



Planning Council Meeting  
Thursday, October 8, 2020  
Zoom  
4:00 - 6:00pm

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### Summary of Attendance

#### Members Present

Amanda Hart  
Ayla Baraka  
Alison Kirchgasser  
Barry Callis  
Brian Holliday  
Bryan Thomas  
Catherine Weerts  
Cindi Bell  
Damon Gaines  
Darian Hendricks  
Darren Sack  
Ericka Olivera  
George Diaz  
Gertrude Lundy  
Harry Shanmugam  
Jessica Stewart  
Jessica Tavaréz  
John Fabiano  
Jose Sostre  
Joey Carlesimo  
Justin Alves  
Kathy Lituri  
Katie Keating  
Kenneth Averett  
Lamar Brown-Noguera  
Lorraine Jones  
Mahara Pinheiro  
Manuel Pires  
Melissa Hector  
Michael Robbins

Michael Swaney  
Patrick Baum  
Richard Swanson  
Robert Giannasca  
Serena Rajabiun  
Stephen Batchelder  
Stephen Corbett  
Tad Bailey  
Tim Mercier  
Tim Young  
Wendy LeBlanc  
Zamir Mavo

#### Members Excused

Carolyn Smith  
Robinah Nakabugo  
Stanley Flores

#### Members Absent

Margaret Lombe

#### PCS

Liz Rios  
Masill Miranda  
Tatiana Ramos

#### RWSD

Fabiola Catulle  
Felipe Ruiz

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### **Topic A: Welcome and Introductions**

Brian Holliday, Planning Council Chair, welcomed everyone, reviewed the virtual ground rules and led a moment of silence.

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### **Topic B: Review and Approve Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting of September 17th, 2020 were reviewed. Members went on Basecamp to look at the minutes before motioning to approve.

**Motion to Approve: Darren Sack**

**Second: Bryan Thomas**

**Result:** The minutes were approved with ( 8 ) Abstentions

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### **Topic C: Committee Reports**

Planning Council leadership and sub-committee Chairs provided updates on their meetings that took place this month (except NRAC, due to first meeting taking place next week, Thursday, October 15, 2020).

**Executive Committee | Brian Holliday:** Exec looked at the evaluations for Orientation and the first Planning Council meetings, as well as discussed the bylaws.

**Services, Priorities, and Evaluations Committee (SPEC) | Michael Swaney:** PCS led the Member Spotlight, the committee charge and leadership were reviewed, as was the work plan. SPEC had an in-depth look at a few service categories as part of a several meeting spotlight on all of the categories, and Patrick Baum was elected as SPEC Vice Chair.

**Membership and Nominations Committee (MNC) | Robert Giannasca:** MNC finalized recruitment for the season, elected Raymond Rodriguez as Vice Chair and reviewed the work plan for the council year. During this Planning Council meeting, Chair Giannasca introduced the Mentor Liaisons (DS/SC) and members were encouraged to connect with MNC if they ever need support.

**Consumer Committee | Tim Young:** The committee discussed the progress of the anti-stigma campaign and ideas on how to make the campaign the best it could be, and reviewed the work plan for the year. PC members are encouraged to join future meetings.

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## Topic D: Tips for Data-Based Decision-Making

Liz Rios, PCS Manager, discussed ways that members can use data presented at Council meetings for decision making as the term progresses.

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## Topic E: MA HIV Epidemiology Profile

Betsey John, MDPH, presented epidemiology data for Massachusetts, in particular counties within the Boston EMA. Information included the total number of HIV cases and HIV cases broken down by gender, race/ethnicity, age, risk exposure, country of origin, and by county. She reviewed the new infection rates reported in 2020 (as of Jan 1 2020). She broke down newly diagnosed cases by race/ethnicity, age, risk exposure, country of origin, and county.

