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Meeting of the
Policy Committee
March 7, 2008, 3:00-5:00 pm

Members Present: Sean Cahill, PhD, Gregory Cruz, Matt Lesieur (Chair), Paul Meissner, Jan Carl Park, Andresa Person, Dorella Walters

DOHMH Staff Present: David Klotz, Nina Rothschild, DrPH, Anthony Santella, DrPH

Others Present: Coco Jarvis, JD

Welcome/Introductions: The meeting opened with a round of introductions.

Review of Minutes: Jan Carl Park reviewed the minutes from the Policy Committee's previous meeting on February 1, 2008.

Policy Issues:

New York City Council: A City Council hearing on the Mayor's budget will take place. Items under discussion will include the increasing number of cases in young women and in gay/bisexual men. GMHC will testify at the meeting and will state that not enough money has been given to combat HIV/AIDS. Jan Park noted that the City Council gives money to NYC DOHMH to distribute to community based organizations for HIV prevention programs, but the money comes relatively late in the year. Proposed "HASA for All" legislation has been introduced in the City Council, sponsorship is being solicited, but no hearing has been scheduled.

Both the City Council and GMHC support the "Dignity for All Students/Healthy Teens Act." Policy Committee members noted that the issue would best be addressed by the New York City Prevention Planning Group (PPG) than for the Planning Council (PC). Matt Lesieur noted that one of the criteria on which principals in the City school system are evaluated is their implementation of the sex education curriculum. Mr. Lesieur will try to send material to committee member Dr. Sean Cahill enabling him to see who has implemented the sex education curriculum on a school-by-school basis.

1 Notice of Grant Award: Jan Park stated that the New York EMA received an
2 increase of approximately \$1.5 million in its supplemental award from HRSA.
3 The challenge lies in deciding what to do with the additional funding. The
4 PSRA Committee will take on this task at its next meeting.

5
6 Federal Appropriations: President Bush has proposed an \$8 million cut to
7 Ryan White Part A funding. The cut would have negative implications for our
8 EMA.

9
10 A letter to the leaders of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees
11 addressing all HIV/AIDS federal appropriations in the US (HRSA, HOPWA,
12 CDC, NIH, etc.) has been drafted for discussion. Mr. Lesieur suggested
13 adding a paragraph specific to the New York EMA's needs and providing
14 information on the local epidemiology and on any notable changes in the New
15 York area such as the rising number of infections in young MSM. Policy
16 Committee members agreed to reorder the paragraphs in the draft letter so
17 that requests for Ryan White appropriations precede requests for other
18 federal agencies such as HOPWA, CDC, and NIH.

19
20 HRSA Ryan White Housing Policy: Recently enacted HRSA Policy 99-02 will
21 implement a 24-month lifetime cap on Ryan White-funded housing services.
22 Many organizations (including the Planning Council) objected when the 24-
23 month cap was first proposed, but HRSA has moved forward with
24 implementing the policy. At this time, all that we can really do is ask HHS
25 Secretary Michael Levitt to rescind or reconsider the policy. Policy
26 Committee members agreed that Dr. Rothschild would draft a letter to
27 Secretary Levitt asking for local discretion in implementing the policy,
28 especially in light of the tight housing market and the limited number of
29 options for people without substantial financial resources. The letter will
30 include the New York vacancy rates. Both New York Senators and all New
31 York Congressional representatives will receive a copy of the letter.

32
33 Ryan White HATMA Reauthorization: Mr. Lesieur and Mr. Park had a
34 conference call with CAEAR Coalition Chair, Chris Brown regarding
35 Chicago's town hall meeting on Ryan White reauthorization. Approximately
36 80 people attended the event, and the cost was approximately \$2,000. A
37 survey of participants developed by NAPWA was conducted, and the
38 information is being compiled. Chris Brown will send a copy of the survey
39 and the facilitation questions. Organizers of a similar event in New York will
40 identify a date in mid-April. The local event will include breakout sessions for
41 consumers and providers. Keeping people focused on the issues, rather than
42 highlighting their own personal needs, will be key. Mr. Meissner suggested
43 holding a Spanish forum. Organizations may also invite their Community
44 Advisory Boards to attend so that we have a really substantial number of
45 participants including consumers as well as other interested parties such as

1 case managers. Mr. Lesieur will ask the Bronx HIV network for its mailing list.
2 At the end of the town hall, a survey of participants will be conducted. Dr.
3 Cahill noted that GMHC will be happy to co-sponsor the event and is trying to
4 arrange for Congressman Eliot Engel to attend and to arrange for television
5 coverage by Channel 12.

