**Minnesota Council for HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention**

**Community Voices Committee Meeting**

**Monday, March 13, 2023**

**4:00 – 6:00 p.m.**

**Hybrid In-Person/Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Meeting Minutes**

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| **Committee Members Present:** |  |
| Danielle Brantley (co-chair) | Lesa Nelson |
| Jo Ann Vertetis (co-chair) | Sherry Outten |
| Stephen Jensen | Tristian Sparks |
| Belinda Charleston-Green | Connie Moeller |
| Verneice Acevedo | Lia E |
| Virginia Blom | James McMurray |
| **Community Members/Guests/Consultants:** |  |
| Matt Tiburon (Aliveness Project) |  |
| **Hennepin County (Part A) Representative:** | **DHS (Part B) Representative:** |
| None | Thomas Blissett |
| **MDH (Prevention) Representative:** | **MCHACP Staff:** |
| None | Audra Gaikowski, Council Coordinator |
|  | Emily Murphy (minutes) |

1. **Welcome**

* Jo Ann Vertetis called the meeting to order at 4:07pm and introductions were made.
* The proposed agenda was reviewed and approved as printed.

1. **Community questions and concerns:** 
   * A committee member asked if someone’s residence is established in Greater MN, can they receive outpatient care in the Metro Twin Cities area?
     + Thomas Blissett responded that this would require a bit more research since the answer would depend on what kind of health insurance an individual has. The simple answer is yes it is possible because an individual can find services wherever they want, but the more complicated answer is that they would need to look into payer sources since Ryan White is a payer of last resort.
   * A committee member asked about electronic records and the safety of records when they are being transferred from one provider to another when a file is not saved electronically. There’s a concern about the safety of the information on the paper copies because they can be easily lost.
     + A committee member responded that if someone is transferring to a new doctor’s office, the new office can request the previous provider’s paperwork. A new provider could have the paperwork faxed over to their office.
2. **HIV Legislative Update**