### Questions/Comments

- JA: Are the numbers with regard to people in prisons from when they initially are incarcerated or while they are inside?
  - BJ: There isn't a way for us to know exactly when they were diagnosed, but we test when they are first brought to the prisons.
- DH: Do you track medications?
  - BJ: We survey at one point in time, and it is so under reported so we don't usually use that information.
- DH: Do college / university medical facilities report new diagnoses? Or are university students getting care out of state (place of origin) so those numbers may be unreported?
  - BJ: We do see some of that, but we count MA as their residence if they receive their mail here. Any test that goes through to MA, we would receive it, but if they get their care out-of-state, likely not.
- CB: It seems compared with decades ago, the increased proportion of cases that are classified as "not reported transmission mode/unknown" is larger. Is this because of less pre-test counseling/data collection- versus they are truly unknown?
- DH: What is correlation / tracking between PLWHA and AIDS death? What are contributors to moving to AIDS status and the death?
- DS: Could we do a brief summary of that cluster referenced in case some are not aware of what it is?
- JS: Did you have any data about HIV and Hep C outcome?

## Action Step

- Members asked to include any questions in their meeting evaluations.

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### Topic F: Assessment of Administrative Mechanism (AAM) Response

Katie Keating, RWSD/BPHC, provided the Council with a response to the AAM recommendations made by the 2019-2020 Planning Council. The recommendations include ways to better streamline fiscal processes and strengthen the relationship of the recipient and the funded agencies.

#### *The response included*

- RFP, webinar, and Q&A session clarified HRSA required MAI focus on racial and ethnic minorities.
- Staff communicated with MAI funded agencies via email several times and on monthly calls to notify them of the need to re-apply for MAI services to be eligible for funding in FY20 fiscal year.
- Will identify additional strategies to clarify requirements in similar circumstances in the future.
- BPHC allotted 5 weeks for agencies submit proposals for the limited FY20 procurement and will strive to allot 6 weeks in future procurements as possible.
- BPHC did not receive any feedback from applicants about challenges with the portal.
- BPHC will work with IT and the Procurement office to provide more details to SPEC about the online submission portal based on SPEC questions by December of 2020.
- Provided budget revision training to fiscal and program staff in August 2020 which was recorded and sent to subrecipients along with slides.
- Updated the budget revision guidance in the FY20 Provider Manual.
- Will continue to provide ongoing technical assistance to agencies and host additional trainings as needed.
- BPHC will work with the Planning Council to understand their questions about the process of issuing PO numbers in order to provide the information they are seeking by December 2020.
- RWSD SPEC liaison give an update close to March 1 about expected date that all subrecipients will be issued POs for FY21.
- SPEC sent AAM findings and recommendations to all subrecipients in the Boston EMA in September 2020.
- BPHC will collaborate with Planning Council to share AAM responses with all subrecipients by December 2020.

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### Topic G: Planning Council Bylaw Revision

Brian Holliday, Planning Council Chair, and Liz Rios, PCS Manager, provided the recommended revisions made by the Executive Committee in September at the Planning Council meeting and on Basecamp. The Planning Council is expected to vote on the proposed revisions recommended by the Executive Committee at today's meeting.

#### *Proposed revisions are as follows*

- Nominations process (page 9)

- The appeals process (page 11)
- Unaligned consumers certification (page 5).
- Virtual voting procedure (page 15)
- Member limit “The Planning Council shall consist of a minimum of 25 members, with a target level of 45 members that may be increased up to a maximum of 50 members, if necessary, in order to achieve or improve the demographic reflectiveness of the EMA, including mandated seats.

**Motion to accept the Planning Council revisions recommended by the Executive Committee:**

**Darren Sack**

**Second: Stephen Batchelder**

**All in Favor: 30**

**Opposed: 0**

**Abstentions: 3**

**Results:** The revisions have been accepted by the Planning Council.

**Topic H: Agency Reports**

The representatives for Medicaid (Alison Kirchgasser), New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS) (Cindi Bell), Massachusetts Department of Health (MDPH) (Barry Callis), Mayor Walsh’s Office (Melissa Hector), Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC)/Ryan White Services Division (RWSD) (Katie Keating) gave agency updates – SEE below.

**BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION**

**INFECTIOUS DISEASE BUREAU, HIV/AIDS SERVICES DIVISION**

**REPRESENTATIVE: KATIE KEATING – DIRECTOR, RYAN WHITE SERVICES DIVISION**

- RWSD is currently conducting budget reviews in preparation for sweeps and carryover and recently sent letters to agencies regarding over/underspending
- RWSD is hiring for a new CQM Coordinator
- RWSD is working on the FY21 grant application
- RWSD continues to:
  - Monitor agencies adaptations and needs related to COVID
  - Plan for the use of Ending the HIV Epidemic funds in coordination with the EHE Steering Committee and other EHE funded entities to ensure we are maximizing these resources across the system
  - Build a referral based shared eligibility module through a capacity building grant we received last year
  - Collaborate with partners to identify strategies to address a growing HIV cluster in the City of Boston that is largely impacting people who inject drugs and are homeless

**MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE OF MEDICAID (MASSHEALTH)**

**REPRESENTATIVE: ALISON KIRCHGASSER – DIRECTOR OF FEDERAL AND STATE RELATIONS**

The federal government has announced that the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) period that was scheduled to expire on 10/23/20 will be extended another 90

days. During the PHE MassHealth will continue to not terminate any Medicaid members unless they move to another state, die or request termination. MassHealth will also continue many of the other flexibilities put in place in response to COVID-19. For information on MassHealth COVID-19 related flexibilities, please see: <https://www.mass.gov/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-and-masshealth>

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**BUREAU OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND LABORATORY SCIENCES (BIDLS)**

**OFFICE OF HIV/AIDS (OHA)**

**REPRESENTATIVE: BARRY CALLIS - DIRECTOR OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION**

- EHE Plan for Suffolk County (draft and revision schedule)
- Plan to meet with RWSD to coordinate EHE services in Suffolk County
- Addressing loss, grief, and resiliency (one in-person and virtual sessions)

**NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**REPRESENTATIVE: CINDI BELL - MANAGER, NH RYAN WHITE CARE & TB FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION, INVESTIGATION & CARE SERVICES**

- Program Manager has formally joined the Boston Planning Council in place of Chris Cullinan who retired end of summer
- Contract for Part A has been signed and we are asking for SWEEPS same as the previous year to provide full pay drugs
- CARE Program has 3 vacancies, including an enrollment coordinator, data analyst, and QM Coordinator; none are “posted” due to a state-wide hiring freeze
- Have begun tracking and reporting CARES Act services/expenditures separately; will allow reports on this funding stream
- New and revised contracts begin this month with a new vendor for insurance continuation and new contactor for MCM/NMCM that reflects updates to the Standards of Care—big improvements ahead!
- HPG - Prep Connect Website is undergoing some improvements with regard to SEO and finding partners to share outreach duties; exploring alternate ways to fund the site long-term
- NH Disparities Coalition Collaborative meeting monthly with a focus on QI related to youth
- New Care Engagement Unit is fully staffed with 3 staff—all are deployed for COVID at this time, but will begin organizing strategies to move the program forward
- Statewide Coordinated Statement of Need moving along, testing client survey with actual clients to prepare for launch early November

**The Office of Mayor Martin Walsh**

**REPRESENTATIVE: MELISSA HECTOR**

City Hall is seeing an increase of COVID-19 cases in East and South Boston, Dorchester, Mattapan and Roxbury, where the rates are higher than the city average, mainly in the 20-29 age group. Mobile testing sites are now available. Mayor Walsh will be attending a Mass and Cass Task Force community meeting discussing overcrowding, increase in HIV cases, substance use, etc.

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**Topic I: Other Business, Announcements, Evaluation & Adjourn**

**Meeting to Adjourn**

**Motion: Robert Giannasca**

**Second: Richard Swanson**

**Result:** The meeting was adjourned.

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