

**Minnesota Council for HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention  
Disparities Elimination Committee  
Thursday, March 17, 2022  
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.  
Microsoft Teams Meeting  
Meeting Minutes**

<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	
Dennis Anderson	Megan Mueller (co-chair)
Charlotte Detournay	Jay Orne
Cree Gordon (co-chair)	Sarah Schiele
Rev. Jim Mitulski	
<b>Committee Members Absent:</b>	
Megan Higdon	Nafula Namuninia
<b>Guests:</b>	
Stephen Jensen, Membership and Training Committee co-chair	
<b>Hennepin County (Part A) Representative:</b>	
Jonathan Hanft	<b>DHS (Part B) Representative:</b>
	Thomas Blissett
<b>MDH (Prevention) Representative:</b>	
McKinzie Woelfel	<b>MDH (Surveillance) Representative:</b>
	Hannah Kass-Aten
<b>MCHACP Staff:</b>	
Carissa Weisdorf, Coordinator	Bryan Bick, Administrative Specialist (minutes)

Quorum Present? **Yes**

**I. Welcome and introductions**

- Introductions were made while waiting for others to join the meeting. Megan Mueller called the meeting to order at 9:47 a.m.

**II. Review and approval of past meeting minutes and proposed agenda**

- The minutes from the January 20, 2022 meeting were reviewed and approved as printed.
- The agenda was approved as printed.

**III. Review of Ryan White service areas: emergency financial assistance and housing**

- Carissa Weisdorf explained that this committee had previously decided to review a few service areas to better understand them because it gives recommendations on Part A Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) funding. Cree Gordon added that the information presented today will also be helpful when the council does the full allocation process later this year.
- Carissa displayed the **Minnesota Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Service Area Standards: Housing Rental Assistance** and the service description was reviewed. She explained that the service area standards are found on the council web site under the Service Standards section.

- Jonathan Hanft and Thomas Blissett attended the meeting to provide additional information about funding for the two service areas the committee is reviewing today.
- Jonathan Hanft provided information about historical funding for emergency financial assistance (EFA) and housing.
  - EFA funds currently come from Part B and rebate funds. Part A funded EFA until 2019, when the Hennepin County Ryan White Program worked with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to free up some funds for higher priority items.
  - In 2017 or 2018 there was very little allocation for housing, even though it was always in the top couple priorities for supportive services. The council allocated money in 2017, and since then there's been additional funding to expand housing capacity.
  - In 2022, Part A will fund a new model of permanent co-housing as a response to the HIV outbreak in homeless encampments. One reason people give for staying in encampments is they want a sense of community and to be around people they know.
- Jonathan Hanft reviewed the ***Hennepin County Managed RWHAP Housing Funding*** document. He explained the Part A amount will not be known for sure until the Part A award is determined, but flat funding is assumed.
  - Jonathan explained that the permanent co-housing project will start in 2022. The provider can be announced April 1 once the contract has been finalized. The provider will operate four, possibly five units in one building for non-related individuals who want to live together in groups of up to four.
  - Carissa Weisdorf asked if Part A plans to recommend that the council increase funding for housing rental assistance. Jonathan answered that would only happen if the Part A award to our Transitional Grant Area (TGA) is increased. There may be also an opportunity in 2023 to allocate some funds to housing that have been allocated to other support services but not used.
  - Jim Mitulski asked if housing rental assistance is provided in Greater Minnesota, or just the metro. Jonathan replied that the transitional housing program is statewide, and any housing funding that comes from rebate supports housing in any part of the state. Rental assistance through Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) also goes statewide. The new model for co-housing could be used in the whole state but is not yet expanded that far.
  - Jay Orne asked if the service provider for the new co-housing program will purchase the units that are provided, or if they will be used in housing that currently exists. Jonathan said the provider plans to manage the units, and probably to have them all in one building with 24/7 staffing. It may be a whole building or just a portion of a building.
- Thomas Blissett reviewed Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) funding for housing, and additional housing programs funded through Department of Human Services (DHS).
  - EFA has \$1.3 million in funds for emergency housing assistance.

