

**Capital Region ETE Steering Committee Meeting
Zoom Call April 20, 2021**

Attendees List:

1. Amanda Ahrens – Benefits Counselor, Legal Aid Society of NENY
2. Amy Palma, Unity House of Troy
3. Ashley Smith, Peer Advocate, Albany Medical Center
4. Brittni Gulotti - Public Affairs & Volunteer Coordinator Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood
5. Claire Mone, NYSDOH, AIDS Institute, Office of Planning and Community Affairs
6. Debbie Quinones, NYSDOH, AIDS Institute
7. Diane DeGroat, Senior Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY
8. Donna Muller – PreP Coordinator, Albany Medical Center
9. Jeannie Haller, Ellis Medicine, Project Coordinator
10. Jill Broderick – WMY HIV Program Manager
11. Kate Thorpe – SCCAYA, Albany Medical Center
12. Keion Hennessey – WSW Program Coordinator, In Our Own Voices
13. Kyla Loucks – Albany Medical Center
14. Lauren Quinn Albany Med Specialized Care Center
15. Lisa Currin – AI Contract Manager
16. Lyndsi Wickert- Albany Damien Center, Employment Pathways
17. Megan Green, RN Albany Medical Center
18. Meghan Thompson, Retention Adherence Specialist, Ellis Medicine
19. Morgan Williams – Enrollment Specialist Alliance for Positive Health
20. Perry Junjulas – Executive Director & PWA, Albany Damien Center
21. Randy Viele – Alliance for Positive Health
22. Steve Sawicki – NY Links, NYS DOH
23. Susan Johnson, PrEP Specialist, Whitney Young Health

Call to Order – Kyla Loucks welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

A motion to accept the minutes of March 16, 2021 was made by Lyndsi Wickert and seconded by Donna Muller. Minutes accepted as submitted.

Legislative Update – Perry

Budget is done. GOOD NEWS! 2-year delay for 340B! The advocacy helped; we will continue to fight for this. We will be moving focus to PATHS Bill – revision to this bill & looking for sponsors, HIV Testing Bill & PrEP Access Bill. Make the Case – statewide registration day is this Thursday. Very hopeful for change in Albany with a lot of these issues moving forward.

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.

Committee Updates

HAB Update – Claire Mone

- Met in March for (2) ½ day Full Member meetings. They spoke about infographic to use, resources where people can do for access, example library. Best engagement program is working on Mental Health telehealth for HIV positive community

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- Committee does not meet again until August but they do have a webinar coming up on Certified Peer Workers (for HAB members)

Youth Committee – Lauren Quinn

- Last meeting was on 3/25/21, a few people attended. They are still working on the flyer for Youth. If anyone is interested in joining the committee let Lauren know. Next meeting is 4/26/21 at 3:30pm.

HIV Testing – Kyla Loucks

In the process of calling all agencies on HIV testing list to see if any changes. Perry asked if any update on false positives. No update on possible false positives, patients that tested covid positive tested HIV positive. Not sure why that happened. Ashley did mention that they had a patient that did not test positive for COVID but tested positive on several tests but has no viral load.

Agency Updates

NY Links – Steve Sawicki

- Total shift from in person meetings to virtual meetings
- Tentatively planning in person meeting in Brooklyn on October 28, 2021
- Reduced the number of regional meetings, no longer weekly they are now quarterly. Next meeting is in June.
- Possibly in-person will begin September or October
- There have been a lot of requests to repeat the 4-part training. What people want to see if more of focus on self-care. There was a 2-part theoretical self-care last month. There are some guided meditation webinars coming up, they are scheduled for 45 minutes. If there is interest, they may do this one on a regular basis.
- Coming up- ETE Dashboard training: showing how to use the dashboard, filters that generate data. 2020 HIV data will be available December 2021
- When checking in with providers he found out that people have been very hesitant for in person meetings but not hesitant for telehealth, social media, phone, text or zoom. More adolescents are taking medication. Strong Hospital in Rochester said they had a zero no show rate for 2 months as they were doing telehealth.

PrEP Committee – Sue Johnson

- Did not meet in April, will be meeting in May & looking for new members

Albany Med Adult Clinic– Ashley

- A lot of the patients that were scared to come in to the office started coming in during the fall& wanted to get in before winter came. Some wanted to come in office even though they were scared they wanted to see a doctor. So many patients wanted their lab numbers. More took advantage of telehealth with counseling services.
- Mental Health struggles due to over a year of isolation, she stated that patients are feeling a type of PTSD from when they were diagnosed and felt isolated, the stigma & discrimination etc. We need to keep an eye on the fact that long after this is over people will be dealing with the effects.

