

**Minnesota Council for HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention
Disparities Elimination Committee
Thursday, August 4, 2022
9:30 – 11:00 a.m.
Microsoft Teams Meeting
Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present:	
Charlotte Detournay	Megan Mueller
Megan Higdon	Jay Orne (co-chair)
Jim Mitulski	Sarah Schiele (co-chair)
Committee Members Absent:	
Océane Lune	
Guests:	
Shea Amaro (DHS)	Sue Purchase
Sokun Derosier (DHS)	Emily Reimer (DHS)
James McMurray	Darin Rowles (DHS)
Amy Miller (DHS)	
Hennepin County (Part A) Representative:	DHS (Part B) Representative:
Jonathan Hanft	Thomas Blissett
MDH (Prevention) Representative:	MDH (Surveillance) Representative:
McKinzie Woelfel	Hannah Kass-Aten
MCHACP Staff:	
Carissa Weisdorf, Coordinator	Bryan Bick, Administrative Specialist (minutes)

Quorum Present? **Yes**

I. Welcome and introductions

- Jay Orne called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. Introductions were made.

II. Review and approval of minutes from July 21 meeting and proposed agenda

- The minutes from the July 21, 2022 meeting were reviewed and approved as printed.
- The agenda for the meeting was approved as printed.

III. Discuss FY 2023 allocations proposal and possible directives: Jay introduced the purpose of the meeting and reminded the committee that they previously received the ***FY 2023 Part A and Part B Council Allocations Proposal***.

- Jay asked members of the Disparities Elimination Committee (DEC) to share one sentence describing how they feel about the proposal.
 - A committee member shared that they are interested in the type of directive that addresses population targeting because we know there are disparities in how the HIV epidemic affects certain populations here, and in the HIV outbreak that is occurring.
 - Another committee member shared that it has been hard to connect all the different data sources that have been shared.
 - They wanted to make sure the Disparities Elimination Committee (DEC) looks at disparities related to geography, but also race, class, and gender.

- They highlighted legal services and linguistic services and asked that these be prioritized and funded accordingly if they are barriers to the most impacted groups receiving services.
 - A council member who attended the meeting said they feel the work of addressing disparities is going better but never ends. They feel the planning council has limited power to make an impact.
 - A committee member added that they want the Disparities Elimination Committee (DEC) to focus on the most at-risk populations and on the populations with the greatest barriers.
 - A committee member wondered if some of the models being used for services like medical case management and mental health are not catching the most vulnerable populations.
 - They pointed out that people who don't want to be associated with a diagnosis and are navigating health systems for the first time may struggle to complete assessments to begin certain services.
 - They asked how the Ryan White care system can be more creative with service models or coordinate better with organizations that can do innovative service models that Ryan White legislation does not currently allow.
 - A government agency representative asked for clarification on the agenda for this meeting. They asked if DEC is looking at creating directives specific to Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) funds or for the overall allocation proposal.
 - Jay answered that they see the scope of the discussion to be directives for the overall allocations proposal that advance DEC's goals of addressing disparities.
 - Carissa Weisdorf clarified that Item III of the agenda should have said "FY 2023 allocations proposal," not "Part A MAI allocations proposal."
- A committee member mentioned they had reviewed the **2020 HIV/AIDS Comprehensive Needs Assessment: Highlighted findings presentation** and was struck by slides 45-50 which detail how alcohol, drugs, and mental illness affect outcomes along the HIV care continuum in certain populations such as youth and people in transitional or temporary housing.
 - They pointed out that the council prioritized mental health services as #1 among all core medical services.
 - They asked if a directive could be used that would target mental health services to specific populations like youth, people in temporary or transitional housing, and people struggling with chemical dependency.
 - A community member at the meeting wondered if mental health care could be delivered to individuals where they are, like outreach efforts. They mentioned this could be done with agencies that provide housing and services. They added there are many people who are missed because they do not have access or good understanding of technology.
- A committee member stated a directive aimed at increasing access to care could be helpful. A directive could require weekend and evening availability or that service be delivered in a mobile format. They also pointed out that distribution of HIV medications one month at a time often does not work well for people who are unstably housed.

