

Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) & Positive Prevention Connecticut (PPCT) Workgroup Meeting Summary

February 19, 2025

Date:	Wednesday, February 15, 2025	Type:	Virtual, Zoom
Start Time:	10:23 a.m.	End Time:	11:55 p.m.
Leaders	Dante Gennaro (MAC/PPCT Chair), Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos (CT Department of Public Health Resource Liaison)		
Participants:	18	Next Meeting:	March 19, 2025

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dante Gennaro, the joint MAC/PPCT committee chair, and Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos, the CT DPH Resource Liaison, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Gennaro invited participants to introduce themselves, sharing their name, pronouns, and, if applicable, the organization they represent. The co-chair emphasized the importance of a respectful and inclusive meeting environment. He reminded attendees of key guidelines, including:

• Allowing one person to speak at a time	• One person speaks at a time
• Share the floor – treat all with respect	• Ask questions if any terms or acronyms are unclear
• Use ELMO (Everybody, Let's Move On) if you feel a topic has been thoroughly discussed	• Raise a hand (physically or digitally) to signal you would like to speak

Mr. Gennaro then led the group through a brief mindfulness moment by sharing a 1.5-minute video accompanied by calming music. This allowed everyone to pause, center themselves, and clear their minds before continuing with the remaining agenda items.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Approval of Meeting Summaries: Mr. Gennaro asked attendees to take one last moment to review the November 2024 and January 2025 meeting summaries, which have been uploaded to the cthivplanning.org website for review. In the future, all draft meeting summaries will be posted on the CHPC website within a week of each meeting for review to ensure accuracy. The summary from the previous month will then be approved during the current month's meeting. The attendees approved the meeting summaries.

Workplan Overview & Constraints: Mr. Gennaro offered a comprehensive overview of the committee's responsibilities, highlighting how the work plans align with the Integrated Plan. He noted that federal executive orders aimed at eliminating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs and preferencing have restricted our committee's tasks.

Committee Charge & Connection to Integrated Plan

- The **Membership & Awareness Committee (MAC)** leads CHPC member recruitment, selection, orientation, mentoring, and retention activities, and coordinates marketing and public awareness efforts.
- MAC activities relate directly to the Integrated Plan Goal 4: *"Achieve integrated, coordinated efforts that address the HIV epidemic across community partners and interested parties."*
- The **Positive Prevention Connecticut (PPCT)** workgroup creates health communication and strategies for those populations at highest risk of getting HIV in Connecticut
- PPCT activities relate directly to the Integrated Plan Objective 1.1; *"By December 31st 2026, increase awareness of PWH who know their HIV status to 93%."*; Objective 1.2; *"Achieve a 25% decrease in new HIV diagnoses among MSM, Black men and women, and Latino men and women."*; Objective 1.3 *"Expand Treatment as Prevention."*

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Whereas, the committee's original key projects for 2025 included: 1) developing and distributing a routine newsletter, 2) enhancing CHPC recruitment efforts to ensure representative membership, 3) completing and distributing the Prevention Pack anti-stigma campaign, and 4) launching a pro-condom campaign development competition for funded sites.

However, due to executive orders that impact DEI-related initiatives and gender identity, we must pause certain activities, including the Prevention Pack (for its feature of trans characters) and the pro-condom campaign competition.

Danielle Warren-Dias questioned what increasing condom use has to do with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). She highlighted the need for a broad messaging approach rather than a targeted one to ensure no group is missed, and she questioned why we would need to pause this effort.

Dante Gennaro mentioned that people in the federal administration think distributing condoms promotes sex, which makes discussions or campaigns like this one about sexual health difficult because our funding should stick to the federal guidelines. He added that the regulations are now even stricter than before.

Ms. Warren-Dias then suggested that pausing the pro-condom campaign might be too early. She also noted that some people are rushing to make changes without clear instructions. She expressed concern that stopping these efforts too soon could cause issues and confusion, because others are still moving like they usually would until they receive guidance. She added that instead of using the DEI trigger words for this effort and future efforts, they could and should talk about geographical health disparities or differences affecting health.

