

Minutes by: John Wilson, Uptyme Prevention Services

Rhode Island Community Planning Group for HIV Prevention Meeting Minutes

Date: January 12, 2006

Time: 4:30-8:10PM

Place: DATA 260 West Exchange Street, Suite 301, Providence, RI

Present: Donna (Dee Dee) Williams, Stephanie Howie, Eleanor (Candy) Brown-McSwain, Elisa DelBonis, Nathalie Mena, Midge Sabatini, Jamie Hull, Darrel Isom, Philip Kane, Vinnie Velasquez, Paul Loberti, Lucille Minuto, Deb Davis, Shannon Spurlock, Laura Keene, Jeremy Giller, John Wilson, Paul Medici, Daniel Valencia, Julie Davids

Call to Order: Dee Dee Williams called Meeting to order at 4:30PM

Introductions: Dee Dee began with an icebreaker activity.

Roll Call: Don Laliberte (excused), Pat Threats (leave of absence), Tina Shepard (unexcused), Jacinta Pena (unexcused),

Quorum Announced by Co-Chair Dee Dee Williams

Approval of Minutes: Elisa DelBonis made a motion to accept the minutes as written, 2nd by Midge Sabatini, motion passed unanimously

Co-Chair Dee Dee Williams reviewed objectives for the meeting.

RICPG Survey Report (JSI)

Shannon Spurlock and Laura Keene from JSI presented the results of the October Member Survey results. Shannon presented a 3-year trend including this year's results. She highlighted improvements in perceptions by the group. Also, some areas for improvement were identified. During the presentation, discussion was generated in several areas with the following highlights:

- The group discussed the impact of survey questions that were not answered by members. It was felt some members may not have answered questions due to time constraints, or lack of understanding regarding the impact of non-responses. Specific concerns were with the true representation of the group demographics verses what was reported on the survey. Shannon mentioned that we couldn't alter the results on the survey to reflect the true make-up of the group. We must use this information with limits and rely upon the actual demographics data for a true indication of the composition of the group. An important point is that even though we had a good demographic representation for the survey, some of these questions were left blank so the actual demographic is unclear. One suggestion was to place the survey on-line, offering non-responding members an opportunity to respond and giving more time to take the survey. Shannon said this was not possible as it would not fit within the protocol for the survey (e.g., it had to be taken within the meeting time prescribed) and would essentially violate the ethics of this assessment process.

- Some expressed an interest in knowing how other CPG's in the country have responded to the CDC survey questions. It was mentioned, this is a good idea, but RI has special questions that are different. So we would be comparing different measures.
- 100% of members perceived the RICPG as a functioning group. This was up from 40% three years ago.
- A suggestion was made to revisit the survey design. There were a total of eleven respondents.
- The group considered writing a letter to the CDC about RI specific responses and adding questions of interest to the RICPG.

Perceptions, and recommendations and goals as a result of the JSI Member Survey results:

Perceptions:

- A majority reported having adequate facilitation of meetings and that staff was available for questions as needed.
- A majority reported having the opportunity to give feedback and participate during meetings
- Most reported that work was not shared equally among the membership.
- All members reported that RICPG is a well functioning group.

Recommendations:

- Increase Commitment and Participation
 - Revisit RICPG purpose to decrease individual's advocating for non-RICPG agenda
 - Develop consistent meeting agenda, guidelines for participation, and a system for task accountability for task forces and committees

Goal #1 Community Planning supports broad-based community participation in HIV prevention planning

Recommendations

- The RICPG's recruitment strategies should focus on reflecting target populations
- The group needs to recruit expert perspective from someone in the substance abuse field
- The group should address issues of inclusion of non-members, people with barriers and target populations
- Utilization of the committees and/or Task Force structure may assist the RICPG in reducing gaps in participation

Goal #2 The RICPG identifies priority HIV prevention needs in RI

Recommendations

- The group should continue to utilize committee and task force structure for identifying prevention priorities

- The group needs to clarify the purpose of the resource inventory for setting priorities
- The group may benefit from exploring evaluation tools
- The group may benefit from reviewing Best Practice Criteria

Goal #3 The RICPG ensures that HIV prevention resources target priority populations and interventions set forth in the Comprehensive HIV Prevention Plan

Recommendations

- The group needs training regarding the linkages between:
 - Comprehensive Plan
 - Application for funding (CDC)
 - RICPG activities
 - Community Service Assessment (CSA)

Red Ribbon Rally Recap (Clarendon Group)

Jeremy Giller of Clarendon Group presented a recap of the Red Ribbon Rally event that included a handout summarizing the objectives and outcomes for the event and lessons learned for future events. Highlights included:

- Wide press, including radio and web campaign was promoted through November and early December emphasizing RICPG's role in the community
- 150 people attended the event, with radio personalities Baby J & Tessa as Emcees, RICPG received a written proclamation from Providence Mayor David Cicilline, and RI Government representation by Lt. Gov. Charles Fogarty, Senator Juan Pichardo & Senator Elizabeth Roberts

Lessons learned: For 2006 and beyond

- Event Promotion
 - Earlier distribution of invitations and promotional materials, at least 5 weeks before event
 - Additional invitations sent to RICPG member organizations for distribution to mailing lists and/or made available to their offices
- Event Preparation
 - Engage an ad hoc "events planning" committee, made up of RICPG members and delegated by the full RICPG to make decisions about the Rally (e.g. entertainment, food, etc.
 - Rally organizers (Staff, consultants) should be at the event site at least 90 minutes before the Rally starts. RICPG Members should arrive at least 15 minutes early.

- RICPG Members roles and responsibilities need to be clearly discussed and assigned ahead of time (e.g., greeting attendees, greeting and thanking elected leaders).
 - When elected leaders are expected to be in the room, prepare “cheat sheets”, with photos and something that RICPG members can say.
 - Staff/consultants should have a method (e.g., cell phone numbers) to reach all speakers, performers, etc.
 - Consider scheduling a rehearsal time with speakers/performers/emcees to ensure things run smoothly (i.e., know how to get to the site, equipment works, speeches/performances prepared), so as to reduce the likelihood of “surprises.”
- Event
 - If an event is to run from 6 to 8 p.m., plan to have at least some food available!
 - If an event begins at 6 p.m. in downtown Providence, no one will be there on time – don’t panic, but do plan for this inevitability

Discussion ensued as a result of the recap with suggestions being made to send letters now for next year’s Red Ribbon Rally, that planning for the event should begin this summer, include bits and pieces as they become available to the task forces and committees early through Lorraine, and the mailing list needs to be reviewed for applicability relating to events.

It was also suggested that invitations should be distributed at area NA and AA meetings as a means to increase attendance for events.

Annual Event Update (Clarendon Group)

A status/update and Draft program handouts were distributed to all members for discussion. The annual event invitations were distributed at the meeting with additional invitations available upon request.

There will be a Pasta Station and a Salad Station at the event; therefore RSVP’s are required. A poll of members present was taken with an initial commitment of 60 people to attend the meeting.

There is a need to get photos and quotes of “why belong to the RICPG?” needed from 4 people.

The group offered the names of Becky Chase and Jennifer Minuto as possible entertainers for the event. The group was asked to e-mail any other suggestions to Clarendon Group by 1/18.

Suggestion was made to get the Chairs involved in “Where do we go from here?” portion of the meeting. Paul is to coordinate HIV prevention presentation efforts with Philip (MSM), Midge (Youth), Dee Dee (Women) and Vinnie/Lucille (IDU). All of these individuals are to send a brief summary of major accomplishments, and plans for 2006 of each TF to Paul by 30 January.

Comment cards to give feedback and/or requests to join RICPG are to be distributed at the annual meeting.

Suggestions were made to have give-aways for people who participate, have CPG recognition, and have a raffle for membership requests.

Volunteers were solicited for greeters the night of the annual meeting from the present membership. The official greeters for the meeting will be Vinnie Velasquez, Stephanie Howie and Candy Brown-McSwain. Any others interested that were not there please call Lorraine by 30 January.

Nominations and Unsung Hero Votes

Nomination forms were offered and nominations were made for the 5 individual and 1 legislative Unsung Hero awards. The nominees for individual/institution were as follows, with the areas recommended; General, IDU, MSM Women, Youth, or Institution indicated:

Luz Betancur (General, IDU, MSM)
Suzanne Fernandez (General, IDU, MSM, Women, Youth)
Elizabeth (Betsy) Kretchman (IDU)
Johnston School (Institution, General, Youth)
Martha Powers (General, Women)
Dr. Mickey Lalley (General, Youth)
R. (Bobby) Ducharme (MSM)
Donte Threats (Youth)
Frank Spicola (IDU)

Initially Katherine Thompson and Jenn Steinfeld and Derrill Isom were in the nominee list, but a review of the established criteria for eligibility (Not in Office of HIV/AIDS, Not a consultant, Not in RICPG, Not a past winner), seemed to eliminate them from contention. A vote to reaffirm the criteria and therefore remove them from the list of contenders was held with 10 ayes and 1 abstention. Result: Katherine, Derrill and Jenn could no longer be considered.

Nominations were closed and recommendations/discussions were held for each of the nominees and voted upon in the order of General, Youth, Women, IDU, and MSM.

The winners of the votes were Luz Betancur (General), Donte Threats (Youth), Martha Powers (Women), Elizabeth (Betsy) Kretchman (IDU), R. (Bobby) Ducharme (MSM). This is to be kept confidential until the annual meeting.

