



## CONSUMERS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 17th, 2020 1:00PM – 3:00PM

Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/4708943670>

### MINUTES

**Committee Members Present:** Randall Bruce (Co-Chair), Lisa Best (Co-Chair), Asia Betancourt, Paul Carr, Maria Diaz, Billy Fields, Charmaine Graham, David Klotz, Michael Rifkin, Leo Ruiz, John Schoepp, Rob Walker

**Committee Members Absent:** Atif Abdul-Haqq, Ron Joyner, Jesus Maldonado, David Martin

#### **Agenda Item #1: Welcome/Introductions/Review of the Meeting Packet**

*Melanie Lawrence*, staff support for the Consumers Committee opened the meeting in order to introduce the new technology and go deliver helpful tips. She ran through a roll-call to facilitate introductions and a moment of silence was honored.

#### **Agenda Item #2: Public Comment**

None.

#### **Agenda Item #3: Reorganization of Care & Treatment Unit**

*Graham Harriman* introduced *Guadalupe Dominguez Plumber* as Director of Operations and Program Planning, and his new alternate for Council meetings. He also introduced his new staff members, *Dalveer Panesar* and *Johanna Acosta*, the new planner for the Tri-County area. *Ms. Panesar* is the new director of health equity for Care and Treatment. She presented a brief slide set to explain the purpose of her role. She will develop dashboards to monitor how priority populations are impacted, and look at internal processes to ensure that staff is representative of the population served.

#### **Agenda Item #4: RWPA Housing & COVID-19**

The housing program has been reaching out to housing programs, especially congregate programs with shared kitchens and bathrooms. Providers are currently pulling out their required emergency plans and figuring out implementation.

In cases of housing repairs, trying to figure out how clients will present those needs. Due to activations, the housing unit is low on staff. Trying to move as many services as possible to the telephone. Programs will not be held to monthly deliverables – but programs must adhere to DOHMH standards of data entry.

*Mr. Carr* asked about the lack of cleanliness in many congregate housing kitchens – asked about disinfection practices, need for additional food, etc.

*Ms. Farquhar* emphasized that among RWPA funded providers, cleanliness has not been an issue.

*Mr. Rojas and Ms. Dudley* of HASA joined the call to discuss congregate housing. *Ms. Betancourt* noted that people at the DV shelter are having wifi issues and the service issues— etc.

Protocol in place to identify when and how to quarantine individuals. For essential home visits, protocol is initiated to appropriately identify individuals with symptoms. Non-essential home visits are being conducted telephonically. Encourage clients to make use of special grants. HASA offices remain open, trying to provide same amount of service – but trying to reduce the foot traffic. A lot can be done over the phone. Want to make sure clients are able to check in over the phone. Things are changing rapidly – no services have been suspended.

*Mr. Carr* brought up questions of cleanliness and food access.

HASA has been stressing these issues, particularly around cleanliness with all providers and particularly emergency shelters – but if a known issue exists, contact HASA.

Are the inspection visits a surprise – a lot of centers seem to know that HASA is coming. Inspections varies.

At HASA centers have stepped up cleaning. Have not provided gloves and masks to workers. Deficit in mask availability and due to fear on part of client. Ensuring that programs have food and cleaning supply access. Food pantries and emergency food services continue to remain open.

HASA workers are being staggered and reduced. HRA has not imposed a curfew or limited visitors, but specific programs may have limited access to specific sites or times to access area.

#### **Agenda Item #5: COVID 19 & HIV**

*Dr. Ben Tsoi*, Acting Director of Prevention presented the NYC DOHMH slide deck on COVID-19. Key points follow:

- Social distancing is to slow the epidemic so it doesn't overload the health care system
- Believe the origin is from animals.
- Coronaviruses are very common – they mostly cause colds
- COVID-19 is less deadly than SARS but more infectious
- Seeing sustained community transmission – tracking is not happening all across the country – so the data may not be reflective of what is happening
- In NY avg age of infection is 48 years old
- Not sure about how this infection impacts kids –
- General lack of testing is skewing figures
- Time from exposure to symptoms – about 5 days, but can be as short as 2 long as 14 days.
- Cough, fever, headaches, joint & muscle aches. Fever is very common
- Passed through respiratory droplets
- Those most at-risk are persons with low CD4 counts – not specific to HIV
- No vaccine or approved treatment exists
- Only seek treatment if having trouble breathing
- Not clear if persons can be infected twice (re-infected)
- A vaccine will not be available for a while
- A study on COVID-19 is looking at HIV meds as protective
- In homes – try to self isolate from other family members.

- In close quarters, the likelihood of exposure is high

#### **Agenda Item #6: RWPA & COVID-19**

Letter to providers went out – will pay programs 1/12<sup>th</sup> of grant regardless of hours/services. Went through services and noted all services, which is many, that can be delivered by phone. Assessment and re-assessment will go over the phone. They will run through the end of April.

Many food providers are thinking about how to support clients with no contact – many grab and go, emergency meals, take-home meals.

How will the consumers committee get updates on how they can help?

Going to ask the Council to fund FNS programs with carryover funds.

Issue with grocery access in Tri-County.

Project Hospitality is open with limited hours, servicing Staten Island.

Grantee is working on question of scaling up food availability – and working on policy guidance for home delivered meals.

*Ms. Panesar* will work through finding more resources in Staten Island.

SNAP rules changes are being delayed.

Medicaid and ADAP are extending the amount of prescriptions that can be obtained at once. Some private insurance plans have not moved beyond a 30-day supply.

Grantee will do additional research around Medicare and Medicaid around a long term supply for prescription drugs.

#### **Agenda Item #7: Public Comment**

A survey will go out the Consumers Committee about how to re-focus our agenda to support virtual work for the planning session