- A meeting participant added that for people living in poverty HIV is not a manageable chronic condition due to disparities in access to health care and basic services like telephone access. They added that harm reduction should be recognized as an effective public health measure.
- A committee member mentioned that the data that drives funding decisions is often a year or so behind. Jonathan Hanft clarified that the most recent epidemiological data from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is for 2021 and that the data dashboard is current from FY 2021 (ending February 28, 2022 for Part A and March 31, 2022 for Part B).
- A participant suggested reviewing Ryan White program expenditure data to see what service areas were underspent or underutilized. They could be areas to look at for reallocating funds.
- Jonathan added Ryan White services were delivered to about half of persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Minnesota, but an estimated 70% of PLWHA are eligible. He encouraged the Disparities Elimination Committee (DEC) to think about how Ryan White services can be better promoted in communities that are experiencing disparities.
- A meeting attendee mentioned that plasma centers do not engage in HIV education or outreach efforts.
 - They asked if MDH can work with the centers to make sure people who are diagnosed with HIV there get linkage to care and services.
 - Thomas Blissett answered that the Department of Human Services (DHS) has funded outreach case management initiatives. Those programs can work with DHS to get support in providing that type of outreach.
- A committee member pointed out that the **Quick Reference Handout 5.2: Directives** mentions that town halls and public hearings can be sources of data to inform directives. They thought a town hall in the Duluth area would be an opportunity to get information about improving HIV services and education in northern Minnesota. This idea was first discussed at the Hard Topics conversation that the council held in July.
 - A participant in the meeting mentioned that the St. Louis County Health and Human Service Conference takes place in October. They will be part of a group discussing the HIV outbreak in the Duluth area. There could be an opportunity to combine efforts.
 - A committee member added they are looking into bringing the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt to Duluth for World AIDS Day and organizing concurring public events.
- McKinzie Woelfel pointed out that the comprehensive plan is currently being developed and the council has been invited to give feedback. They thought this might be a good way for the Disparities Elimination Committee to make some of the changes it has been discussing.
- A committee member pointed out that it would require significant resources to fund a directive for a new and innovative program for mental health care. They asked the government representatives for feedback on this issue.
 - Thomas Blissett said he would want more information such as the insurance status of the people who reported they needed but did not receive mental health care. He also

- said the unmet service needs may indicate reform is needed in other systems. For example, can case management be improved so that people are getting the referrals they need for mental health services and transportation?
- Jonathan Hanft added that it would be helpful to identify models or best practices that have worked more effectively with populations that are disproportionately impacted by HIV.
 - Jonathan also mentioned that funds can be redistributed if they are being underspent by certain providers. He also stated that COVID is a factor for recent underspending in services like transportation.
 - A council member asked if government agencies are working with Indian Health Services clinics to do testing, care linkage, and HIV care on reservations.
 - A community member asked why people aren't told about Ryan White services when they receive a positive test result. They mentioned that some new members at the Aliveness Project were never informed about services for which they are eligible.
 - Jonathan mentioned that the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center (MATEC) would be a resource to help providers who are not specifically part of the Ryan White system get the best information to their clients who test positive for HIV.
 - A committee member added that navigators and community health workers within clinic settings should play a role in referring newly diagnosed individuals to Ryan White services.
 - McKinzie Woelfel commented that getting people connected to Ryan White services has been a goal in the Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan, and that viral suppression rates improve because of connection to Ryan White services.
 - Carissa Weisdorf reminded the committee that feedback from council members is being sought about the goals and objectives of the integrated plan. She mentioned that the steering committee for the integrated plan has discussed how Ryan White service levels are not increasing even though most people who responded to the 2020 needs assessment would qualify based on their income.
 - A committee member asked if Part A and Part B can help the Disparities Elimination Committee (DEC) get more data about why there are disparities in services like mental health among certain populations.
 - Representatives from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) agreed that they are willing to help with supporting the council in collecting data.
 - Carissa displayed the **HIV/AIDS System of Care and Prevention Internal Data Request Form**. She said it may help DEC to refine its thoughts about what data is needed.
 - Jay Orne summarized that they and Sarah Schiele will work with council staff on completing the data request form.
 - A committee member asked about directives for population targeting and geographic targeting (specifically the Duluth area).
 - Carissa shared that the allocation proposal is going to be the focus of council meeting on August 9 and the council co-chairs have stated that directives from the Disparities Elimination Committee should be forwarded to the Executive Committee

- first, so they would not go before the council at the August 9 meeting. There will be time to gather data and develop directives after the allocation proposal is voted on.
- A meeting participant added they would like to see more collaboration between HIV efforts and overdose prevention efforts. They felt like a community forum would be helpful so people can get to know the government agencies that work on these efforts.

IV. New business / Unfinished Business

- No new business was discussed.
- No unfinished business was discussed.

V. Announcements and adjourn

- Meg Mueller announced that the Red Door has an allotment of smallpox vaccine to vaccinate people for monkeypox. They are vaccinating about 100 people each day.
 - Meg mentioned that there are already disparities being seen nationwide with Black and Brown communities getting access to monkeypox vaccination.
 - Some appointments at Red Door are being set aside for walk-ins, and the clinic is reaching out to community partners that serve communities of color.
 - Megan announced that if anyone does direct service, especially with communities of color, they can contact her and she can help get people signed up for vaccination appointments that are not available to the public.
- Jay Orne adjourned the meeting at 11:01 a.m.

Meeting Summary:

- The Disparities Elimination Committee discussed the FY 2023 Pre-Award Allocations Proposal.
- The committee decided to continue gathering data to inform possible directives on population and geographic targeting for specific services where unmet need has been identified.

Documents distributed before the meeting:

- Proposed agenda for August 4, 2022 meeting
- July 21, 2022 DEC minutes
- FY 2023 Council Pre-Award Allocations Proposal
- Quick Reference Handout 5.2: Directives

Documents displayed during the meeting:

- HIV/AIDS System of Care and Prevention Internal Data Request Form

BB/cw