



Section I – Mission Statement

The mission of the Greater Hartford Ryan White Part A Planning Council is to determine priorities for how Ryan White Part A funds are allocated based on the documented needs of the HIV/AIDS communities within the TGA. It is the responsibility of the Council to assure that all infected and affected communities and populations of the TGA are represented on the Planning Council.

Section II – Goal and Objective

The goal of the Greater Hartford Ryan White Part A Planning Council is, through its needs assessment and planning processes and through the allocation of funding, to create a seamless continuum of care that addresses the needs of the infected and affected populations of the three counties it is charged to serve. Its major objective is to ensure access to core medical services.

	Member	Regular Planning Council Meetings			Priority Setting Sessions				Regular Planning Council Meetings		
		3/3 2021	4/7	5/5	6/2 P S & AAM	6/23 Data P	7/8 Data Make up	7/21 P & A	9/1	11/3	2/2 2022
1	Alice Ferguson	P	P	P							
2	Alix Dittmore	P	DPH/P	P							
3	Angie Bremser	P	P	P							
4	Cheena Rivera	A	A	P							
5	Danielle W. Dias	P	DPH/p	P							
6	Danielle Montaque	P	P	P							
	Ivette Brown	A	Resigned								
7	Ivette Santiago	P	A	P							
8	James Lloyd	A	A	A							
9	Luis Irizarry	P	P	P							
10	Luis Martinez	E	A	A							
11	Maria Lorenzo	P	DPH	P							
	Marie Raynor	P	P	Resigned							
12	Melanie Alvarez	P	P	P							
13	Michael Ostapoff	P	P	P							
14	Myrna Millet-Saez	P	P	P							
	Nitza Agosto	P	P	Resigned							
15	Ruth Garcia	P	P	P							
16	Sylvia Miller	E	A	P							
17	Valerie Ingram	P	P	E							
18	Anna Marie Shand*	A	A	P							

*Alternate - nonvoting member 7 Members needed for Quorum



Guests Present: Cristian Ortiz (CRT), Erika Mott (ACT), Gabrielle Mitchell, Albert Ruperti (CHS), Caitlin McNulty, Crystal McPherson (CHS), William Bofo (UCONN), Nilda Fernandez (CT Children), Dante Gennaro (DPH), Venesha Heron (DPH), Tia Gaines (DPH), André L. McGuire (HRA), Khelsey Smith (ACT)

Recipient's Office: Angelique Croasdale, Peta-Gaye Nembhard

Meeting Facilitated By: Danielle Warren Dias & Luis Irizarry

Recorded By: Marie Raynor & Sou Thammavong, Planning Council Support

Wednesday May 5, 2021 Planning Council Meeting

Luis Irizarry, Planning Council Co-Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed participants and continued with the Council Mission, Notices, a Moment of Silence and asked attendees to introduce themselves in the Chat Box. Ground rules were reviewed. Luis acknowledged May 19th is National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. We know that many in the community are hurting from the Atlanta Spa Murders and the increase in hate crimes because of the coronavirus. We stand in solidarity with our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities who feel targeted, isolated, and afraid.

Sou T was as invited to share resources and she spoke about the implications using the "China-Virus" to justify anti-Asian violence. Associating the coronavirus with an ethnic group is dehumanizing, and it perpetuates stereotypes through fear mongering. She shared that two national organizations, Hollaback! and Asian Americans Advancing Justice are partnering for virtual workshops on bystander intervention to recognize the 'spectrum of disrespect' and how to safely intervene. Other information included:

- ✓ The #IAMNOT A VIRUS campaign began in March 2020 to address the attacks against Asian Americans due to COVID related racism.
- ✓ Locally the CT Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity joined State Leaders Condemning Recent Hate Crimes Against Asian Americans.
- ✓ There is an ongoing push for the reporting of hate crimes in Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander communities.
- ✓ Asian Family Services, a program of CRT, is the only behavioral health agency in the greater Hartford area that provides counseling and case management for Asian and Asian Americans.

She then invited participants to contact her for more information and expressed her gratitude to the Council for the opportunity to speak on the topic.

April 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes and Evaluation Results

The Co-chair then requested members to review the minutes of the April 7, 2021 meeting. Members were given a few minutes to review, and a motion was requested. Alixe Dittmore made a motion to accept the April 7, 2021 meeting minutes and was seconded by Melanie Alvarez. With no corrections or further discussion, 9 members voted in favor of accepting the April 7, 2021 minutes. With no objections or abstentions, the minutes were accepted. The May 7, 2021 Planning Council Meeting Evaluations shared that respondents enjoyed the breakout session, and it went well.