Mr. Gennaro, Director of New England Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Education & Training Center, explained that he was advised that his agency should be proactive. Adjusting their projects so they are not seen as threats to the administration's goals and to avoid putting their funding at risk in the future.

Ms. Warren-Dias suggested presenting our projects to the executive committee to gain more guidance and clarity on whether and how the committee should proceed with them.

Public Awareness and Community Engagement (PACE) Committee Discussion: Dante Gennaro explained that, at the Executive Committee's suggestion, this committee is considering merging MAC and PPCT into a new committee—the Public Awareness and Community Engagement Committee (PACE). The goal is to streamline efforts, improve collaboration, and enhance the impact of our public outreach.

The proposed committee charge would include parts of both the MAC and PPCT charges:

- Strengthening CHPC membership through recruitment and support
- Leading marketing and public awareness efforts
- Developing health communication strategies for at-risk communities

Mr. Gennaro asked for comments, questions, or concerns. Several attendees said they liked the idea, noting that it is excellent as long as it doesn't cut down committee responsibilities.

- Mr. Gennaro asked if they accepted the proposal to merge MAC and PPCT into the PACE Committee. Danielle Warren-Dias motioned to accept the proposal, Charles Hardy seconded, and the remaining attendees agreed by saying aye. There weren't any oppositions or abstentions.

Co-Chair Vacancy & Recruitment Strategy: Mr. Gennaro reminded folks that Marcelin Joseph has stepped down as PPCT chair due to his professional obligations. Additionally, Mr. Gennaro, who served as MAC chair, will step down to work on CHPC projects that better align with his agency's workforce development goals, leaving the new PACE Committee without a chair.

Mr. Gennaro mentioned he has a few individuals in mind to take on the chair role, whom he will contact directly. However, the committee is seeking aspiring leaders to guide this newly established committee. It encourages those

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interested in developing leadership and facilitation skills to apply. It is important to note that to apply for a committee chair position, you must be a voting member of the CHPC.

He said he would send personalized messages to inform the folks he identified about the vacancy and motivate them to apply for the committee. Additionally, he will provide standardized communication to those who aren't present but are voting members, alerting them to the PACE Committee Chair Vacancy. Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos suggested reviewing the membership list to confirm active members before proceeding. Dante concurred with this strategy.

MEMBERSHIP AND AWARENESS COMMITTEE (MAC)

Newsletter Update: The committee reviewed the progress on the newsletter, which includes the following components:

- **Integrated Plan Aligned Articles:** The identified articles will see authors continuing or starting work, to complete them by the March 19th meeting.
 - Living with HIV: Personal Stories – Reggie Knox & Ken Plourd
 - Stigma Reduction: Words Matter – Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos
 - Prevention Methods & Scientific Advancements – Dante Gennaro & Subject Matter Expert
 - The Link Between HIV and Other STIs – Dante Gennaro & Subject Matter Expert
- **Interactive Activity:** The initial ideas created for this section are detailed in the first bullet, while the ideas contributed by attendees are presented in the sub-bullet.
 - Q&As, Polls, Games
 - Wordle, Sudoku, Crossword Puzzle, Mad-Lip
- **Events and Conferences:** The following list of events was shared with the committee, and attendees were asked for additional events to include:
 - International AIDS Society Conference
 - HIV Treatment & Prevention Adherence: Continuum 2025
 - National Latinx Conference on HIV/HCV/SUD

Mr. Gennaro summarized the next steps as follows: finalize contributions (articles, interactive activities, and a list of events and conferences), define layout and design (the sequence of the newsletter's parts and layout per newsletter page), and coordinate digital distribution (identify the best way to distribute the newsletter to community members and providers).

