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3 Meeting of the
4 **POLICY COMMITTEE**
5 October 24, 2008, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
6

7 Matthew Lesieur and Darryl Ng, Co-Chairs
8

9 **Members Present:** Damian Bird, Sean Cahill, PhD, Gregory Cruz, Coco
10 Jervis, Matthew Lesieur, Esther W.Y. Lok, Jan Carl Park, Andresa Person,
11 Charles Shorter, Dorella Walters
12

13 **Members Absent:** Susan Alston, Elaine Greeley, Paul Meissner, Reynolds
14 Mulero, Darryl Ng
15

16 **DOHMH Staff Present:** Nina Rothschild, DrPH, Anthony Santella, DrPH, Elys
17 Vasquez
18

19 **Others Present:** Yves Gebhardt, Peter Gee
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21 **Material Distributed:** Agenda; minutes from Policy Committee meeting on
22 June 6, 2008; statements on attendance at and selection of alternates for
23 Planning Council committee meetings; flowcharts showing path of federal and
24 state legislation; grid presenting Policy Committee activities during 2007-8
25 planning cycle.
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27 **Welcome/Introductions:** Matthew Lesieur welcomed participants.
28 Members introduced themselves.
29

30 **Review of the Meeting Packet:** Nina Rothschild reviewed the contents of the
31 meeting packet.
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33 **Review of the Minutes:** Minutes from the most recent meeting of the Policy
34 Committee on June 6, 2008, were approved by consensus.
35

36 **Policy Committee New Member Orientation:** Jan Carl Park provided an
37 overview of the work of the Planning Council and noted that DOHMH is still
38 waiting to hear from Mayor Bloomberg's office regarding new Planning
39 Council appointees. We are holding committee meetings at this time and
40 expect that the full Planning Council will be vetted and seated in November.

1 Mr. Park reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Policy Committee as
2 articulated in the Bylaws. He informed Committee members that they will
3 need to designate an alternate, and names of alternates will be added to the
4 Planning Council list-serv. Alternates should be prepared to cast a vote on
5 behalf of the Committee member whom they represent. Mr. Park also noted
6 that Planning Council staff will track attendance this year more closely than in
7 the past.

8
9 Mr. Park stated that last year's Policy Committee activities involved
10 generating letters to elected officials on a variety of policy issues such as the
11 24-month cumulative lifetime limit on Ryan White-funded housing, HIV testing
12 legislation, ADAP as TrOOP, and the 30% rule. Many of the letters, which go
13 from the Policy Committee to the Planning Council's Executive Committee to
14 the full Planning Council, have a short turnaround time, but we have time to
15 develop a position on some issues. Mr. Lesieur chimed in, noting that Policy
16 Committee members serve as the eyes and ears of the Council and provide
17 advice. Mr. Park reminded members to be mindful of conflicts of interest,
18 noting that they need to acknowledge if they are weighing in on a policy issue
19 that affects their own agency.

20
21 **New York State AIDS Advisory Council Appointment Discussion:** Mr. Park
22 stated that the Ryan White Planning Council oversees Part A funding by
23 setting priorities and allocating resources. The New York State AIDS Advisory
24 Council oversees Part B funds and advises the governor whether funding
25 allocations should be increased or decreased. The work of the NYS AIDS
26 Advisory Council (AAC) takes place through the New York State Department
27 of Health AIDS Institute, and all AAC members are appointed by the governor.
28 NYC DOHMH is interested in obtaining a seat on the Council. Although Mr.
29 Park attends the meetings, he does not have an official seat on the Council –
30 even though the New York State Department of Health has two seats on our
31 Planning Council. We are open to a partnership with them and would like to
32 see a seat open up in reciprocity. Dr. Isaac Weisfuse, Deputy Commissioner
33 for the Division of Disease Control at DOHMH, has been identified as a
34 possible candidate. Dr. Sean Cahill remarked that protecting written
35 informed consent for HIV testing is GMHC's top priority and that NYS Health
36 Commissioner Richard Daines and Governor David Paterson are seeking
37 further compromises on this issue. He inquired about the influence Dr.
38 Weisfuse would bring to bear on these deliberations. Mr. Park promised to
39 bring more information on this issue to the Committee's next meeting.

40
41 **Ryan White Reauthorization:** The current Ryan White legislation (the
42 HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act) expires on September 30, 2009. The
43 legislation was originally designed to address the end-stage needs of people
44 dying from AIDS. The bill is still fairly similar to the original version of the bill
45 earlier in the epidemic, but the epidemic itself has spread to areas including

1 the South with poor infrastructure. Those areas of the country are trying to
2 obtain a greater share of the pie, but we are the epicenter of the epidemic and
3 want to keep our share. The legislation was last reauthorized in 2006 under a
4 Republican Congress and Republican President. Dr. Cahill noted that the
5 AIDS Action Council is stating that if Barack Obama is elected President,
6 universal health care will be on the table. AIDS Action Council plans to seek a
7 2-year reauthorization so that in 2011 (an off-election year) we can really focus
8 on Ryan White.