May Reallocation Vote & Core Medical Service Waiver Vote

Moving on to Agenda item V, The Steering committee on 4/20/21 approved the Ryan White Part A May 2021 Reallocation Pool and Proposed Uses submitted by the Recipients' office on 13-Apr-21. The Projected



Unexpended Funds of \$6,831 is being reallocated from priority setting #11-HEALTH INS PREMIUM & COST SHARING ASSIST to priority setting #05-MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES. The recipient proposed to Reallocate Unexpended Funds to continue virtual mental health sessions that were previously funded with Ryan White CARES Act dollars. Alice Ferguson made the motion to accept the May Reallocation and was seconded by Angie Bremser. With no corrections or further discussion 14 members voted in favor of accepting the May Reallocation with 1 abstention.

Core Medical Services Waiver projected allocation

The presented alternative allocation schedule proposed moving \$45,000 from Core Services to Non-Core Services. Since the waiver (if granted) would only cover FY2021, it would provide the Planning Council flexibility in voting to reallocate any unspent funds without having to adhere to the 75% core services requirement. It was shared that even if HRSA approves the Core Medical Services request, the Planning Council is under no obligation to adhere to the proposed allocations. The deadline for submission of the waiver is June 1, 2021.

It was explained that moving \$45,000 from Core Medical services to Non-Core Support will allow more funding to emergency financial assistance, housing, and psychosocial groups. Core services are what is considered medical services like dental, mental health, substance use disorders, and paying for medical or life insurance.

It was proposed to move -\$10,000 from Medical Case Mgt (incl Treatment Adherence); -\$10,000 from Early Intervention Services; -\$10,000 from Substance Abuse Services; and -\$15,000 from Mental Health Services to Housing + \$10,000, Psychosocial Support Services + \$30,000, earmarked for direct services/ support clinical of supervision of peers, and Emergency Financial Assistance + \$5,000.

Questions raised: Who made the decisions about how much money went to where? What were these financial decisions based upon for these support services? It was shared that the Waiver Committee is responsible for reviewing the financial guidelines of the waiver application. As a subcommittee of the Council, they looked at the past three years of Priorities as voted by Council Members, Expenditures and Reallocation of unspent funds. The current influx of COVID funding into the state was also taken into consideration. It was reminded that Part A is the payer of last resort. To keep in line with Council By-laws, the Waiver committee submitted its recommendation to the Steering Committee, and it was approved to go to a vote at today's meeting. The explanation was received, and a motion was requested.

The motion was made by Melanie Alvarez to accept the proposed alternative set of allocations to support the Council's Core Medical Services Waiver Application to HRSA for this fiscal year 2021 and was seconded by Alice Ferguson. There was no further discussion; 11 members voted in favor of the proposed allocation and there were no objections. A tutorial and written guide was requested to help members better use the online ZOOM platform.

Recipient's Office Report

Angelique Croasdale-Mills, Senior Project Director of the Greater Hartford Ryan White Transitional Grant Area indicated that she had no Reports at this time.

Committee Reports

Ad Hoc Waiver Committee – reported that the Planning Council earlier voted in favor of the proposed alternate Allocation table and the application will be submitted when we get the letters to meet our deadline.

Continuum of Care Committee (CoC) – The committee completed the reviewed FY 2021-2022 timeline. Discussion included the need to collaborate with the CT HIV Planning Consortium training program for Case Management and other folks working in the field to optimize services. It was discussed that National HIV/AIDS Awareness day's events from agencies be shared on the state website calendar for visibility and participation. The World AIDS Day event that started in the Greater Hartford Transitional Grant Area, will now be a collaborative event on a state level; a 3 min video presentation was shown to the Council. Members gave feedback to include more sound bites of people saying, "let's end the epidemic," have all staff make one video clip, make it inclusive with New Haven submitting a portion. The current infomercial can be played at the opening of the WAD event on the day.

Membership Committee – Reviewed the Reflectiveness chart and shared that we are down on membership. A plea to recruit members was made to the full planning council body and for members to join the membership committee meetings, every first Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.

Positive Empowerment Committee (PEC) – did not have quorum and did not meet.

Evaluation Committee – Received the Assessment of the Administrative Mechanism and will review the same day to present at the June 2nd Planning Council meeting. The Planning Council Support Survey will be conducted via emails to members and due May 28, 2021 for presentation on June 2nd. A review of the 3rd quarter Early Identification of Individuals with HIV/AIDS/HCV 2020 was completed.

