



Planning Council Meeting
Thursday, January 14, 2021
Zoom
4:00 - 6:00pm

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 Tavarez
John Fabiano
Joey Carlesimo
Jose Sostre
Justin Alves
Kathy Lituri
Katie Keating
Kenneth Averett
Lamar Brown-Noguera
Lea Nelligan
Lorraine Jones
Mahara Pinheiro
Manuel Pires
Margaret Lombe
Michael Robbins
Michael Swaney

Patrick Baum
Richard Swanson
Robert Giannasca
Robinah Nakabugo
Serena Rajabiun
Stanley Flores
Stephen Batchelder
Stephen Corbett
Tad Bailey
Tim Mercier
Tim Young
Wendy LeBlanc

Members Excused

Melissa Hector

Members Absent

Cindi Bell
Raymond Rodriguez

PCS

Liz Rios
Masill Miranda
Tatiana Ramos

RWSD

Fabiola Catulle
Alexandra Zhang

Guests

Rinka Murakami
Sarimer Sanchez, MD; IDB Bureau Director

Topic A: Welcome and Introductions

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

Topic B: Review and Approve Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of December 10th, 2020 were reviewed. Members went on Basecamp to look at the minutes before motioning to approve.

Motion to Approve: Darren Sack

Second: Stephen Batchelder

Result: The minutes were approved with (2) Abstentions

Topic C: Committee Reports

Planning Council leadership and sub-committee Chairs provided updates on their meetings that took place since the last Planning Council meeting. Members were encouraged to refer to the Sub-committee handouts for more details on Basecamp.

Needs, Resources, and Allocations Committee (NRAC) | Harry Shanmugam: CW led a member spotlight, NRAC reviewed service categories and funding and looked at the progress of the NA ad hoc group.

Executive Committee | Kathy Lituri: We discussed the attendance record, the Planning Council agenda and ongoing topics.

Services, Priorities, and Evaluations Committee (SPEC) | Patrick Baum: PB led the meeting as MS was out. RR led a member spotlight, while the committee reviewed the AAM, non-funded service categories and had a breakout room exercise discussing the various categories.

Membership and Nominations Committee (MNC) | Robert Giannasca: MNC held the first meeting of the council for 2021, and has been doing virtual outreach, including at Boston HAPPENS and an upcoming SWCAG meeting. Changes were also made to the application in preparation for the recruitment season.

Consumer Committee | Tim Young: Consumer Committee held a panel focused on different sub-populations of PLWH and their specific barriers. An update on the anti-stigma campaign was also provided, as Consumer and PCS meet with the production team weekly.

Topic D: Mid-Year Review

Liz Rios, PCS Manager, led the mid-year review with the Planning Council. She discussed content from the last quarter of the Planning Council, addressed questions/comments from evaluations and funding streams information. There were 2 comments in the evaluation regarding the perception of the COVID-19 on consumers and the mistrust among communities of color.

Questions/Comments

- TY: We might even want to chat about this [COVID-19 vaccine] during a coffee hour.
- SB: Before at the beginning of meetings can we state the number of evals that was submitted, the percentage?
 - ER: Yes, we can add it at the Feb meeting.

Action Step

- PCS to include number of evaluations submitted as a slide at the start of meetings, and set a goal (percentage) to collect.

Topic E: Needs Assessment Strategy

Masill Miranda, PCS and Harry Shanmugam, discussed the Needs Assessment strategy oversight by NRAC and the Needs Assessment ad hoc group. The presentation provided an overview of the assessment, goals, review of the timeline and next steps. The Planning Council will be informed about the progress at the March Planning Council meeting, and results at the May Planning Council meeting.

Questions/Comments

- BH: Who makes up SHEF?
 - HS: Students at BC who are interested in public health, as it is a student-led group.
- BH: Does SHEF have affiliation with similar groups at other nearby universities?
 - HS: They do not, but we may look into developing those relationships in the future.

Action Step

- The NA ad hoc group to continue to meet and make edits to the survey tool for distribution.
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Topic F: Q3 Spending and Utilization Report

Katie Keating, RWSD Director, BPHC, and her team presented the Q3 utilization and spending report to the Planning Council.

