



Meeting of the
POLICY COMMITTEE
Adrian Guzman, JD, MPH, Chair

January 17, 2014
Center for HIV Law and Policy
65 Broadway, 7th Floor Conference Room

Members Present: Yves Gebhardt, Adrian Guzman, Matthew Lesieur, Esther Lok, Jan Carl Park, Kimberleigh Smith, Lyndel Urbano

Members Absent: Kareem Clemons, Sandy Guillaume, Graham Harriman, Lorna Littner, Paul Meissner

NYC DOHMH Staff Present: Katrina Estacio, Rafael Molina, Nina Rothschild, DrPH, Anna Thomas

Others Present: Billy Fields, Mallory Lowenstein

Material Distributed:

- Agenda
- Minutes from the December 16, 2013 Policy Committee Meeting
- Press Release Announcing Appointment of Dr. Mary Bassett as NYC Commissioner of Health
- Policy Committee List of Open and Closed Items
- ABAC FY2015 Federal HIV/AIDS Appropriations Chart
- NMAC Press Release on Restoration of Partial HIV Funds in FY2014 Spending Bill
- Article from *Poz* Magazine on Obamacare's Potential for Covering PLWHA
- HIV Trial Information Concerning PrEP
- Study Information for Women with HIV and CMV
- Topics Poll of Planning Council Members
- Summary of Policy Issues in Selected EMAs
- Planning Council Calendar for January 2014

Welcome/Introductions/Moment of Silence/Review of the Meeting Packet/Review of the Minutes: Committee Chair Adrian Guzman welcomed Committee members. Participants introduced themselves. Matt Lesieur led the moment of silence. Nina Rothschild reviewed the contents of the meeting packet. The minutes from the December Policy Committee meeting were accepted for posting on the Planning Council website at nyhiv.org.

Budget Update: Congress has approved a budget. The budget has gone to President Obama for his signature. Sequestration is off the table, and we may have an increase in Ryan White appropriations. The era of meaningful increases in ADAP, however, is over.

Affordable Care Act:

- Initially, only one person requested assistance from ADAP in paying the premium for an insurance plan on the NYS health insurance exchange, but recently Christine Rivera, director of the ADAP Program, has received a lot of requests for assistance.
- The first priority for the Planning Council's reprogramming dollars is to restore money to ADAP. ADAP can pay premiums and co-pays, but we are unsure whether it pays deductibles. When attempting to identify good plans for PLWHAs, accessing information about national offerings is easier than accessing information about state offerings.
- There may not be enough HIV specialists on the individual plans, although the plans for families are better. DOHMH is struggling to identify plans that are a good fit for PLWHAs. New York State says that plans at the silver level and above are satisfactory for PLWHAs. GMHC navigators are referring clients to platinum plans.
- An ongoing concern with Medicaid expansion under the ACA is whether the providers are actually accepting what Medicaid is paying. Some reimbursements are so low that providers may not participate in the plan.
- The FIDA (fully integrated duals advantage) program will go into place later this year.
- Some navigators will be invited to the next Policy Committee meeting.
- Committee members discussed producing a resource guide or consumer education tool for PLWHAs for navigating the insurance exchanges.

Planning Council Update: Jan Carl Park provided an update on Planning Council activities.

- Neither the EC nor the full PC is holding a formal meeting in January, although EC members had a conference call.
- The big ticket item for February for PSRA is developing a scenario plan.

- PSRA will also examine whether we really need to spend a substantial portion of our HRSA grant award on HIV testing, given that the vast majority of people tested are not infected.
- IOC has begun its work on behavioral health services.
- Needs Assessment is wrapping up the formal needs assessment by the end of February and will spent the rest of the session looking at data sources, the mechanisms used to collect information about PLWH, and the uses to which that data is put, focusing in particular on whether the collection of that data leads to better services, given that questions can be a barrier to low-threshold services. Needs Assessment will also look at the opening of the HIV registry to private providers.

Poll of Planning Council Members re Hot Topics: Planning Council members were polled about policy topics in which they are interested in receiving more information. Topics of particular interest include the impact of health care reform on coverage for PLWH, the NYS insurance exchanges (best policies for PLWHAs), and HASA issues including the 30% rent cap.

Housing:

30% Rent Cap:

- Esther Lok noted that her organization, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, has reached out to Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services under Mayor Bill de Blasio, on the 30% rent cap issue. Mayor de Blasio supports the 30% rent cap, although final figures for what the City will have to pay have not been released.

Challenges:

- Issues impeding the ability of PLWHAs to obtain housing include brokers' fees, vouchers, and the policy regarding studios.
- A New York State law requiring screening recipients of public assistance for drugs raises concerns about whether this will lead to denial of benefits. It is also a punitive approach and may discourage people from seeking housing.
- Another issue of concern to housing community advocates is the level of training and competency of HASA case workers. Is Local Law 49 part of the problem? Local Law 49 is 30 years old and needs updating for service improvement.

Planning:

- Committee members agreed to invite Jeremy Saunders, a housing activist, to a Policy Committee or Planning Council meeting to discuss

housing issues. Topics would include changing eligibility for HASA and HASA for All.

- We also need to focus on issues such as how to pay for proposals such as HASA for all. Currently, there are a total of approximately 32,000 HASA clients (and some families).

Handling of Policy Issues in Other EMAs: Nina Rothschild and Adrian Guzman are in the process of contacting other EMAs to see how they address policy issues. Very few EMAs actually have policy committees; some address these issues through their executive committees. Mr. Guzman and Dr. Rothschild will deliver a report to the Policy Committee on these questions when more EMAs have been contacted.

Public Comment: Yves Gebhardt stated that the Manhattan HIV Care Network is being evicted from its space in the Harlem DPHO because the building is being reassigned to the NYPD. He also noted that people are using a legal incense product known as K2 to get high because it is not detected during drug tests.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.

Items for Follow Up:

- Planning Council staff will invite navigators to the next Policy Committee meeting.
- Planning Council staff will invite housing advocate Jeremy Saunders to the next Policy Committee meeting.
- Planning Council staff will provide a FIDA update.
- Adrian Guzman will reach out to Cathy Bowman
- Committee members and staff will produce a resource guide or consumer education tool for PLWHAs for navigating the insurance exchanges.
- Adrian Guzman and Planning Council staff will contact other EMAs to discuss their handling of policy issues.