9
10 Mr. Lesieur stated that the CAEAR Coalition has created a list of top ten fixes –
11 aspects of the current legislation that have to be changed before September
12 30th for the next reauthorization. Connie Gardner of Senator Ted Kennedy's
13 staff thinks that these fixes can be slipped into other bills, and reauthorization
14 can proceed with a simple extension of dates.

15
16 Dr. Cahill stated that he would like to make a case at the next Policy
17 Committee meeting for increased funding for Ryan White. He believes that
18 there are tactical reasons for not going for a full five-year reauthorization. Mr.
19 Park commented that many big cities have taken a position on the technical
20 fixes, and he encouraged the Policy Committee to take a policy position on
21 reauthorization. Gregory Cruz asked about the Southern Coalition's
22 perspective on reauthorization. Mr. Lesieur responded that states such as
23 Alabama would like to eliminate Part A of the Ryan White legislation because
24 it focuses on the needs of metropolitan areas, and Alabama and many other
25 states do not have big cities. Mr. Park noted that taking positions that are
26 contrary to those of other groups is inevitable.

27
28 Dr. Cahill stated that he wants to focus on a national AIDS strategy, the travel
29 ban, and abstinence-only sex education. He doesn't want to be pulled into
30 divisive struggles similar to those that erupted three years ago during the last
31 reauthorization. Mr. Cruz advocated for including consumers in the crafting of
32 policy. Mr. Lesieur advocated for the Policy Committee to formulate a
33 reauthorization position. Charles Shorter asked for a cheat sheet providing a
34 brief summary of the opinions of various organizations on reauthorization.
35 DOHMH staff agreed to send members of the Policy Committee the Ryan
36 White legislation and an executive summary.

37
38 **Review of Policy Committee 2007-8 Activity:** Members reviewed the
39 progress of letters generated by the Policy Committee through the Planning
40 Council. The Policy Committee puts together a letter (sometimes taking a
41 letter already written by another organization and tailoring it to be specific to
42 New York or specific to the Planning Council, and sometimes authoring a
43 letter from scratch) and sends the letter to the Executive Committee which in
44 turn forwards the letter to the full Planning Council. Next month's Policy
45 Committee packets will include all letters distributed during the 2007-8

1 planning cycle. Dr. Cahill suggested taking the letter sent last year to
2 Secretary of HIS Mike Leavitt concerning the 24-month cumulative lifetime cap
3 on Ryan White-supported housing and sending it to Congress. Members also
4 agreed to write a new letter in support of the 30% rule – namely, that no
5 individual should have to spend more than 30% of his or her income on rent.
6 Dr. Anthony Santella asked whether the PC could engage in some activity
7 other than letter-writing, such making calls or visiting legislators' offices. Mr.
8 Park cautioned, however, that the Planning Council is federally funded and
9 should not engage in partisan activity. Dr. Cahill noted, however, that we can
10 lobby and write letters as individuals.

11
12 One of the topics addressed in a Policy Committee-generated letter last year
13 was a one-year moratorium on seven Administration-imposed Medicaid
14 regulations. Only one of these regulations – the upper payment limit –
15 remains to be addressed. According to this regulation, Medicaid
16 reimbursement cannot exceed Medicare reimbursement for the same service.
17 Furthermore, services not covered by Medicare will not be covered by
18 Medicaid. Senate and House bills to address this regulation haven't moved.

19
20 **Policy Committee Work Plan:** Dr. Cahill suggested sending a letter to HHS
21 Secretary Mike Leavitt asking him to de-list HIV as a disease of public health
22 significance. The idea is to repeal the ban on HIV-infected travelers before
23 President Obama takes office. Dr. Cahill also advocated for intense outreach
24 to immigrant communities and contact with Latin American consulates in New
25 York on this issue. Policy Committee members agreed to generate a letter.
26 Mr. Park also suggested that this might be an appropriate topic for the
27 Prevention Planning Group's Immigrant Work Group.

28
29 Dr. Cahill also noted that both Presidential candidates support a national AIDS
30 strategy. Senator Obama, in particular, said that he would address this issue
31 in his first year. Planning Committee members agreed that the Planning
32 Council should send a letter to the New York Congressional delegation on this
33 topic.

34
35 Policy Committee members also addressed HIV testing legislation.
36 Assemblyman Richard Gottfried's bill will be included in next month's packet.

37
38 Other topics noted for possible inclusion on the Committee agenda are
39 Medicaid managed care and City and State budget cuts. Committee
40 members agreed to write a letter encouraging legislators not to cut the
41 budget for HIV/AIDS-related services. Esther Lok, in particular, noted that
42 any budget cuts that occur should not be across-the-board but should, rather,
43 be weighted. Mr. Lesieur inquired about the possibility of obtaining a list of
44 what might be cut from the DOHMH budget.

1 Yves Gebhardt stated that NYC DOHMH is closing STD clinics in East Harlem
2 and Central Harlem.

3

4 A special session on the State budget is coming on November 18th.

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6 **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will focus on Ryan White reauthorization.

DRAFT