AIDS Institute – Claire Mone

- Hosting (2) ½ day virtual meeting for ETE Regional Co-Chairs discussing moving forward past ETE 2020, setting 2021 goals. Breakout sessions as they apply to Call-to-Action letter. Also gives the Regional ETEs to talk about their local priorities and how they apply moving forward.

Albany Damien Center – Perry Junjulas

- Received an award to provide statewide trainings to help agencies who are interested in creating and sustaining employment programs specifically for people living with HIV & AIDS.

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- We have openings in our Housing Program but onsite and offsite
- Spots available in our Nutrition Health Education program where participants can receive a pantry bag weekly or a food gift card each month.
- We still have our Congregate Meal program – it is delivery or pick up available. We are hoping to potentially open a little bit in the future, we are just waiting to see how the vaccinations are going.

Albany Med – Donna Muller

- Still recruiting for PrEP Case Manager and HIV Part C Case Manager, both on AMC website if anyone wants to apply. Also, email Chris or Donna to give them a heads up
- Sue Johnson talked about 16 positives in the last 10 days, one was someone tested there but the others were referred in, all young MSM Black/Latino under the age of 30. We need to increase outreach again in the community. These were not clustered diagnosis.
- Ashley added that they have had 5-6 diagnosed new patients and 3 or 4 of them are very advanced. 35 or younger. Some were in the hospital for something else and got tested because blood work was already being done. Not a lot of education as far as how HIV transmission goes.
- Kyla advised that they now have their social media up and running, Facebook (Albany Medical Center Dept. of Medicine) & Instagram (Albany_Med_Dept_of_Medicine)

Albany Med Youth Program, Lauren Quinn

- Planning free rapid HIV testing around awareness days, May 17-21st for National Asian/Pacific Islander HIV Awareness Day
- Now have a full team, Megan joined our team last month.
- Opened a new teen room, dedicated to adolescent/young adults. Patients ages 13 & up.
- Funding they will use to have masks made for their program, hoping to do an outreach outside in the community to be able to give them out.
- Also doing a food insecurity program for program patients. If anyone expresses that they have food insecurity they have bags full of food to get people by and give handouts for local food pantries.

Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood – Brittany

- Digital Access Program is up and running.
- Coming Soon – Virtual Open Houses via zoom
- On a positive note some educators have been teaching in person courses
- There has been some request for outreach
- Virtual Sex Ed Lobby Day is Thursday 9a-5p
- They have still been providing care, more patients want to come in
- There is a Specialist who will go to Public Libraries, Universities, etc. setting up virtual appointments for people. Some appointments are even same day.

Ellis Medicine

- Meghan & Jeannie have been helping patients register for the vaccine. Approximately 50% of patients have received their 1st shot, 35% have received the 2nd shot. 15% say they are not interested.
- Ellis Residents will be speaking about Cardiovascular Disease at this month's meeting.

Legal Aid Society – Diane DeGroat

- HIV/AIDS Legal Services are fully funded, up & running. Anyone with non-criminal legal problems can call Diane directly.

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- Albany Damien Center is a community partner with Family Support & Stabilization services. If someone is in need of Wills, Health Care Proxy, Power of Attorney, etc. They can do counseling with Peg Stucky to talk thru the process. Very emotional for end of life or long-term planning. They are either referred to Legal Aid or Albany Law School.
- Housing and eviction moratorium will expire May 1, 2021.
- If someone is thinking about going back to work but receive SSI benefits and have questions they can call/email Amanda Ahrens with any questions.

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

- People are feeling more comfortable going back to work with vaccines etc.
- Re-engaging with members. We have new swag bags from our CAPCOM grant that we will deliver to them in person so that we get to see them.
- Working Wednesday Facebook LIVE is going well, May 5th we will have Albany County DOH talk about the COVID vaccine

Unity House of Troy, Amy Palma

- Helping clients that are interested in accessing the vaccine. Assist with appointment & transportation. Independent pharmacy is proving COVID vaccines to the public.
- Openings in Medical Transportation Program

Alliance for Positive Health, Morgan Williams

- 2 open positions; Outreach Specialist & Enrollment Specialist

New Business

- Upcoming Awareness Days – Albany Medical Center is trying to do as much as they can (with COVID) for the Awareness Days
 - May 19th – National Asian/Pacific Islander HIV Awareness Day
 - June 5th – Long-term Survivors Day – 40 years of HIV Epidemic

Meeting adjourned at 10:24am

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

Next ETE Meeting is Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Contact information

Kyla Loucks loucksk1@amc.edu 518-264-5839 (work phone)

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