

**Minnesota Council for HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention
Community Voices Committee Meeting
Monday, July 11, 2022
4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Hybrid In-Person/Microsoft Teams Meeting
Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present:	
Joe Amrhein	Lesa Nelson
Max Bowman	Legistine North
Danielle Brantley (co-chair)	Sherry Outten
Miles Hamlin-Zamojski	Alex Palacios
Megan Higdon	Sue Purchase
Calvin Hillary Hylton	Cody Rogahn
Stephen Jensen	Jo Ann Vertetis (co-chair)
James McMurray	
Hennepin County (Part A) Representative:	DHS (Part B) Representative:
None	Thomas Blissett
	Asneth Omare (DHS)
MDH (Prevention) Representative:	MCHACP Staff:
None	Carissa Weisdorf, Coordinator
	Bryan Bick, Administrative Specialist (minutes)

I. Welcome

- Jo Ann Vertetis called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. and introductions were made.
- The proposed agenda was reviewed and approved as printed.
- The May 9 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as printed.

II. Community questions and concerns

- Asneth Omare from DHS Program HH was present to answer questions about Program HH benefits.
 - A committee member asked how they would know if they needed to reapply for Program HH.
 - Asneth said that any provider who bills Program HH can look back as long as one year to see if someone is currently or was previously enrolled.
 - Consumers can also call the Program HH customer care line at 651-431-2398.
 - A committee member asked if Program HH pays for nursing home care. Asneth explained that Program HH is designed for outpatient care, not inpatient care.
 - A committee member asked how Program HH dental works along with programs that receive Ryan White Part F funds.
 - The member shared their understanding that at a Part F dental provider, insurance is billed first, then Program HH. Ryan White Part F funds then cover any remaining charges.

- The member asked why there is only one provider in the state that receives Ryan White Part F funds.
- Asneth explained that Part F is a separate federal Ryan White program, and Program HH is funded by Ryan White Part B.
- Asneth Omare shared that dental providers must apply directly to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for Ryan White Part F funds when they become available.
- A committee member asked how consumers can help their providers understand Program HH if they are not familiar with it or if they are not enrolled.
 - Asneth explained said Program HH is part of the Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP). If a dentist is a MHCP provider, they can bill for clients who are enrolled in Medical Assistance, Minnesota Care, or Program HH.
 - Asneth added that if a dental provider you are working with isn't enrolled in MHCP, Program HH can instruct them on how to get enrolled. They should be directed to Program HH customer care at 651-431-2398.
- A meeting participant asked if providers who accept MCHP can limit the number of MCHP patients they take.
 - Asneth explained that dentists may limit the number of MCHP patients they serve because MCHP pays a low reimbursement rate.
 - Before 2021 dental providers were paid 20 cents on the dollar by MHCP. Those rates have been increased since 2021 so there is hope dental providers will begin accepting more MHCP patients.
 - A committee member asked when MHCP last increased the reimbursement rate for dental services. Asneth said the last time was probably in the 1980s or 1990s. The recent increase came from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health and Human Services convened by Governor Walz and the Minnesota legislature to improve health outcomes for Minnesotans.
- Asneth was asked if Program HH covers medications other than antiretroviral treatment for HIV. She answered that Program HH has an open formulary and covered all prescription medications except controlled substances.
- A committee member asked if there is a list of providers who accept Program HH/MCHP.
 - Asneth advised calling the Program HH customer care line at 651-431-2398.
 - Council staff agreed to email out the Program HH dental presentation that was provided to the Community Voices Committee at its January 2022 meeting. It includes tips to access Program HH dental benefits.
 - Asneth mentioned the tips include asking your primary doctor or infectious disease doctor, or the health care system they work for, if they recommend specific dental providers. Case managers and benefits counselors may have referrals too.
- A participant asked about Program HH mental health benefits. They stated it has been difficult to find mental health providers who will accept MHCP, and it can be hard to coordinate between primary insurance and Program HH.

