks about how the committee can disseminate valuable information, like the dental resources that were shared at the January meeting, especially when it is not common knowledge.
- Stephen Jensen added that there is work to be done on making sure people on the council stay up to date when information is shared, and to get council members involved in key decisions like whether to revise the attendance policy.
- Jo Ann stated that a one-page flyer of current council activities would be useful. It could go on the council's Facebook page and web site. She asked if the council has resources to put more information out on other platforms like TikTok. She also noted that she has never seen any public service announcements about the council.
- Teresa Jones suggested a bimonthly podcast.
- Verneice Acevedo suggested that a flyer could be sent to council members encouraging them to come to the Aliveness Project to participate in the Community Voices Committee. James said he has encouraged people to come to Aliveness to meet in person.
- James asked what the purpose of the Community Voices Committee is. Verneice said it's your voice being heard in your community. She wants to share information.
- James moved on to the "Gut" portion of the conversation.
  - James asked what makes Community Voice Committee members feel appreciated and valued. Verneice Acevedo said the way James talks to them on the same level, and his honesty.
  - Danielle Brantley said just being here is valuable. She said group text message reminders among the participants would help. She also said she responds to flyers that she sees and was surprised Rainbow Health did not have flyers posted about the Community Voices Committee.
  - Teresa Jones asked if flyers about council meetings could be mailed out to council members. James said he thinks it can be done.
  - James said he tries to invite as many new people to Community Voices Committee meetings as possible. He encouraged others to do this too.
  - James asked members to talk about how they felt after recent meetings. Verneice Acevedo and Stephen Jensen felt that recent meetings were effective and informative.
  - James asked what seems exciting, what seems boring, or what seems unexpected about council activities.

- Danielle Brantley said it was surprising to her that the meetings are recorded, and the meeting minutes are posted on the website. She felt that breaking the minutes down into smaller pieces might make it easier for people to access the information.
- Stephen Jensen mentioned that repetition makes the meetings seem boring. Often topics are covered in multiple committee meetings, and then again when the council meets.
- Danielle said just being able to participate, recruiting others, and speaking with like-minded individuals is exciting.
- Stephen added that it's exciting when interesting topics are covered that get a lot of people engaged.
- James moved on to the "So what" questions of the focused conversation.
  - James asked about other factors the Community Voices Committee needs to consider to be effective. Verneice Acevedo replied that getting out in the community to pass out information and flyers would help.
  - Sherry Outten suggested setting up booths in apartment complexes to give out brochures and do HIV testing. She mentioned there is still a lot of HIV stigma, and the African American community continues to be impacted at higher levels. She mentioned using crafts or entertainment to get people out, while staying mindful of COVID safety concerns.
  - Stephen asked if outreach could be done at Clare Housing and similar organizations to get more people involved in the council.
  - James asked what kinds of decisions the committee needs to make as a group. Sherry Outten suggested that the committee members need to get to know each other, and then get out into the community.
  - Belinda Charleston-Green said the committee should have a retreat.
  - James asked what insights were emerging from the conversation. He summarized that the committee has talked about doing more outreach in the community and having a retreat.
- James moved on to the "Now what?" segment of the conversation.
  - James asked, where does the committee go from here, and how does it articulate its consensus?
  - Danielle said that two years into COVID we have figured out more about how to gather and resume activities with precautions. Carissa Weisdorf said that the government agencies that convene the council are still figuring out their plans for holding public meetings in person. Thomas Blissett added that in-person meetings won't be held at the Department of Human Services for a while because logistics are still being worked out.
  - Carissa Weisdorf added that so far it seems like the committee wants to focus on recruiting new members and presenting topics in the meetings that feel relevant.
  - James said that the committee had agreed today to having topics prepared in advance and making sure committee members are reminded of the upcoming meetings.

- Belinda Charleston-Green said the Community Voices Committee needs to meet more often than quarterly (the committee currently meets every other month). Jo Ann Vertetis pointed out there might be budget constraints to meeting monthly, if dinner is to be served.
- Belinda Charleston-Green felt that a \$10 gift card is not an adequate incentive for attending committee meetings. She felt that a higher amount might help with recruiting and retention of members, and to make members feel more appreciated by government stakeholders.
- Carissa thanked the Community Voices Committee members for their time and input. She explained that the \$10 gift card isn't meant to be compensation for time, and the Part A Planning Council prohibits giving stipends for council participation. The council can reimburse for allowable expenses including mileage, hotels, childcare, and lost wages. The \$10 gift card is meant to replace the cost of food per person that would typically be spent at an in-person meeting. Carissa agreed to explore if the amount of the gift card can be increased.
- Danielle Brantley mentioned that if more people know about the reimbursement for allowable expenses, they might want to participate.