* Matt Tiburon, Executive Director of the Aliveness Project, discussed an update on the current legislative session.
* The state has a sizeable surplus, and we have an opportunity this year and next, due to the surplus and the makeup of the legislature, to increase HIV funding from the state.
* Advocates are going to be asking for increased funding for HIV care and prevention services to cover the gap in Ryan White Part B funding. The state allocated $2 million to HIV care in the 1990s and this amount has never increased. The bill asks, House File 2568, for an additional $10 million per year for 2024 and 2025.
* Because there are many people coming to the capitol to ask for an increase in funding, we need to educate legislators about how the budget shortfalls affect the community of those living with HIV, and to help them see that we can protect in services that currently exist, while investing in services that can end HIV in MN.
* There is are additional bills being introduced in this legislative cycle. One bill is to expand access to PrEP and PEP in pharmacies, including providing access during weekends. Another bill is a request for funding for harm reduction, syringe service programs and legislative changes because these programs are not technically legal in Minnesota. There is also a request to reduce the cap on the number of syringes you can purchase at a pharmacy and the number that pharmacies are permitted to sell.
* Matt showed a legislative agenda 1-pager for folks present in the room. Matt will share an electronic copy with Audra to share with community members after the meeting.
* Several HIV organizations have organized an HIV Day on the Hill, Wednesday March 29th from 9am-3pm. The event starts at 9am, where they will talk about lobbying, the bills, educations, etc. People will be separated by their districts so they can meet with their Representative and Senator. Registration is necessary ahead of time so you can be paired with meeting your elected representatives. Then, there will be a rally at the rotunda at 11:15am. This is a chance for you to meet your elected officials to hear directly from the HIV community and to build a relationship with your legislators.
* Lunch will be catered-in.
* Ryan White funding cannot be used for transportation to this event. Carpools may be arranged, leaving from the Aliveness Project.
* Those who are interested in participating need to register ahead a time so \meetings can be scheduled with your legislator. Register on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hiv-on-the-hill-tickets-518050120857?fbclid=IwAR1Hcvmln0WMKeSpITt_avz5BatughIOqcXesLBBpufov6BxcdDB9aiagXQ). The link is also on the Aliveness website.
* Additionally, there will be email templates that you can use to email your legislator to share your support for the bills.
  + A committee member asked if they could speak with legislators who do not support HIV, so they can speak across the isle, to try to convince someone who is not voting their way?
  + Matt responded that the most success we have had legislatively is bipartisan, when they have had support from Democrats and Republicans. When the bill to frame the End the HIV legislative, one of the reasons it was so successful is because the Chief Author was a Republican. The way that he became the Chief Author, was from an HIV advocate who lived in that district who built a relationship with the legislator.
  + Your legislator will always make time to meet with you. However, if you want to speak with a Republican legislator, they can organize for you to meet with them. Also, just because a Democrat supports HIV, does not mean that they will vote for this bill.
  + When people meet with their legislator, advocates will ask their legislator if they vote ‘yes’ on this bill. This allows us to have a record of how many votes we have and how many more we need to advocate for.
  + A committee member asked how much is the 503b hurting the funding that is trickling down to different agencies from the Rebate money?
  + Thomas Blissett responded that it is 340b and asked for further clarification on the question.
  + The committee member responded that there are many 340b in the state, and because the state is not receiving the Rebate dollars that would increase the poll of money DHS would have. Is that directly impacting the funding available for HIV services?
  + Thomas responded that the answer is yes and no. Depending on the funding stream that an organization has, part of the requirement is that if you receive any program income from Ryan White dollars, then those dollars have to go back into HIV services. It does mean it can reduce DHS’s funds, but sometimes this is a good thing because it allows providers some flexibility in how they can utilize those funds in HIV services. The main issue is that the accumulated rebates is depleted.
  + A committee member asked what will happen when the public health emergency ends and those who became Medicaid eligible during the pandemic lose Medicaid eligible status.
  + Matt responded that it is a very big question right now. DHS, case managers, are going to have a very big responsibility to make a smooth transfer for people moving off Medicaid and onto ADAP and the Ryan White program. There is a question of what this will mean for the budget because there is an increase in spending over the next few years.
  + Thomas responded that they hope people are not going to fall through the cracks, but that Medicaid is going to start redetermining people’s eligibility, which has not happened since the public health emergency went into place. If someone is determined ineligible to Medicaid, then they would come onto the ADAP Program. Program HH is working with Benefits Counselors right now to make sure that everyone is up to speed with contingency plans so they can meet the special enrollment period.
  + Thomas said that Rachel from Program HH could possibly speak to CVC on this topic more.

1. **Review FY2023 workplan** 
   * Jo Ann Vertetis asked the committee to review the January 9 minutes. Audra displayed the ***2023.01.09 CVC Minutes*** on the screen. The minutes were approved with the addition to add Belinda’s name.
   * Audra displayed the ***FY 2023 CVC workplan*** spreadsheet. The workplan is open for this fiscal year. In the January meeting, the committee had a discussion on topics they would like to talk about this year. Potential topics include Part A RW services, HIV and aging, data and safety of information, decriminalization of HIV, stigma and disclosure, family education and HIV. As Thomas mentioned, we could have Rachel come to speak on Program HH as well. If the committee would like, Audra can start scheduling speakers on some of these presentations. If anyone has additional suggestions, please share now so they can be added to the workplan.
     + A committee member stated that there has been a Hennepin County programming to offer $50 to providers. Some of the topics have been interesting and relevant to clients as well, including how clients need to learn and advocate how to talk to providers. This would be a good way to get client input on work that would benefit themselves. This presentation came from Brenda.
     + Audra will reach out to Brenda to see if she would be able to present.
     + A committee member added that the Positive Living Conference is in September 2023. This is a conference for all people living with HIV, and they would like to see how someone from the state could make it affordable for clients from MN to attend.
2. **Committee co-chair election**

* Audra displayed the ***CVC co-chair position description*** and reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the CVC co-chairs.
* Danielle is up for reelection if she would like. Jo Ann is not eligible to run again this year, but she is eligible to keep serving until a successor is named.
* Tristian Sparks was nominated and accepted the nomination to serve as co-chair.
* Danielle Brantley was nominated and accepted the nomination to serve as co-chair.
* Nominations were closed and the election was held.
* Audra put a link in the chat to the ballot, and displayed a QR code on the screen. Audra emailed the link to committee members who requested a emailed link.
* Tristian Sparks (received 12 votes) and Danielle Brantley (received 13 votes). Both were elected to serve as the next year’s CVC co-chairs.