- A committee member commented they would like more insurance coverage for gender-affirming hormone treatment.
- A social service provider asked for guidance when a client brings them a bill for vision care that wasn't covered by insurance.
 - Asneth explained that Program HH does not have a vision benefit.
 - Thomas Blissett added that the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) specifically calls out vision care as something that cannot be covered by Ryan White funds.
 - Uncovered medical bills, including for vision care, can be covered by emergency financial assistance (EFA) through the Every Penny Counts program
- A committee member asked what nutrition benefits are provided by Program HH. Asneth Omare explained that Program HH can pay for nutritional supplements like Ensure or Boost.

III. Connecting the Work: Members and staff of the Minnesota Council for HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention gave updates on the council's work.

- **Planning and Allocations Committee**

- Council staff shared that the Planning and Allocations Committee (PAC) voted in favor of a directive for \$183,900 Ryan White Part A of the post-award increase to go toward housing services for unhoused people who inject drugs and American Indian/Alaska Native HIV-positive individuals.
- PAC also voted in favor of the post-award increase in Part A Minority AIDS Initiative funds to be allocated to medical case management for Latinx populations.

- **Membership and Training Committee:** Calvin Hillary Hylton shared that there are several vacancies on the council and encouraged attendees of the Community Voices Committee to apply or refer people they know.

- **Needs Assessment and Evaluation Committee:** Joe Amrhein shared that the Needs Assessment and Evaluation Committee (NA&E) heard a presentation from Dr. Rachel Sandler Silva, the medical director at the Hennepin County Adult Detention Center (HCADC).

- Dr. Silva shared that medical providers at HCADC try to re-prescribe the same HIV medications that an individual was taking before they entered custody. They also link individuals to agencies that provide HIV care and services upon their release.
- NA&E learned that the Hennepin County Adult Corrections Center (also known as the workhouse) contracts with a private company for medical services. They may switch someone's medication to a lower-cost regimen even though their current one is working well.
- NA&E also learned that people cannot receive Medicaid benefits while they are in custody.
- An attendee encouraged NA&E to look at jails and prisons statewide to see if HIV testing is taking place, and if referrals for services and care are given when people leave custody.

- **Ad hoc attendance committee:** Jo Ann Vertetis reported that the ad hoc attendance committee has wording for its recommendation on a change to the bylaws regarding council attendance.

IV. New or unfinished business and set agenda for next meeting: Jo Ann Vertetis announced that the next meeting of the Community Voices Committee (CVC) will be held on September 12. She asked for feedback on what people would like to see on the agenda.

- A committee member suggested that an informational session at the end of each CVC meeting to explain what the council does and what participation looks like would be helpful. They shared that it can be difficult to get a sense of what the council does from attending CVC.
- A committee member said they would like to hear more about gender-affirming hormone treatment.
- A discussion of transportation services in both Greater Minnesota and the Metro area was suggested.
- A participant said they would like to hear more about how to access mental health services in Greater Minnesota, especially with a lack of providers.
 - Committee members mentioned that Rainbow Health has mental health providers that offer telehealth appointments.
 - It was pointed out that people must have access to technology to attend telehealth appointments.
- A participant asked if the Aliveness Project offers outpatient mental health services. James McMurray shared that it does, and their mental health provider accepts fee-for-service Medical Assistance or Medical Assistance through BlueCross and BlueShield, UCare, or HennepinHealth.

V. Announcements and adjourn

- Jo Ann Vertetis announced that the Red Ribbon Ride will take place August 19-21. They are looking for more riders and volunteer crew. The Ride benefits the Aliveness Project, One Heartland, and the Rural AIDS Action Network.
- Alex Palacios announced that voting season is coming up. The general election for statewide and municipal offices will be November 8. He encouraged people to register to vote and offered assistance to those who want it.
- James McMurray stated that the Aliveness Project was awarded the Lavender Magazine Community Pride Award Organization of the year.
- Thomas Blissett announced that the National Ryan White Conference begins on August 23. It will be 100% virtual and registration is free.
- Jo Ann Vertetis adjourned the meeting at 5:30p.m.

Meeting summary:

- Asneth Omare from Program HH at the Department of Human Services attended the meeting to answer questions.

Documents distributed for the meeting:

- Proposed agenda
- May 11, 2022 Community Voices Committee meeting minutes
- 2022 CVC Meeting flier

Additional documents displayed during the meeting:

- None

BB/cw