



Membership & Public Relations Committee Meeting
February 13, 2025 | 10:00 AM | Teleconference
Facilitator(s): Eric Martinez | Host: Tiffany Canate, Sr. Health Planner

Attendees: Adolfo Lorenzo, April A. Ganzy, Carrie Hollinger, Channel Bonner, Edwin Torres, Eric Martinez, Jackie Clarke, Sandra Rangel, Sherry Gizzarelli, Tiffany Canate (HCSEF)

Minutes

1. Introduction & Moment of Silence

- E. Martinez welcomed group and commenced the meeting at 10:03 am.
- T. Canate conducted a roll call, then E. Martinez led a moment of silence.

2. Review / Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- E. Martinez called for review of previous meeting's minutes and current agenda.
- J. Clarke motioned to approve and C. Hollinger seconded.

Discussion:

A. Community Update (Standard)

- E. Martinez invited members to share recent or upcoming events.
- C. Bonner listed a series of outreach events the Department of Health of St. Lucie County conducted for February:
 - February 8 – Caribbean American Cultural Group Fair
 - February 10 – The Source in Vero
 - February 12 – UpCenter
 - February 16 – Garcia Store Bakery
 - February 28 – After-hours event at the Health Department
- C. Bonner also mentioned that an HIV Resource Brochure was under review for approval. She highlighted that once it is finalized, it will be distributed at outreach events and will include a section on the Planning Body.
- J. Clarke reported outreach events held by the Florida Department of Health in Martin County:
 - The Indiantown after-hours event took place on February 4, 2025.
 - An outreach event was scheduled for Hobe Sound at the Pettway Store on February 20, 2025.
 - LAHIA, which serves individuals experiencing homelessness, hosted the Florida Department of Health in Martin county for the second time. J. Clarke noted that Florida Community Health Centers provides regular services there.
- E. Martinez asked E. Torres about after-hours services at Midway.
 - E. Torres confirmed that no after-hours services were available at his location but noted that Palm Beach sites offer them. He noted that their staff does outreach at the

UpCenter on Mondays and Fridays, they visit rehab centers on Tuesdays, and general community outreach occurs on Wednesdays.

- E. Torres reported that his team conducts at least 95 tests monthly and distributes Health Department flyers in Spanish, Creole, and English across their Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce offices.
- E. Martinez encouraged members to place Planning Body rack cards in exam rooms as a way to start conversations with clients. He also formally announced and welcomed C. Hollinger as the new co-chair of the Membership Committee.

B. Website Update (New Updates)

- T. Canate reported the January website metrics:
 - New Visitors: 15
 - Returning Visitors: 2
 - Total Visitors: 17
 - Total Page Views: 13
 - Site Sessions: 11
- Device Usage:
 - Desktop: 15 page views, 11 sessions, 9 unique visitors
 - Mobile: 2 page views, 2 sessions, 2 unique visitors
 - Tablet: 0 page views, 0 sessions, 0 unique visitors
- T. Canate shared that the 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes had been added to the website and that updates to modernize the site were in progress to increase user friendliness and accessibility of the site. Members were encouraged to provide feedback and help ensure that all resources and links were up-to-date.
 - Questions were raised about whether the promotional rack and business cards were available on the website.
 - Suggestions for website improvements included adding photos from previous outreach events, and ensuring upcoming events included flyers and event information.

C. Future planning to increase client membership.

- E. Martinez emphasized the need to engage clients, as he is currently the only consumer member. E. Martinez proposed virtual Zoom discussions to introduce potential members to the Planning Body, gauge their interest, and provide education. J. Clarke supported the Zoom orientation approach.
- E. Martinez shared insights from participating in a national HIV support group, highlighting how peer connections help individuals feel supported.
- C. Bonner suggested an annual in-person meeting for existing members and Zoom sessions for potential new members that are being recruited.
- C. Bonner highlighted that case managers can distribute brochures and educate clients about the Planning Body. Additionally, she stressed the importance of offering incentives, such as food or education on topics like medication and nutrition, to make participation more appealing.
- E. Martinez suggested a trial Zoom session to assess interest before planning an in-person event to attract new members.
- T. Canate inquired where in-person events were held previously, as the Consortia covers a four-county service area (St. Lucie, Indian River, Martin, and Okeechobee Counties).
- C. Bonner noted that all events were in-person at Avenue C (Department of Health in St. Lucie County) pre-COVID.
- J. Clarke recommended starting outreach efforts in St. Lucie County and expanding to other areas.

- E. Martinez recalled that early outreach efforts saw strong attendance, but participation declined. He noted that some Okeechobee residents were able to attend Dance for Life because a nurse transported them in her personal vehicle.
- E. Martinez suggested a Zoom "cameras-on" day for next month to increase engagement. T. Canate agreed to include a reminder in the next meeting email.

3. **Open Discussion**

- E. Martinez shared his involvement with the National HIV Aging Advocacy Network (NHAAN). He noted that the organization was initially focused on individuals aged 50+ but the network now includes long-term survivors and those born with HIV.
- E. Martinez explained that the National HIV/AIDS Advocacy Network (NHAAN) sponsors the initiative, and E. Martinez was selected to co-chair the executive committee for NHAAN.
- The group congratulated E. Martinez on his appointment.
- E. Martinez discussed opportunities that may create cohesion between the Area 15 work and the NHAAN work, including:
 - Food vouchers and gift cards for clients completing NHAAN training
 - Consumer involvement in national advocacy efforts like AIDS Watch
 - Scholarships for clients to attend the U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS
 - A Silent March in Washington, D.C., advocating for medication access, Ryan White services, ADAP, and client rights
- E. Martinez inquired about consumer concerns that the partners were hearing and addressing.
 - E. Torres reported client concerns about medication availability under Medicaid and Medicare Part D.
 - A. Lorenzo, with Wellview Care, reported a few updates:
 - The Gilead PrEP program stopped accepting new clients in January 2025, limiting access to those with health insurance.
 - Copay assistance issues have increased reliance on third-party foundations, which risk depleting funds.
 - Some health insurance plans have removed prior authorization for PrEP, but Sunshine Health/Ambetter still requires it.
 - E. Martinez stressed the importance of case managers and doctors serving as frontline consumer advocates.
- E. Martinez thanked members for their efforts and engagement.
- J. Clarke motioned to adjourn, and C. Hollinger seconded.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:57 am