

**Capital Region ETE Steering Committee Meeting  
Zoom Call March 16, 2021**

**Attendees List:**

1. Amanda Ahrens – Benefits Counselor, Legal Aid Society of NENY
2. Ashley Smith- Peer Advocate, Albany Medical Center
3. Brittini Gulotti - Public Affairs & Volunteer Coordinator Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood
4. Brooke Strauss – Specialized Care Ctr for Adolescent & Young Adults, Albany Medical Center
5. Claire Mone, NYSDOH, AIDS Institute, Office of Planning and Community Affairs
6. Diane DeGroat, Senior Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY
7. Donna Muller – PreP Coordinator, Albany Medical Center
8. Erika Walker – Hudson Headwaters Health Network
9. Geri Walsh, Employment Pathways, Albany Damien Center
10. Jeannie Haller, Ellis Medicine, Project Coordinator
11. Jill Broderick -
12. John Daniels – Board President, Pride Center
13. Keion Hennessey – WSW Program Coordinator, In Our Own Voices
14. Kyla Loucks – Albany Medical Center
15. Lauren Quinn Albany Med Specialized Care Center
16. Lisa Currin – AI Contract manager
17. Lyndsi Wickert- Albany Damien Center, Employment Pathways
18. Meghan Thompson, Retention Adherence Specialist, Ellis Medicine
19. Perry Junjulas – Executive Director & PWA, Albany Damien Center
20. Scott Daly – Peer Navigator, Ellis Medicine
21. Steve Sawicki – NY Links, NYS DOH
22. Suzanne Beattie – Associate Executive Director of Programs, Albany Damien Center
23. Susan Johnson, PrEP Specialist, Whitney Young Health
24. Whitney Closson - Family Education Specialist, Mental Health Association of New York State, Inc. (MHANYS)

**Call to Order** – Kyla Loucks welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

A motion to accept the minutes of February 16, 2021 was made by Scott Daly and seconded by Ericka Walker. Minutes accepted as submitted.

**Legislative Update** – Perry

It's all about the budget at his point. This has been a very interesting process, legislature put things in budget bills that they may not have in the past. They delay was put in for 340B. We are not done yet but we continue pushing on this. We are also hoping to remove the global cap on Medicaid. We are watching the battle develop between the Legislature & Governor's office. ETE programs look safe, funded at what they were last year. Federal Stimulus means that NYS revenues are higher than anticipated. AIDS Institute paying fully on contracts no 20% withhold. These payments are being released. There will still be a 5% withhold (not a 5% cut). Things feel better than they did last November.

**Co-Chair Position Open** – Kyla urged everyone to help look for a new co-chair to join her as Perry will be stepping down as Co-Chair. Is there anyone within your organization that may be interested? We need someone with a passion for what we do. If you know anyone who may be interested, please reach out to Kyla or Perry.

**AIDS Watch** – Scott Daly

Registration ended yesterday for Legislative Visits. March 22 – March 24, 2021. No sessions or policy briefings have been updated on site yet.

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### Committee Updates

#### **HAB Update – Claire Mone**

- (2) ½ day Full Member Meeting tomorrow & Thursday. Tomorrow is Health Equity training and the data that was presented from 2019. Thursday will be subcommittee check-ins.
- Committees are working on an infographic for telehealth regarding mental health due to COVID.

#### **Youth Committee – Lauren Quinn**

- Last meeting was on 2/25/21, 3 youths attended the meeting (all virtual), we asked those youth to come up with a flyer to get more youth to attend meetings. They will review these flyers at next meeting on 3/25/21. Everything else is going well.

#### **HIV Testing – Kyla Loucks**

Currently looking for someone to take over the Adult Testing. 3/10/21 was Women & Girls HIV Awareness Day and next week is National Native HIV Awareness Day.

### Agency Updates

#### **NY Links – Steve Sawicki**

- Started to shift from in person to virtual a little over a year ago
- Tried moving to adaptation & support, keeping services available on a state-wide level
- Switched to 45-minute zoom check-ins
- They have been doing a lot of webinars – ended up doing 86 virtual meetings
- Continue to optimistically cautiously plan being back in person this fall or beginning of 2022
- Check ins coming up this week are Self Care webinars. Part 1 is 3/19 & Part 2 is 3/26. They will be trying to do another one in April. If you want any information regarding this please contact Steve and he can get you on the email list.

