

**HIV Consortium Meeting
November 5, 2009
Summary Minutes**

Carol Jameson, Chair, called the meeting to order.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- AIDS Awareness Day at the Virginia General Assembly will be February 3. Details on VORA's website (www.voraonline.org).
- Inova Juniper is recruiting for a Social Worker for the new Arlington clinic. They have hired a nurse and are about to fill the educator position vacated by Ros Cousar.
- Karen Berube, Inova Juniper, asked HRSA for the three and a half day Leadership and Advocacy Program (L.E.A.P.) training for PWAs in Northern Virginia. This training is offered through HRSA and scheduled annually each June.
- The Virginia Dept. of Health is holding two public hearings in Fredericksburg this month to receive comments on their use of Ryan White funds. Flyers were distributed.
- The Planning Council will hold an orientation for new and prospective members on Saturday, November 14. See Wade Menear for details.
- Committees were reminded to plan for any specific needs assessment activities they needed to undertake prior to setting priorities and allocations in the next funding cycle.

OPEN MIKE

No speakers signed up.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of October 1, 2009, were approved as written.

VENDOR PROFILES:

Alexandria Health Department Casey Clinic

Rosie Olson described the clinic's focus on full medical care and some of their services. Nechelle Terrell, Kim Ford Monte Jones, and Debbie Bowers, Alexandria Health Department staff, also attended. The Casey Clinic typically serves 165 HIV positive people each year, with 60 receiving ADAP prescription assistance. There is an increase in obstetrics cases with 6 so far this year vs. a more usual 2 - 3 cases per year. Patients can be referred to the National Institutes of Health for treatment under a study arrangement. Casey Clinic patients also benefit from the work of Project Access, a local nonprofit affiliated with the Medical Society of Northern Virginia, which recruits medical specialists to provide free care. The Health Dept. is facing some cuts in state funding, including the closing of their onsite pharmacy in March.

PANEL PRESENTATION:

Using Peers to Support HIV/AIDS Care

Tanya Kearney of Virginia's Eastern Regional AIDS Resource Center, David Mangano of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, and Alicia Downes of the Kansas City Free Clinic described their experiences with peer programs. Handouts from Ms. Kearney and Ms. Downes were distributed and each offered assistance in planning for peer services in Northern Virginia.

The Eastern Regional AIDS Resource Center has offered an education and training program for HIV/AIDS peer mentors/educators for several years. They require a formal application with a letter of reference; both are reviewed by a panel of Peer Educators that selects participants. Participants receive about 30 hours of training over 5 weeks with a test before and after training and weekly homework. Each trainee must teach a session to his/her peer classmates to successfully complete the course. Graduates receive a one-year certification with an annual refresher class required. They work as volunteers who sometimes receive a stipend. The Eastern Virginia Medical School clinic would like to hire Peer Educators but is finding the existing Human Resources system difficult to navigate.

Barriers include additional training in HIPAA confidentiality, documentation of work, and communication styles along with some needed immunizations.

David Mangano explained the Community Services Boards (CSBs) of Virginia have had a formal curriculum for Mental Health Peer Support Specialists for ten years or so. Training has occurred in Charlottesville which is supported by the community college system and the Virginia Dept. of Rehabilitation with the local CSB paying a stipend to trainees they send. Northern Virginia is now using a mental health training organization from Pittsburg to see whether they can achieve similar results at a lower cost. Peer employees complete a three-month internship at the end of the classroom training and receive a community college certificate. The federal mental health system website, www.samhsa.gov, contains information on peer support theory and practice.

The Fairfax-Falls Church CSB has 6 or 7 Mental Health Peer Support Specialists employed part-time with another 30 or so employed in four nonprofit mental health drop-in centers like the Consumer Wellness Center. Fairfax hopes to expand this number as Peer Support Specialists are effective and promote consumer choice and self-direction. They currently lead support groups with an educational focus and work directly with clients to set goals. Employers use their existing job descriptions, hiring and supervising procedures. Performance expectations are the same as for any other employee.

The Kansas City Free Clinic is in the fifth year of a five year grant to develop an HIV/AIDS peer program and disseminate information on how it can be done. They are now focusing on training the trainers. Their services, including travel for consultation, are available without charge until the grant ends.

The Kansas City Free Clinic provides primary medical care to over 500 HIV positive clients, case management, mental health and substance abuse counseling, prevention and education with peer educators integrated into all the multi-disciplinary teams. They started peer education about 10 years ago using trained volunteers in Outreach and Prevention. One of their innovative programs uses peers to work individually with clients for four weeks before clients start a new medication regime. Together they consider all aspects of the client's situation and develop strategies for adhering to often complicated medication schedules.