Recruitment Toolkit Discussion: The committee discussed how the CHPC's membership, attendance, and engagement have fluctuated recently, and how to engage more people and encourage them to join this and other CHPC groups. Mr. Gennaro presented a new approach/effort to engage more people that involved:

- Direct outreach to planning councils, DPH Prevention funded sites, and community stakeholders to expand committee representation.
- Distribute a recruitment toolkit (appendix A) for funded sites to post recruitment materials on their social media and, when appropriate, in their lobbies. The toolkit would focus on:
 - Highlighting CHPCs Impact
 - Recommending funded sites schedule outreach posts and in-person promotion (paper materials in lobbies) for the third Wednesdays of the month, also known as "CHPC Wednesdays," because the primary CHPC meetings happen on the third Wednesday of the month.

Mr. Gennaro asked "What do you think about this recruitment effort?"

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- Danielle Warren-Dias mentioned that, as a Greater Hartford Ryan White Part A Planning Council member, she was aware that council members intended to apply for CHPC membership. They are interested in joining to increase their influence in shaping the CT Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan, to ensure their perspectives are considered and heard.
- Committee members recommended distributing recruitment materials through the following:
 - Community colleges, particularly those with community health worker programs, should attract folks who may already be interested in this type of work and are probably required to complete volunteer public health hours.
 - In addition to the PACE newsletter, other publications, newsletters, and listservs
 - Medical Case Managers
 - Infectious Disease Counselors
- Ms. Warren-Dias raised the concern that clinical settings have become paperless environments since COVID-19, so the sites may not use physical or paper materials. Suggesting that the toolkit should instead include a promotional video that sites could display on repeat in their lobbies, and/or a recruitment sheet with a bar code to be displayed in a plastic sign holder.

Committee Promotional Video Initiative Discussion: The committee discussed creating promotional videos for each CHPC committee. The videos would feature committee members answering key questions about their subcommittee and encourage community participation. The following guidelines were suggested to ensure the videos were accessible and appropriate for different contexts (social media, websites, and stakeholder meetings).

- Video Lengths:
 - 30 seconds – 1 minute for social media
 - 4-5 minutes for websites and stakeholder meetings
- Accessibility Considerations:
 - Approachable Language
 - English and Spanish
- Key Questions – The committee was invited to react to the following questions, with the options being: yes, this is a strong question; it's okay, but could be improved; no, I don't think this question adds value; or other (please share in the chat). The committee also proposed some alternative questions in more accessible language.

Key Question	Reaction / Feedback (N=5)	Accessible Alternatives
What is the mission or charge of this subcommittee?	5 of 5 – strong question	
What role do members play?	4 of 5 – strong question 1 of 5 – okay, but could be improved	
What initiatives have had the most impact?	3 of 5 – strong question 2 of 5 – okay, but could be improved	What does the subcommittee you belong to do?
How can new members contribute?	4 of 5 – strong question 1 of 5 – other (please share in chat)	What would be your impact in the community if you joined?
Why should someone join?	4 of 5 – strong question 1 of 5 – other (please share in chat)	Why is it important to have new members? Why should we get new members at the table?

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As previously discussed, we are temporarily pausing campaign work due to executive constraints and funding limitations. While this is not ideal, we must comply with funding regulations while maintaining momentum in our community engagement efforts. **For more information, see the work plan overview and executive constraints section.**

OTHER BUSINESS, NEXT STEPS, AND MEETING FEEDBACK

Next Steps:

- Finalizing PACE Committee Structure
- Showing PACE Campaign Projects to the Executive Committee to decide on the best way forward
- Moving forward with co-chair recruitment outreach
- Completing the newsletter
- Adjusting the recruitment toolkit and developing an outreach plan
- Finalizing committee promotional video plans and presenting key questions to the executive committee

ATTENDANCE

Attendance records are kept on file with the CHPC support staff.

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The committee meeting ended at 11:55 a.m.

APPENDIX A

CONNECTICUT HIV PLANNING CONSORTIUM (CHPC) RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT USE GUIDE

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Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support **DPH-funded sites** in promoting the **Connecticut HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** by incorporating recruitment materials into **physical office spaces and social media outreach**. The goal is to increase community participation and awareness of CHPC's work, ensuring diverse voices help shape HIV/AIDS prevention and care strategies in Connecticut.