Legislative Award Vote

Three legislative members were considered for the legislative Leadership award; Representative Steven Constantino (D-District 8, Providence), Senator Juan Pichardo (D- District 2, Providence), and House Majority Leader Gordon Fox (D- District 4, Providence). An open vote was suggested and accepted with Sen. Juan Pichardo receiving an overwhelming majority.

Networking Break

A motion to skip the networking break was made by Elisa and 2nd by Candy. Motion was passed with a unanimous vote.

Task Force and Committee Reports

Women – Establishing meetings via e-mail.

Youth – Midge was unable to attend and the meeting was rescheduled. Key issues are: working on recruiting strategy for the TF, preparing to do the workbook

MSM – MSM taskforce hasn't met, but have been focusing on issues pertaining to the Men's Health Collaborative and have attended those meetings.

IDU – Looking at IDU working plan and prioritizing and tightening up that documents. Also will be giving recommendations to the CPG ASAP.

Empowerment Committee – Non-RICPG members were asked to leave the room (Daniel Valencia, Paul Medici and Julie Davids departed) as an executive discussion was to be had regarding the CPG nominees for consideration as members. Paul Medici applied for membership to the RICPG and it was pointed out that only 2 members of the Empowerment Committee were available for the interview. The issue discussed was there is a charter requirement for 3 members to recommend a new member. A motion was made to temporarily overrule the charter requirement, and allow for two interviewees, instead of the 3 suggested in the charter by Elisa, 2nd by Candy and so moved by unanimous vote. It was recommended that Paul Medici be accepted as a new RICPG member.

A motion was made to accept Paul Medici as a new RICPG member by Elisa, 2nd by Vinnie and so moved by unanimous vote.

Pat Threats requested to extend her leave of absence for an additional 6 months. A motion was made to allow Pat Threats an additional 6 months leave of absence by Midge, 2nd by Vinnie and so moved by unanimous vote.

Paul Medici was congratulated on his acceptance as a new member.

Strategy Committee – Meeting scheduled for Thursday 1/19/2006 @ 1:30PM at the DOH facility.

Comment from Elisa: She is disappointed that meetings are held during daytime working hours.

REACH Committee – Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 1/17/2006 @ 10:00 AM at the DATA facility.

Community Update

On Saturday, 1/14/2006 Dee Dee Williams is flying out to Switzerland to present WomenCARES at a conference being held there.

Elisa attended the HIV Leadership Institute and reported successful completion. Recommends it to anyone who is able to attend, however it requires substantial time commitment and there is homework.

CDC Conference on Innovative Strategies in Dealing with HIV Issues.

Friday, March 10 is Women and Girls HIV Awareness Day, sponsored by Woventhreads

Vinnie reported that since April 2005 MAPS HIV Outreach programs have tested 403 people.

Old Business (Web site update)

Clarendon Group reported that the Web Site (www.RICPG.org) is now operational and recommends all members view it and submit any comments or recommendations.

New Business (July Capacity Building Event/Retreat)

Paul presented the idea of planning and attending a Capacity Building Retreat for the month of July 2006. It was recommended that an ad hoc committee be formed to plan the retreat agenda and details. Lorraine Kaul, Lucille Minuto, Paul Loberti, Paul Medici, Stephanie Howie Dee Dee Williams, and Vinnie Velasquez (Starting Feb) will comprise the membership of this ad hoc Retreat planning committee. It was suggested that Lorraine coordinate and pull this group together.

Paul Loberti presented an update on the AIDS Omnibus Law currently being drafted by the legislature. The law is at draft 1.9 and requires contemporary name reporting for people who are HIV positive. The ACLU disagrees with this but will not vigorously oppose the change. The change from the current Code reporting to Name reporting is a requirement by the CDC that will impact in negative funding for any states that don't participate in the change. RI cannot afford to lose funding, so it is vital that RICPG be involved. A workgroup will be formed regarding the "new law changes" and all will be invited to attend.

Public Comment

Julie Davids of CHAMPS presented a flyer about the Campaign to End AIDS (C2EA) event on February 11, 2006 from 12 noon to 2 PM @ 198 Carpenter St in Providence. Their efforts are aimed at pressuring the CDC to suspend PEMS. There are 4 major issues: Confidentiality, the Burden to Programs, Low Data Quality and Is it Research?

Review Objectives & Meeting Evaluation

A poll of the group by Dee Dee Williams found that all meeting objectives were met, with small dissention about the completion of planning the Capacity Building Retreat. It was agreed that putting together the ad hoc committee partially fulfilled that objective.

Evaluation and stipend forms were distributed, completed and collected.

Meeting adjourned – 8:10 PM