- EFA also includes \$374,830 for emergency utility assistance.
- There is an additional \$140,000 for first month's rent which comes from rebate funds.
- DHS also funds housing advocacy programs. One is at Rainbow Health and provides administrative support for the Minnesota HIV Housing Coalition. DHS also manages \$460,000 to fund a couple non-medical case management programs that provide housing readiness services.
- Overall funds for statewide housing totals \$2.7 million.
- Megan Mueller shared that Kim Lieberman from Rainbow Health writes a housing newsletter about housing systems advocacy. She shared a [link in the chat](#) and encouraged members to sign up to receive the newsletter.
- Carissa Weisdorf displayed the **Minnesota Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Service Area Standards: Emergency Financial Assistance**. Cree Gordon added that payments do not go directly to clients; they go directly to the payee. Grocery funds are given to clients in the form of gift cards.
- Carissa displayed [the data dashboard tab](#) of the council website.
  - The Needs Assessment and Evaluation Committee is planning additional trainings on using the data dashboard since it will be a key data source for the upcoming Priority Setting and Resource Allocation (PSRA) process.
  - Carissa explained that the council does not allocate rebate funds; when the council is allocating funds, it looks at Part A, Part A Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI), and Part B.
  - Jonathan Hanft added that Ryan White funding for housing assistance is limited to two years. Providers need to work with clients to help them find sources of permanent assistance for housing.
  - Jay Orne asked if it was possible to compare the utilization data on the dashboard to the number of people who might get the services if there was more funding. Jonathan said the number of persons living with HIV (PLWH) in the TGA or the state who receive Ryan White services can be roughly estimated as a percentage of all of HIV known diagnoses in the TGA or state. The latest estimate showed that about 70% of PLWH are eligible for Ryan White services, but only 51% are receiving Ryan White services. An ongoing Part A goal is to increase the percentage of PLWH who receive Ryan White services. The latest needs assessment data represents 9% of PLWH in the state. The assessment asked if people needed a service but didn't receive it. Those data could be used to see what capacity would be required to serve everyone who needs a service.
  - Jim Mitulski asked if there is evidence that people lose their housing after two years of Ryan White housing assistance. Jonathan said some qualitative data comes from quarterly reports from providers. There have not been a lot of reports that people lose their housing after the two years ends.
  - Stephen Jensen asked if the dashboard shows which providers are funded by Part A or Part B. He said this should be kept in mind to identify possible conflicts of interest. Carissa Weisdorf explained that providers are not listed

on the data dashboard, but they are listed on the council website under the “Where to Find Services” tab.

- Jonathan Hanft shared the **2020 HIV/AIDS Comprehensive Needs Assessment: services databook**. For each service it shows how many respondents received a service, and how many needed a service but could not access it.
- Jay Orne observed that the data dashboard shows an increase in Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) of \$300,000 from 2019 to 2020, but only 100 additional clients were served. Jonathan Hanft said that question may best be addressed by DHS, but he believed the eligibility requirements were expanded and the amount of EFA each client could receive was increased. Jonathan encouraged caution about 2020 data because COVID likely had an impact.