#### **V. Plan for 2022**

- Carissa Weisdorf shared the FY 2022 Community Voices Committee workplan. She explained that last year the frequency of committee meetings was increased to every other month.
- The workplan includes training on the annual planning cycle for the council. It also includes review of the fundable Ryan White service areas, and a discussion in the committee about what the community priorities are around those services.
- Belinda Charleston-Green asked if Hennepin County or the Department of Human Services can send people to conferences like they used to, perhaps using funds that have been underspent during the pandemic. Carissa said that Hennepin County usually has a few spots to send council members to the national Ryan White Conference for Part A, and DHS probably will too for Part B. The Ryan White Conference is in August and HRSA has limited the number of people who can come in person.
- Thomas Blissett mentioned that the United States Conference on HIV/AIDS is supposed to be in Puerto Rico, but it seems too early to be confident that will happen. He said DHS will do what they can to make sure community advocates have access to conferences, but that access may be virtual.
- Belinda said she will send out a list of upcoming conferences that she is aware of.

#### **VI. Co-Chair Election**

- James McMurray reviewed the committee co-chair position description and stated that his time as co-chair is up. He asked Jo Ann Vertetis if she was willing to stay on as co-chair and asked if anyone else was interested in running.
- Jo Ann said she is willing to stay on, but she needs a co-chair.

- Danielle Brantley said she would like more information, but she has time available and may be interested.
- Verneice Acevedo also said that she has time available and may be interested.
- Teresa Jones stated that she would like to run for co-chair.
- Belinda Charleston-Green asked the individuals who are running to speak about why they want to co-chair the committee.
  - Verneice said she is open-minded, a good listener, and ready to help. She has 40 years of experience.
  - Danielle said she has no experience, but would bring willingness and effort. She has available time and a desire to serve. She hasn't had a voice or been a part of anything like the council before.
  - Teresa said she would get stuff done that other people don't want to be bothered with.
- Carissa made a last call for nominations. She announced that Jo Ann will be elected by acclamation because she is the only candidate who fits the criteria of current council member.
- Carissa created a ballot and provided multiple ways for attendees to respond. Carissa tallied the responses and confirmed that everyone voted who wanted to. With 12 eligible voters, a majority of 6 was needed. Danielle Brantley received nine votes, Verneice Acevedo received two, and Teresa Jones received zero.
- Danielle was elected as co-chair and congratulated by the committee. Carissa said the council staff will follow up with Danielle for training and next steps. There will be an action item from the Community Voices Committee to the council to elect Jo Ann and Danielle as co-chairs of the committee.

## **VII. New or Unfinished Business**

- The next Community Voices Committee meeting will be Monday, May 9 from 4:00PM to 6:00PM.

## **VIII. Announcements**

- James McMurray reminded the committee that there are vacancies on the council, and the membership application can be found at [mnhivcouncil.org](http://mnhivcouncil.org).
- A \$10 Target gift card will be provided to everyone who attended the meeting.
- Thomas Blissett mentioned the Department of Human Services has two open grant coordinator positions. Carissa Weisdorf has the link to the application. Please apply if you are interested or share the information if you know anybody who might be.
- Carissa Weisdorf asked that attendees fill out the contact information survey and let her know how they would like to receive their gift card.
- James mentioned that the Aliveness Project will offer two food shelf visits this month for members. Also, their hours of operation will expand to 9am to 5pm starting April 4.

- Carissa put a link in the chat for ordering free at-home COVID test kits from the federal government. They are now sending four additional free test kits. Tests are also available at Rainbow Health and the Aliveness Project.
- Belinda Charleston-Green announced that HERR Day Out will hold an event on March 11 to honor National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.
- Jo Ann Vertetis announced that Dining Out for Life will be April 28. They are looking for volunteer ambassadors.

## **IX. Adjourn**

- James McMurray adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

### **Meeting summary:**

- Access to dental providers was discussed in the open forum.
- The council attendance policy was discussed during the update from the Membership and Training Committee. For now, there will be no changes to the policy.
- A focused conversation was led to discuss what individuals want to get out of their participation in the Community Voices Committee.
- The workplan for FY 2022 was reviewed.
- An election was held for co-chairs of the Community Voices Committee. Jo Ann Vertetis and Danielle Brantley will be forwarded for election by the council.

### **Documents distributed for the meeting:**

- Proposed agenda
- Minutes for the 1/10/22 CVC meeting
- 3/7/22 CVC Meeting flier
- FY 2022 CVC Work Plan
- Community Voices Committee Co-Chair Position Description

### **Additional documents displayed during the meeting:**

- None

**BB/cw**