1. **World AIDS Day Breakfast**

* Community Voices Committee will be holding a World AIDS Day Breakfast on December 1, 2023.
* A smaller committee will be formed to plan this event. James McMurray volunteered to serve on the committee.
* The CVC co-chairs will seek additional volunteers at the next Planning and Allocations committee meeting and at the council meeting on Tuesday.

1. **Connecting the work**
   * Audra provided the report of the Executive committee. The Executive Committee met last week to plan the Council meeting on 3/14/2023. This will be the first meeting of the new term. Everyone is welcome to attend the council meeting. Matt Tiburon will at the council meeting and there will be a training on Robert’s Rules of Order. The committee also just finished their bi-annual bylaw review and voted in 14 new members.
   * Audra provided the report of the Disparities and Elimination Committee, who is currently planning a mental health provider discussion on May 18th from 9:30am-11:30am in-person at the Health Services Building. There will also be a call-in option. The purpose of the meeting is to is to discuss systemic issues that create barriers for people living with HIV to accessing mental health care services.
   * Audra stated that Planning and Allocations has not met in a few months.
   * James provided the report of the Membership and Training Committee. The committee made a revision of the attendance policy. They reviewed vacancies on the council. The next committee meeting is Friday at 10am.
   * Audra provided the report of the Needs Assessment and Evaluation Committee. They last met in January. The committee is continuing discussions on the needs of incarcerated people living with HIV and how to improve access to services for that population.
2. **Unfinished / new business**

* Danielle brought up that several people have brought up that they would like to see this meeting take place at Clare Housing.
  + James responded that the CVC meeting previously took place at Marshall Flats and there was good turn out, but that was before COVID-19.
  + A committee member asked if the meeting will still place hybrid so people can attend virtually.
  + A committee member responded that the meeting at the Aliveness Project is convenient because they can make an appointment for the food shelf.
  + A committee member responded that when the meeting used to be at Clare Housing, there weren’t any extra people who attended specifically from Clare Housing.
  + Jo Ann asked if anyone else had a perspective to share. We can look into other locations, but we are really trying to get people from out of the TGA to come to the meeting so they can access services.
  + Sherry added that she would like to help with the World AIDS Day Breakfast.
  + A committee member suggested that the meeting be rotated at different AIDS Service Organizations, like Open Arms and Marshall Flats, that way people from outside the TGA can see what services are available here.
  + Jo Ann suggested that we explore these options and at the next meeting, to take place at the Aliveness, we can vote on a decision for where the meetings will take place for this year’s meetings.
* Jo Ann asked if the committee would like to have Rachel present to the committee in May on the transition from Medicaid to ADAP.
  + A committee member responded that they thought it would be a good idea.
* Jo Ann Vertetis adjourned the meeting at 5:46p.m.

**Meeting summary:**

* Matt Tiburon gave an update on HIV-related legislation and shared information on the upcoming HIV Day on the Hill.
* Audra reviewed items to the 2023 FY Workplan.
* The committee made plan to form a subcommittee to plan the World AIDS Day breakfast on December 1st.
* Each committee gave an overview of its recent activities.

**Documents distributed for the meeting:**

* Proposed agenda
* January 9, 2022 Community Voices Committee meeting minutes
* HIV Council postcard
* 2023.03 CVC meeting flier

**Documents distributed during the meeting:**

* HIV Day on the Hill Legislative agenda

**EM/ag**