About the CHPC

The CHPC conducts **planning work** to help the **Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH)** and its partners make meaningful decisions about the **delivery of HIV/AIDS prevention and care services**. The CHPC also fosters **networking, leadership development, professional growth, and HIV/AIDS awareness**.

As part of its work, the CHPC gathers information on **HIV, STIs, Hepatitis, Substance Use Disorders (SUD), homelessness, and mental health** to develop essential planning documents, such as:




- **Epidemiological Profiles**
- **Statewide HIV/AIDS/Syndemic Needs & Resource Assessment**
- **Statewide HIV/AIDS/Syndemic Prevention & Care Plan**
- **Statewide Coordinated Statement of Need (SCSN)**

How to Use the Toolkit

1. Physical Promotion at DPH-Funded Sites









- Print and display the **postcards (at the end of this document)** in **waiting rooms, lobbies, and offices** where clients and staff will see them.
- Ensure front desk staff and outreach teams are aware of CHPC's mission and can **encourage participation**.
- Consider including **CHPC recruitment tool in intake materials** or community resource packets.

2. Social Media Integration

- Post the **social media graphics (at the end of this document)** to your organization's **Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn**.
- Use **#CHPCWednesday** to synchronize with other DPH-funded sites and create a **coordinated recruitment push**. Posting on the third Wednesday of the month for a coordinated approach.
- Suggested caption templates:
 - **"Your voice matters!** Join the **CT HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** and help shape HIV prevention and care in our state. Meetings happen every **third Wednesday of the month**—your perspective is essential! Learn more at CTHIVPlanning.org #CHPCWednesday #HIVPrevention #PublicHealth"
 -  **It's CHPC Wednesday!** 
The **CT HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** brings together voices from across Connecticut to shape the future of HIV prevention and care. If you're passionate about equity, public health, and making a difference in your community, CHPC needs you! 💡
Join us every **third Wednesday of the month** and be part of the conversation. Your voice matters!
 **Learn more & get involved today!**
#CHPCWednesday #HIVPrevention #PublicHealth #CommunityVoices #EndHIV #CTHealth #HIVEquity

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-  **Stronger Together!** 
HIV prevention and care impact all of us. That's why the **CT HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** is calling on **you**—community members, advocates, and providers—to help shape Connecticut's response.
 **We meet every third Wednesday of the month.** Join us to share your experiences, learn from others, and make an impact.
 **Your voice can create change. Will you be part of it?**
#CHPCWednesday #TogetherWeCan #EndHIV #CTCommunity #HIVAwareness #PublicHealthMatters
-  **Let's Talk About It!** 
Want to be part of a community shaping real change in **HIV prevention and care**? The **CT HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** is where your voice matters.
 **We need diverse perspectives, bold ideas, and passionate advocates.** Join us on **CHPC Wednesday (every third Wednesday of the month)** to help shape Connecticut's HIV strategy.
 Ready to step up? **Get involved today!**
#CHPCWednesday #HIVAction #JoinTheConversation #PublicHealth #HIVPrevention #CTHealth

3. Dissemination & Availability

- The materials will be available for **download on the PPCT and CHPC websites.**
- Consider integrating CHPC promotion into **newsletters, email updates, and community announcements.**

Contact Information

For questions, additional materials, or more information, visit CTHIVPlanning.org or contact CT DPH/CHPC representatives.

Thank you for helping to strengthen CHPC's reach and impact!

Social Media Post



YOUR VOICE MATTERS:
JOIN THE CONNECTICUT HIV PLANNING CONSORTIUM (CHPC)

The CHPC meets on the third Wednesday of most months, gathering individuals from across our state to provide an opportunity for people to:

-  Influence HIV Care and Prevention in Connecticut
-  Be part of a diverse, supportive community
-  Make a difference for those affected by HIV

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CHPC VISIT CTHIVPLANNING.ORG, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW, OR VISIT THE LINK IN THE CAPTION





Print Post Card Front

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