With a new peer program, Ms. Downes strongly advised taking time up front to identify the roles of the new staff and get buy-in from existing ones, helping them understand that peers are held to the same standards as all other employees.

Follow-up questions included:

- What sources fund peer programs?

Mental Health programs are talking to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) about national standards for training programs and eligibility for Medicaid reimbursement. In Missouri, Ryan White Planning Councils and the state Dept. of Health have identified peer programs as fundable services.

- How would volunteers fit in?

All three programs use volunteer mentors or coaches who are held to the same standards as other volunteers. Fairfax CSB is moving toward replacing volunteers with peer employees, believing that people should be paid fairly for their work. He acknowledged an alternative philosophy of people giving back to their communities.

- Where certificates are used, are they portable?

While there has been some interest, no state has the formal training standards necessary for certificates to be recognized by other localities. Rosie Olson suggested trying to use the certification strategies of Virginia substance abuse counselors in the 1970s. Massachusetts seems the farthest ahead on certification for HIV Peer Educators.

- What disqualifies someone from becoming a peer advocate/educator?

Not submitting a well-thought-out application with a good letter of recommendation; not completing educational requirements; not attending annual or other required update classes; same behaviors as disqualify any other employee.

Next steps for Northern Virginia involve talking to VDH and establishing an Ad Hoc Committee to develop a Work Plan defining:

- What topics should Peer Educators advise people about?
- What qualities should a peer program administering agency have?
- Interest among agencies in utilizing peers or administering a peer program
- Training
- Supervision

PROFILES PROJECT FOR THE METRO AREA:

Mosaica will present an update at the December meeting.

PLANNING COUNCIL REPORT

Wade Menear reported that Dr. Hader came to the last Planning Council to discuss the recent Washington Post articles on misuse of funds and the efforts of the DC HIV/AIDS Administration to address them.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ad Hoc Orientation

Carol Jameson reported for David Hoover, the Committee Chair, who was attending training in Delaware. His goal is to offer training in January, possibly after the Consortium meeting, using much of the curriculum from previous trainings. Ms. Jameson passed around a sign-up sheet for those who would like to serve on the Peer Advocacy/ System Navigator Committee.

PWA Committee

Ron Scheraga thanked Carol Jameson and Michelle Simmons for attending the committee's last meeting and helping establish a work plan for the committee.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Michelle Simmons reported that Lucy Lawrence had to see clients this day but sent a report that they were considering setting up focus groups to identify the needs of Latinos and Africans (men and women separately). Africans may require one-on-one interviews in place of focus groups. Lastly, the committee has elected a new Co-Chair, Rene Prior Johnson of IJP.

VDH UPDATES

- Everyone was invited to attend one of the two public hearings on Part B services in Fredericksburg on Nov. 9 and 12.
- Prince William ADAP has transitioned 120 people into CSI's centralized eligibility program, about 60% of the total case load there.
- The Virginia Dept. of Health is closing local pharmacies and laying off pharmacists. The VDH central pharmacy will remain open. SPAP, the State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program that fills the Medicare Part D donut hole for those with HIV/AIDS, will be reduced and there will be waiting lists. No federal funds can supplement SPAP. VDH is planning to continue to provide medications, perhaps through ADAP.

NEW BUSINESS – WORLD AIDS DAY DECEMBER 1, 2009

- George Mason will host the AIDS Quilt with discussions, programs, and testing at several sites. Events will center on Dewberry Hall in the Johnson Center between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Alexandria Commission on HIV/AIDS will be making three awards that day.
- Wholistic Family Agape Ministries will host a worship and memorial service with drama and dance for the Alexandria and Arlington area.
- NVCC Woodbridge Campus will host a NOVAM education and testing event in the middle of the day.
- A.R.E. is co-sponsoring an event Nov. 30 with the Shenandoah Arts Council in Winchester
- A.R.E. is also co-sponsoring a day of remembrance with Shenandoah University in Winchester

NEW BUSINESS – L.E.A.P. TRAINING

Phillip Bailey suggested that in addition to Karen Berube’s request through Part C, the Consortium make similar requests through the Planning Council (Part A) and VDH (Part B).

OLD BUSINESS – ORIENTATION TO THE CONSORTIUM

Ron Scheraga moved and Mike Hughes seconded a motion to establish an annual schedule for orientation in October and February with the schedule and agenda at the sole discretion of the Chair. Motion approved.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

- November 16 Executive Committee
- December 5 Consortium – A panel on psycho-social barriers to care for special populations will be invited.

Minutes ___ Approved as Written ___ With Corrections

Tylee Smith

Date