Questions/Comments

- HS: Among the categories where there is significant underspending, which of these you think will continue to underspend and which will bounce back for FY22?
 - KK: Yes, how can we support agencies to plan? We're in this for the long-haul so we're definitely thinking about that. Medical transportation is an example of one where agencies are looking for different ways to provide transportation during lockdown. We need to monitor FY21 to see if we need to do a sweeps process for this service category later in the year. We'll learn a lot from needs assessment and the first six months of FY21 before we can plan for FY22.
 - FC: Worcester has waived public transportation fees (bus) since the beginning of the lockdown, so the agencies funded for that service in Worcester have not been able to spend the money.
- SB: Will there be more trainings for peer support facilitators? For a peer to learn how to facilitate a group?
 - KK: JRI is the agency that leads the trainings, and we can connect your long term survivor support group with JRI for continued trainings.
- JA: How is the funding for MAI Psychosocial Support being utilized? It's FY20 projection is 11% compared to 55% for the general funding.
 - AZ/KK: We will explore this and get answers as to the reason behind the disparity. The activities are the same as PS general funded; 1:1 sessions and group sessions, but utilization has been low due to COVID-19 and stay at home.

Action Steps

- RWSD to provide more information on peer support facilitator trainings and information on which agencies are funded by service categories.
- RWSD to connect with SB and find ways to support

Topic G: VOTE: Amendment to FY21 Allocation

Liz Rios, PCS Manager, and Brian Holliday, Planning Council Chair, discussed the need for amending the FY21 allocation. One agency funded in FY20 - 50% reduction from the 2 agencies funded for the service in the past 5 years. Significant underspending occurred because of the availability of other funding

streams (such as private insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and private funding). As a result, the agency returned \$87,000 of their FY20 award to BPHC. That money was reallocated to Housing and Psychosocial Support programs.

The Executive Committee proposes to reduce the FY21 allocation for this category, which was voted on in June 2020, from \$142,000 to \$0 based on spending patterns and the availability of other sources of payment. It has been proposed to reallocate the money to Housing (75%) and Psychosocial support (25%) programs.

Questions/Comments

- DS: Psychosocial Support is important and needed, but that category is also having underspending. If we reallocate from SA-Res to PS, can PS absorb that funding?
- JA: On a bigger scale, I'm concerned as to why the agency doesn't want the money [for Substance Abuse, Residential]. The funded program was 90 days and now is shortened and insurance doesn't cover beyond 60 days. Is BPHC looking at other agencies to utilize this money? The service provided has changed. Are there any agencies in the community that would bid for this contract and offer HIV exclusive recovery services.
 - KK: We can have more conversation with EHE and recovery services to find ways to better serve this population. It seems to be a bigger systematic question.

Action Step

- **RWSD to discuss on a larger scale the need for SA-Residential in the EMA.**

Motion to vote on the amendment to the FY21 allocation, proposed by the Executive Committee: Wendy LeBlanc

Second: Stephen Batchelder

Favor: 32

Opposed: 1

Abstention: 1

Result: The motion was approved

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**

- Working with agencies to optimize service delivery and spending before the close of the fiscal year (end of Feb)
- Continue to monitor and respond to agency COVID needs
- Continue to work on EHE plans with partners
- Dr. Sanchez is the new IDB Bureau Director (Dr. Sanchez then formally introduced herself to the council)

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
BUREAU OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND LABORATORY SCIENCES (BIDLS)
OFFICE OF HIV/AIDS (OHA)**

- Ending the HIV Epidemic Plan for Suffolk County, 2020
- Ending the HIV Epidemic Funding (Suffolk County)
- Second Trauma, Loss, and Resiliency Session (for HIV+ people), February 10, 2021, via THRIVE, JRIs virtual Peer Support Program

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

**CITY OF BOSTON
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
MAYOR'S REPRESENTATIVE: MELISSA HECTOR, DIRECTOR OF CAPACITY BUILDING**

The Boston Resiliency Fund has announced the opening of phase 2 funding.

- The updated grant application can be [found here](#). To download a Word Document of the application, please [click here](#). We are asking for all applications by **January 25th**. Funding criteria of the Boston Resiliency Fund on boston.gov/brf

**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 1/21/21 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>

MassHealth has published a Provider Bulletin confirming coverage of the COVID-19 vaccines with no cost sharing. See <https://www.mass.gov/doc/all-provider-bulletin-304-coverage-and-payment-for-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-vaccine-0/download>

Topic I: Other Business, Announcements, Evaluation & Adjourn

Meeting to Adjourn

Motion: Tim Young

Second: Kathy Lituri

Result: The meeting was adjourned.