#### IV. Council training needs

- Representing the Membership and Training Committee, Stephen Jensen reviewed council training needs and asked the Disparities Elimination Committee for input on what trainings it would like to add.
- Jay Orne suggested training on needs of the African-born community living with HIV. Stephen asked if anyone knew of a subject matter expert who could provide training.
  - Cree Gordon suggested Tom Bichanga from Aliveness Project might be able to recommend a trainer.
  - Megan suggested African Immigration Services.
  - Carissa Weisdorf mentioned that Sub-Saharan African Youth and Family Services in Minnesota (SAYFSM) is a funded provider, and Ephraim Olani could speak to this group about disparities.
  - Hannah Kass-Aten said she could supplement the training with epidemiology data on African-born clients.
  - Megan added that training should include information on East African and West African communities because there is a tendency to overgeneralize the entire continent.
- Carissa Weisdorf displayed **HealthHIV Technical Assistance for HIV Planning**.
  - In 2019 the Disparities Elimination Committee had recommended a training on undoing racism from the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond in New Orleans. Cree Gordon said their proposal was turned down and wondered if it was due to the cost or if people were not really invested in doing the work. Stephen Jensen said the proposal should be brought to the Executive Committee again because the HealthHIV report showed that council members felt there was a need for more training.
  - Carissa Weisdorf said that the People’s Institute training was going to be offered to providers and council members were going to be invited. That was in 2019 and then COVID disrupted the plan. Charlotte Detournay confirmed the training is currently being held virtually.

## V. **Committee co-chair election**

- Megan Mueller explained that the Disparities Elimination Committee needs to elect co-chairs and shared her experience in that role. Cree Gordon said they are ending their term on the council, and one of the co-chairs must be a council member. Cree would be willing to serve as a co-chair if no one else is interested but at least once council member needs to be elected.
- Carissa shared the **MCHACP Committee Co-Chair Position Description**. She added that no experience is needed and training is provided. She explained that committee co-chairs must attend Executive Committee meetings. She added that at least one of the co-chairs must reside in the Minneapolis-St. Paul TGA.
- Cree observed that some committee members who are part of the council were absent from this portion of the meeting. Cree suggested conducting an email ballot in the next week to give people more time to think.
- Jay Orne said they were interested in helping but would feel more comfortable having an experienced co-chair. They also felt that it was important for a person of color to have an opportunity to serve as co-chair.
- Cree agreed to send an email out to invite committee members to run for co-chair and to explain that a ballot will be conducted via email.

## VI. **Review fiscal year 2022 work plan and set agenda for next meeting**

- The **FY 2022 DEC Work Plan** was displayed. Carissa Weisdorf mentioned that a review of the oral health care service area is scheduled for April and asked what the committee hopes to learn. It was suggested to invite Hank Jensen, customer care specialist at DHS Program HH, who presented to another committee previously.
- Carissa Weisdorf asked McKinzie Woelfel if there was an update on priority populations. McKinzie said that can be presented in the April DEC meeting.
- Stephen Jensen asked if a meeting should be cancelled if it falls on a holiday. No one expressed a desire to cancel a committee meeting.
- Jay Orne said open times on the work plan might be devoted to discussing what systemic changes the committee wants to see. Cree Gordon agreed that they would like "moving the conversation beyond the table" to be added to the work plan.
- Megan Mueller said further work plan development should be deferred until the committee co-chairs are elected, so they can have a greater say.
- Jim Mitulski asked for more information about which services are provided outside the Metro area. Carissa Weisdorf said a statewide map showing where services are located was recently created. It will be added to the council web site and committees will get that information.

## VII. **Adjourn**

- Megan Mueller adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

### **Meeting Summary:**

- The service areas of Housing Rental Assistance and Emergency Financial Assistance were reviewed.
- On behalf of the Membership and Training Committee, Stephen Jensen asked for input on what training activities the council should focus on in the coming year.
- The committee decided to postpone the co-chair election due to a few members being absent today. It was decided to invite people to run for co-chair over email and then hold a vote over email.
- The 2022 DEC work plan was reviewed.

**Documents distributed before the meeting:**

- Proposed agenda for March 17, 2022 meeting
- January 20, 2022 DEC minutes
- HealthHIV Technical Assistance for HIV Planning
- MCHACP Committee Co-Chair Position Description
- Fiscal Year 2022 DEC workplan

**Documents displayed during the meeting:**

- Minnesota Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Service Area Standards: Housing Rental Assistance
- Hennepin County Managed RWHAP Housing Funding
- Minnesota Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Service Area Standards: Emergency Financial Assistance

**BB/cw**