6
7 Medicaid Managed Care: There will be two community forums on Medicaid
8 managed care, one in the Capital District (Albany) and one in Queens.

9
10 Counseling and Testing: The New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation
11 (HHC) screens approximately 10% of its patient load for HIV. Often,
12 individuals who test positive are able to obtain their first primary care
13 appointment on the same day as the test. Mr. Meissner noted that Montefiore
14 is doing a lot more testing but is not finding a substantially increased number
15 of cases.

16
17 Under a bill sponsored by Assemblyman Dick Gottfried and State Senator
18 Tom Duane, permission for HIV testing is folded into consent for medical care
19 with an opt-out provision. Signatures are durable. The bill requires the test to
20 be offered in all health care settings. New York State Health Commissioner
21 Richard Daines has questions about the bill, such as whether testing needs to
22 be offered in geriatric facilities and whether hospitals have the resources to
23 cover the cost of testing. The Policy Committee will draft a letter for the full
24 Planning Council supporting the bill.

25
26 An alternative bill, sponsored by Assemblywoman Nettie Mayersohn, would
27 allow for testing without written informed consent and would increase the
28 penalty for disclosure of information on an individual's serostatus.

29
30 SNPs: Following up on a presentation on the Special Needs Plans (SNPs)
31 presented at the NYS AIDS Advisory Council, Jan Park suggested that we
32 invite the presenter to a future Planning Council meeting.

33
34 Universal Health Insurance (Gottfried Bill): Assemblyman Gottfried's bill is
35 based on an expansion of Family Health Plus. Under his proposal, health
36 insurance would be free. The plan, unfortunately, is somewhat vague and
37 lacking in substance. We presume that this bill won't go anywhere until the
38 next legislative session, and it is a placeholder on our agenda. Policy
39 Committee members may invite Brian O'Malley of Mr. Gottfried's staff to a
40 future meeting.

41
42 Massachusetts Universal Health Care Initiative: Dr. Sean Cahill reported that
43 the Massachusetts plan has not yet proven to be overwhelmingly effective.
44 People have to wait approximately two months before they can be enrolled.
45 The plan does offer subsidies for low-income members of the population, but

1 affordability is still a problem. Many young members of the population are
2 not enrolling. The hospitals do not receive as much money via this initiative
3 as they did when they received compensation from the uninsured care pools,
4 and they have been losing some provider capacity.

5
6 COBRA/Lombardi: Discussion of enrollment in either COBRA or Lombardi
7 case management as a result of changes in the programs continued from the
8 last meeting. Planning Council staff is in the process of gathering more
9 information on the changes and numbers of consumers impacted

10
11 New Business: Dorella Walters noted that the Department of Aging is
12 changing its meal delivery and case management systems. She asked how
13 the change will affect PLWHAs. If HIV-infected people are receiving case
14 management through the Department of Aging, are their AIDS-specific needs
15 being met? GMHC and ACRIA plan to survey 5,000-6,000 older adults with
16 HIV.

17
18 Gregory Cruz introduced himself as the new Co-Chair of the Policy
19 Subcommittee of the PLWHA Advisory Group and wants to contribute a
20 consumer voice to the discussion.

21
22 Paul Meissner is the President of the Public Health Association of New York
23 City. PHANYC has a policy group. He invited Ryan White Policy Committee
24 members to join the next meeting.

25
26 Dr. Sean Cahill provided members with a copy of GMHC's "State Policy
27 Agenda: 2008"

28
29 Next Meeting: The Policy Committee will meet again on April 4th from 3:00-
30 5:00 at NYAC, 231 West 29th Street, Suite 1002.