

DRAFT

Capital Region ETE Steering Committee Meeting Albany Damien Center, 728 Madison Ave, Suite 100, Albany May 19, 2020

Attendees List:

1. Mary Ellen Adams – Specialized Care Center for Adolescents & Young Adults at Albany Med at AMC
2. Scott Daly – Ellis Medicine Peer Navigator
3. Diane DeGroat – Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York
4. Brittni Gulloty – Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood
5. Perry Junjulas – Albany Damien Center
6. Quentin Lott – In Our Own Voices
7. Claire Mone – AIDS Institute
8. Donna Muller – Albany Medical College Department of HIV Medicine
9. Steve Sawicki - AIDS Institute, NYS DOH, Office of the Medical Director
10. Todd Cramer, Albany Damien Center
11. Terra Westfall – Unity House
12. Christine Wasik – Albany Medical Center
13. John Hartigan – AIDS Institute
14. Kyla Loucks – Albany Medical Center
15. Jill Hodson – Whitney Young Health Center
16. Meghan Thompson – Ellis Hospital
17. Kirstin O’Sullivan – Alliance for Positive Health
18. Callee Carpenter – Albany Medical Center
19. Dave Gabrielson – Catholic Charities
20. Jill Broderick – Whitney Young Health Center
21. Bonnie Kerr – Albany Damien Center (taking minutes)

Call to Order – Perry Junjulas welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. He noted that we do not want to lose focus on HIV while dealing with COVID. Now is not the time to pull resources. It is the time for us to pull together to advocate for the people we serve. Perry asked the group to share an update as to how they are providing services in the COVID environment.

Albany Damien Center – Perry Junjulas

We instituted a COVID response plan. There are no cases of COVID at the Center at present. All services are still being provided remotely, curbside, or by delivery. Grants were received to assist with the delivery of pet foods for our PAWS program. MPower has moved its offices back to 728 Madison. Members are not coming into our building. Only essential employees and tenants are at the Center. Cleaning supplies and masks are provided to all tenants and members. Calls are made to our members to check on them. We are taking new members, especially for Nutrition Health Education for pantry bags and food vouchers, for PAWS, and for Employment Pathways to assist people with returning to work.

Albany Medical Center – Christine Wasik, Kyla Loucks, and Mary Ellen Adams

Christine Wasick reported that Clara Barton is open with most staff on site. Some folks are rotating and working from home. Looking to move patients to tele-med when possible. Checking temperatures when patients enter. Services still provided on site. PREP program fully operational. Giving extra meds when necessary. HIV walk up testing available. Able to see patients. Seeing an increase in volume of patients experiencing anxiety and an increase in the amount of mental health services provided due to COVID. Program is heavily funded by C & D Ryan White Grant. Did receive funds from HRSA/CARES Act. Utilizing these funds to cover increases staffing and supplies cost. Patients are still getting labs drawn, some via scripts to LabCorp. Allowing care to be patient-centered. Flexible with some regulations. CAB meetings are on hold – not sure when the next meeting will be.

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Kyla Loucks reported that tests can be completed in the clinic by appointment or curbside. Trying to spread the word that curbside testing is available. They still offer on-site appointments, but tele-medicine or curbside service is great for patients who do not want to risk exposure to others.

Mary Ellen Adams reported that the Adolescent program is open and seeing patients, also utilizing tele-med. PREP and HIV treatment available. Social workers have been checking in with patients to see what need they may have. Some work from home, but office is open daily. Need to refocus on what we can do moving forward to continue to provide services.

Whitney Young – Jill Hodson

Only seeing current patients via tele-med. New patients are seen face to face. Suspended testing of HIV. People can call to make an appointment for COVID testing.

Ellis Medicine – Scott Daly, Peer Navigator

Today will be his first day back on site. Has been running weekly video meeting. Going to re-connect with his patients today. People who have lived through the 1990s are having flashbacks to that time. It is like having a scab ripped off. People are experiencing trauma due to COVID. Patients need connection. Must have a Behavioral Health link. He also shared the CNY HIV Care Network for PWAs meetings are held Monday/Friday at 11:00 a.m.

Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood - Brittni Gulloty

Centers are still open – utilizing tele-med as well. Must call the 518 number to make tele-med appointment. Patients still coming in – waiting rooms have been redesigned to provide proper distancing. Wednesday and Friday nights are holding Facebook Live sex education events. Doing a trivia event. Educators are having fun utilizing virtual platforms. Teen Program Facebook events held on Thursdays.

Legal Aid Society – Diane DeGroat

They have transitioned to working remotely. Trying to do as much virtually as possible. Reaching out to clients to check in. Have conducted three Town Halls with over 400 attendees. Intake still occurs as a phone process. Looking to roll out opening of offices – starting with Amsterdam, Canton, and Plattsburg – these offices will open before the Albany office. There are LOTS of issues with the law and COVID. They have a very thorough page of resources on their website. They also have a COVID hotline which is staffed Monday/Tuesday/Friday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. 833-628-0087. There is an expectation that there will be a spike in eviction issues once the moratorium is lifted. Unemployment insurance benefit questions have increased.

In Our Own Voices – Quentin Lott

Working remotely – trying to utilize Zoom as much as possible. Focusing on building community outreach re. testing. Anti-violence as increased their utilization of services. Food Pantry open by appointment.

Alliance for Positive Health – Kirstin O’Sullivan

All services are up and running except testing. Pantry bags are being delivered. Working creatively to ensure people are receiving the services they need. Able to do marketplace insurance over the phone for HIV positive clients with same day coverage in some cases.

Catholic Charities – Dave Gabrielson

Working remotely. Rolling opening of their offices. Have been utilizing tele-meetings.

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Unity House – Terra Westfall

Merging with NE Career Planning. They are operating similar to other agencies – working from home, no contact pantry drop-off. They are looking to be creative about helping people who are feeling isolated. They are offering bag lunches daily at 11:30 a.m.

AIDS Institute – Claire Mone and John Hartigan

Claire Mone reported that they are collaborating with NYC hosting community engagement events. Hosting regional sessions based on needs. Theme based sessions via Zoom. The Capital Region session is scheduled for July 21.

John Hartigan reported that staff are adapting and working remotely. EFA has been added to some grants to allow a one time grant to be used for expenses. All agencies are inundated with technical issues. Contract managers are there to help.

NY Links – Steve Sawicki

Their focus was in-person meetings. Have been utilizing on-line methods. Hosting a Thursday teen group. To be added to the e-mail list send him an e-mail. Scott will be attending a virtual mini-conference on June 4 entitled Novel Approaches for a Novel Time.

Question posed by Scott Daly: Is the AIDS Advisory ETE meeting tomorrow? What effect will the reduction in the state budget have to funding various agencies providing services to people living with HIV/AIDS?

Response by Claire Mone of the AIDS Institute: She is not aware of any funding being cut at this time. The focus of the meeting will be ETE 2020 and Beyond.

**Next ETE meeting will be on June 21, 2020
9 a.m. – 11 a.m. via Zoom**

Next ETE Capital Region Meetings are from 9 AM to 10:30 AM on the 3rd Tues of each month

Contact information

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New ETE Webpage at <http://www.albanydamiencenter.org/capital-region-ete.html>