Priorities Need Assessment (PNA) Committee – Received updates that the Request for Information (RFI) were made to the Department of Public Health (DPH) [HIV Surveillance](#) data team through their online portal. Suzanne Spears and the HIV Surveillance Team were emailed the request as follow up. Suzanne replied that she received and was working on the request for HIV Epidemiology. Dante Gennaro, CT DPH: HIV Prevention, asked if Requests for Information was sent to DPH Communications and Legal Team, recommending going through [Freedom of Information Request](#). He shared the legal team ultimately decides on what data we will be shared. It was repeated that, the Council is following DPH's procedure to request public data and will follow up regarding the FOIA along with submitted RFI.

In the PNA meeting held earlier Dante mentioned that a change in DPH policy as it relates to data release. The Co-chair reported that the committee was caught off guard because the requested data set was sent on April 14th and had a follow up meeting with Suzanne Spears and conversation with the HIV Surveillance Team with no mention the Freedom of Information Request. This potential new process of requesting data from the state created confusion and frustration. Dante stated that we may or may not be able to receive all the requested data. Support staff will be working offline with DPH on the data request that has been shared for the past 16 years with no challenges that includes zip codes. This gave rise to a vibrant discussion.

A member exclaimed that they are 'appalled to hear that because it just is going to damage our process in our ability to be able to make decisions based on data. PNA Co-chair commented that the committee will work with what we are given even if it is not everything we received as the timeline is set for our priority's session. Another participant commented that the statement made by the co-chair is unacceptable because we should not be moving forward to make decisions with incomplete data. Another member commented the Council is

responsible for making decisions in the TGA for over 3,000 individuals living with HIV and AIDS, this process requires us to have up-to-date information. There seems to be a miscommunication and Dante is not here to expand on it. Support staff to follow up and report back regarding the submitted Request for Information, no notification on a potential policy change emphasizing the federal mandates the Council must uphold. A former member of the council stated in the chat that he would like to see a specific policy they can point to for denying basic public information to a public Health entity. The DPH website made no reference to that new process.

Suggestion on the way forward:

- Contact attorneys from the City of Hartford for clarification. The Greater Hartford TGA should have access to public information.
- Request an extension for priorities schedule.
- Pull the data from the DPH website.
- Send letter to The Commissioner of the DPH explaining this issue asking for assistance in rectifying this miscommunication to assist in helping to adhere to our federal mandates.

The DPH representative member on the council was asked for feedback. Michael stated he is unaware of the details of what data was requested and not fully understanding the issue explaining DPH is under the constraints of HIPAA and state laws. Planning Council Co-Chair responded that the request is for aggregate information which does not fall under any HIPAA law. We are asking for Epidemiology information, not clients names or personal information or identifying information.

Venesha Heron from DPH volunteered to email the Team at DPH to get the Council clarification. She seeks details on the request for information; the date it was sent and the due date. The Co-chair shared it was requested in April with the return date of June 4, 2021. She was asked to copy the Co-chairs of PNA Danielle Green-Montaque, Alice Ferguson and Support Staff.

The Out of Care survey and Non-Virally Suppressed survey data will be first shared with the continuum of care committee and then back to the Priorities Needs Assessment for review. On June 2nd Danielle GM, will be presenting information on the priority setting and the data process. Angelique will conduct a training on the surveys, scheduled for May 10, 2021 for agencies and will launch the surveys then. PNA decided to not include the 2018 Statewide Needs Assessment in favor of the COVID, Out of Care and Non-Virally Suppressed survey data to be included in the 2022 Data Booklet. The deadline for preparation of the booklet is June 4th.

Multicultural Care Team (MCCT) Committee Report – The committee is scheduled on the third Thursdays of each month starting at 1:30 p.m. The committee met on April 15th, focusing on collaborations with agencies for HIV/AIDS Awareness days and outreach events.

Public Comments, Other Business, & Announcements

1. Agencies were encouraged to visit the Connecticut Statewide HIV Community calendar of HIV events www.guardianhealth.org and add their upcoming events onto the Calendar.

2. CRT host National Awareness HCV testing day May 19th hosted by CRT at Kenney Park by the Pond House area, more info call Cristian Ortiz, 860-462-5225



3. A digital Summit for Boys and Men of Color June 8 through 11, 2021 registration is currently open <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/state-of-health-equity-among-boys-and-men-of-color-summit-tickets-145922661609>

Danielle W reminded everyone to submit their meeting evaluations, refer to the agenda for upcoming meetings and adjourned the meeting. She reminded Planning Council Voting members to remain on the call for the Executive Session.