#### **PrEP Committee – Sue Johnson & Donna Muller**

- Committee met on 2/24 and they are trying to decide on the next steps. Where do they want to take this? Also, they want to try to recruit new members.
- Always good news coming out of this group
- Trends on STIs are on an all-time rise especially in Schenectady County. Because of COVID its been hard trying to connect people with services and its been a very slow decline with getting people engaged.
- Adult PrEP Program is putting on a networking meeting one week from today. 10-11:30am. Carol Tyrell from AI will be there and help connect with faith-based community. There will be a panel with 3 PrEP patients to answer any questions they may have.

#### **Albany Med – Lauren Quinn**

- Free rapid testing this week and the week of April 12<sup>th</sup> for ages 13-24, flyers will be displayed throughout the building. Testing is on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> floor of building.

#### **Albany Med Adult Clinic– Ashley**

- Received approval to do phone support groups, everyone has been missing coming to group. Starting with phone group.
- Yesterday in service teaching about new injectable Cabenuva. WE don't have plans for rolling this out or offering to patients yet but there was training for staff at clinic. This is really exciting for some of patient population.
- Telehealth and in person visits. Some people like the telehealth and others like the in-person visits.

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**Legal Aid Society – Diane DeGroat**

- HELP Program has been funded and is back up running. People can call Diane directly for intake 518-533-5930.
- If any of the organizations need presentations about Legal Aid Services for staff or members of community Diane can present.
- Amanda at Benefits counseling pilot program is still going. It helps teach how employment will impact benefits such as SSI, Section 8 etc.
- NYS now has mandatory paid leave to get your vaccine effective 3/12/21

**Call to Action Letter – Claire Mone**

- Main focuses on the Call-to-Action letter are Health Equity, Racial Justice, Trauma Informed Care, Older Adults living with HIV, Injection Drug Use and Opioid Overdose. AIDS Institute is offering an online training for Health Equity so providers have better understanding. You can register for the Health Equity training at: <https://www.hivtrainingny.org/User/ConfirmCourse/3644>. If you have any questions please reach out to Claire.

**Albany Damien Center Employment Pathways- Lyndsi Wickert-Holmes & Geri Walsh**

- Working Wednesdays are still LIVE on Facebook, they have been focusing on the Albany Damien Center program and they have also been promoting information about people getting their taxes done.
- Two participants getting employed, one full time and one part time. Also, if you have any referrals to the peer certification please send them to Lyndsi or Geri.

**Albany Damien Center – Perry Junjulas**

- Looking for people for Nutrition Program
- Looking to slowly reopening, potentially opening Living Room to those who have been vaccinated.

**Ellis Medicine, Meagan Thompson**

- Lifted some visitor restrictions
- Peer Meeting is next week via zoom or they can call in – Ellis Residents will be speaking about the vaccine and will answer any questions they may have.
- Scheduling people who want to be vaccinated.

**Hudson Headwaters Health Network – Erika Walker**

- Erika will be leaving HHHN, her last day is 4/23/21. Melissa Carbone will take over the position as Director.
- About half of their patient population is vaccinated.
- Sending at home kits to about 16 Skidmore students that have responded to emails
- Getting a Mobile Unit this year which will enable them to go out & draw labs
- There have been 3 new HIV diagnosis. One person was dx with at home test kit, one had exposure and last was a 17-year-old transgender female that tested positive at Pediatrician's office. They will follow up and test again as no viral load. All three did receive blood tests.

**AIDS Institute, Lisa Currin**

- Encouraged everyone to take the Health Equity Training and also offer it to staff

**MHANYS -Whitney Closson**

- Just had Mental Health Matters Week, at the end of March (3/25) they will be having a recorded webinar Parenting in a Pandemic families can access these on their own
- She will share mental health training with Kyla to forward to everyone

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**New Business**

- COVID Vaccines – Counties are doing great with clinics. 3/24/21 Scott’s monthly peer group is having Ellis Residents will be there to answer questions regarding the vaccine. Education is the key! Claire will also follow up to see if there is anything that is going out from AIDS Institute regarding questions people with HIV may have regarding the vaccine. The DOH website has FAQs and resources for consumers and providers  
<https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/what-you-need-know>

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Meeting adjourned at 10:28am

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**ETE Capital Region Meetings are from 9 AM to 10:30 AM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues of each month**

Next ETE Meeting is Tuesday, April 20, 2021

**Contact information**

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