



Meeting of the  
**POLICY COMMITTEE**  
June 24, 2009

Matthew Lesieur and Darryl Ng, Co-Chairs

**Members Present:** Sean Cahill, PhD, Terri Faulkner, Yves Gebhardt (alt. for Gregory Cruz), Elaine Greeley, Matthew Lesieur, Wanda Mitchell (alt. for Andresa Person), Darryl Ng, Jan Carl Park, Jim Shields (alt. for Dorella Walters)

**Members Absent:** Susan Alston, Coco Jervis, Esther WY Lok, Paul Meissner, Reynolds Mulero

**NYC DOHMH Staff Present:** Nina Rothschild, DrPH

**Others Present:** Mallory Marcus

**Material Distributed:**

- Agenda
- Minutes from the May 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting
- Policy Committee List of Open and Closed Items 2008-9
- Planning Council Letter to President Barack Obama on Federal Funding for HIV/AIDS and Syringe Exchange
- Planning Council Letter to House and Senate Chairs and Ranking Members of Appropriations Committees on Federal Funding for HIV/AIDS
- Planning Council Letter to Chairs and Ranking Members of Senate HELP and Finance Committees on Health Care Reform
- Sign-On Letter to Chairs and Ranking Members of Senate and House Appropriations Committees Concerning Federal Funding for HIV/AIDS (CDC, HOPWA, HRSA, NIH)
- Summary of Senate HELP Committee Draft Legislation
- Key Features of the Tri-Committee Health Reform Draft Proposal in the House of Representatives from June 8, 2009
- Sign-On Letter to Senator Schumer Asking for Inclusion of ETHA in Health Care Reform

**Welcome/Introductions/Moment of Silence/Review of the Meeting Packet:**  
Matt Lesieur and Darryl Ng welcomed participants. Members introduced

themselves. Jim Shields led the moment of silence. Nina Rothschild reviewed the contents of the meeting packet.

**Planning Council Letter -- ETHA:** Committee members discussed the possibility of drafting a sign-on letter concerning the inclusion of ETHA in health care reform. The letter would be related but not identical to the one included in the meeting packet and would be distributed to the HIV/AIDS community through the Planning Council mailing list. For New Yorkers, this is an easy issue - New York already has a waiver enabling HIV+ individuals who have not yet progressed to AIDS to qualify for Medicaid coverage - so we would be supporting an issue that doesn't have an immediate impact on our jurisdiction but is important nationally. Undertaking a sign-on letter would involve extending the Policy Committee's (and the Planning Council's) boundaries but would not be a conflict of interest. Matt Lesieur will be listed as the contact person for signing on.

**Approval of Minutes/Website Postings/Distribution of Letters:** The minutes from the May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved by all present with no votes in opposition and two abstentions. Committee members agreed that all minutes and all letters originating in the Policy Committee would appear on the Planning Council website. Committee members also agreed that all letters would be distributed to CAEAR Coalition members to keep them informed about the plans and activities of an activist Planning Council.

**CAEAR Coalition Update:** Mr. Park and Mr. Lesieur are on the CAEAR Coalition board. The main item at the recent meeting was the push for a three-year extension of the CARE Act. CAEAR members hope that the CARE Act is reintroduced during the brief window in time before the August recess. During several Hill visits, CAEAR Coalition members advocated for increased funding to Part A - in addition to the meager \$8 million addition (to be split among all jurisdictions) granted by President Obama in this year's budget. CAEAR Coalition members are also looking at the difference between the amount for which we ask and the amount which we really need.

**List of Open and Closed Items:** Jan Park reviewed the Policy Committee list of open and closed items. Dr. Cahill noted that the \$330 per month bill promoted by Assembly Member Deborah Glick did not pass. Matt Lesieur agreed to try to obtain a meeting with Congress Member Nita Lowey to advocate for increased appropriations for the New York EMA. Mr. Lesieur also agreed to put together a list of Policy Committee accomplishments and to forward the list for review to Nina Rothschild.

**CVS and Condoms:** CVS is a national drug store chain. In some locations, CVS stores do not provide open access to condoms. Dr. Cahill agreed to check into the matter of restrictions on condoms at CVS. CVS has also signed up to participate in the New York State ESAP (Expanded Syringe Access Program), but

some stores are not responding to customer requests for needles. A CVS at 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 24<sup>th</sup> Street, for example, would not give syringes to Darryl Ng. Darryl and Elaine Greeley agreed to talk with the AIDS Institute regarding ESAP and report back at the next Policy Committee meeting.

**Health Care Reform:** Policy Committee members discussed health care reform. Two Senate committees and three House committees are working on plans. Senator Max Baucus, Democrat of Montana and Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, is due to come out with a plan. Medicaid and Medicare would not be folded into the plan under discussion but, rather, would continue to exist as separate entities.

**Budgets:** The Planning Council's letters expressing disappointment with Federal budget allocations for HIV/AIDS already went out. The New York State Senate is in chaos. Soraya Elcock, Planning Council Community Co-Chair, testified on behalf of the Council at the City budget hearings. The City has a \$59.4 billion dollar budget including tax increases, the elimination of agency staff positions, an increase in the tax on clothing costing more than \$110, a small increase in taxes, and the trimming of 2,000 jobs. City bonds are rated lower, and the money available for capital funding will drop dramatically. The NYC DOHMH benefited from a \$2 million restoration for HIV prevention, including \$1.6 million for communities of color. Nutrition programs benefited from a restoration of \$491,000. The proposed changes in case management did not take place, but Scatter Site 2 housing (with supportive services to help people with substance abuse and mental health issues who are close to homelessness) is disappearing. Terri Faulkner stated that HASA (the HIV/AIDS Services Administration) will not help folks who were in Scatter Site 2 housing and that these individuals will do best under COBRA case management.

New York is receiving \$12 billion from the federal stimulus package, but only \$2 billion of that money is going to New York City.

**HIV Testing:** Four competing bills have been submitted in Albany. With the New York State Senate in chaos, nothing will happen this legislative term.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned. The Committee will not meet in July unless a pressing issue emerges.