

## Public Awareness & Community Engagement (PACE) Committee Meeting Summary

April 15, 2026

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, April 15, 2026	<b>Type:</b>	In-Person (Chryslais)
<b>Start Time:</b>	1:25 p.m.	<b>End Time:</b>	2:30 p.m.
<b>Leaders</b>	Angel H. Ruiz & Reggie Knox (Co-Chairs), Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos (CT Department of Public Health Resource Liaison)		
<b>Participants:</b>	16	<b>Next Meeting:</b>	May 20, 2026 (In-Person)

### MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Administrative updates and March meeting summary approval
- 2026 PACE Work Plan: monthly progress check-in (standing item)
- Statewide social media campaign concept, 60-day pilot plan, and connection to PACE campaign deliverables
- June newsletter: content update and contributor coordination
- Youth Subcommittee: status update and recruitment
- Announcements

### WELCOME

The meeting opened at 1:25 PM in Room A at the Chrysalis Center in Hartford. **Angel Ruiz** (co-chair) welcomed attendees and invited each person to share their name, organization, and something that made them smile that week.

- **Angel Ruiz** (PACE Co-Chair, UCHC) – playing volleyball with his kids
- **Blaise Gilchrist** (CHPC Co-Chair, UCHC) – the discussion during the members’ lunch and the support offered to a newer member (and shared a joke: “Why did the one-legged man go to the ATM? To check his balance.”)
- **Danielle Warren-Dias** (UCHC) – prayer this morning, and cracking up with a new provider while sharing her care journey
- **Lauren Beaudry** (Case Manager, HRA New Britain) – a loved one now in remission from cancer
- **Linette Torres** (Medical Case Manager, ACT (Ryan White Part B)) – going shopping
- **Ruby Rios** (ACT) – the weather
- **Tom Alfano** (Case Manager, ACT) – taking his kids to the movies on Sunday
- **Charles Hardy** (Community Member, Middletown) – starting to look at dogs (possibly adopting one)
- **Mena Sgambato-Prokop** (Case Manager, Yale (Prevention Counselor)) – warmer weather
- **Chloe Johnson** (Yale) – nicer weather
- **Carlos (Jean Carlos) Negrón** (CRT) – The weather
- **David Martinez** (Prevention Outreach, CRT) – the weather beautiful (windows open at home)
- **Carl Ferris** (Community Member, New Haven) – the first day outside without a jacket
- **Clifford Batson** (Community Member, Hartford; Peer Mentor with the Ryan White Planning Council) – walking into a room like this and being among “brothers and sisters” – “I always consider you all as my additional family”
- **Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos** (CT DPH Liaison) – her daughter
- **David Reyes** (Cross Sector Consulting (PACE Support Staff)) – a well-timed survivor reference from his brother

Blaise returned to close out the round with a second joke (If you’re American before you go into the bathroom and American when you come out, what are you while you’re in the bathroom? You’re-a-peein”), cementing the warmer tone for the rest of the meeting.

### ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

#### March Meeting Summary

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**Jenny** clarified that the March summary had been posted online but had not been distributed by email in advance of the meeting. Going forward, the summary will be emailed to members one week before the next meeting so members can review, comment on, and formally approve it. Without email distribution, the March summary was not put to a vote this meeting.

### Upcoming Events and Important Dates

**Jenny** shared the following:

- **Prevention Power Hour** – Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 10 AM to 12 PM, via Microsoft Teams. The session is a refresher and introductory training on Evaluation Wev and EDUCT. Registration link to be circulated; members can join for only a portion of the session if necessary.
- **Integrated Plan – Public-Facing Version** – The NAP Committee is leading a SurveyMonkey community feedback survey. A banner at the top of the CHPC website ([cthivplanning.org](http://cthivplanning.org)) links to the downloadable plan and the survey. Angel noted the plan is dense reading and encouraged members to go straight to the survey and reflect on today's discussion there if they prefer.

**Jenny** will send a consolidated follow-up email including the Power Hour registration, the SurveyMonkey link, the March meeting summary, and the Youth Subcommittee recruitment flyer.

### Committee Charge Overview

**Angel** briefly re-grounded the group in PACE's two charges: (1) bring people into the CHPC and keep them engaged, and (2) coordinate statewide campaigns and materials that reach people living with and affected by HIV. He emphasized that every PACE activity connects back to the Integrated Plan and to what community members told the committee in the 2025 Ryan White Needs Assessment.

### 2026 PACE WORK PLAN: MONTHLY CHECK-IN

**Angel** moved the Work Plan to a standing, high-level check-in at the top of the meeting, as members agreed in March. Printed copies were distributed. Highlights of progress across the six Key Activities.

- **KA1 – General Committee Management:** on track, Minutes, sign-in sheets, and end-of-meeting feedback polls continue each month.
- **KA2 – Newsletter Production:** February issue completed in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. The KKAJJune issue content pipeline is active; David has a running list of contributors.
- **KA3 – Statewide Campaigns:** three campaigns are required in 2026. This is the main focus of today's discussion (below).
- **KA4 – Community Engagement:** the social media resource folder is active and still needs more member submissions. Agencies are invited to upload campaigns they have created for cross-state amplification.
- **KA5 – Youth Subcommittee:** Jordan, Blaise, and David are coordinating behind the scenes; the first youth meeting is being planned.

No additions were raised when Angel asked whether anything was missing or off-track.

### STATEWIDE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN CONCEPT

**Angel** framed the centerpiece discussion: PACE is the root of coordinated public awareness messaging across Connecticut. Today, many agencies produce strong HIV content in isolation – nobody is saying the same thing on the same day. The proposal is to pilot a coordinated statewide voice for roughly 60 days, so the committee can learn what works before scaling. Ground rules: this is a discussion, not a presentation; any member can stop the conversation at any time.

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### The Case for Coordinated Messaging

The campaign concept ties back directly to what community members told PACE in the 2025 Ryan White Needs Assessment. Members reviewed several of the starkest data points:

- nearly 1 in 4 do not know about PEP,
- 1 in 5 have never heard of injectable HIV medications, and
- 1 in 3 do not know about syringe services.

These awareness gaps are the problem; a unified statewide message is the proposed remedy. A coordinated effort also enables measurement for the first time: PACE can monitor downloads of website and social media resources, as well as clicks, shares, and geographic reach by tracking a unique hashtag.

### Cadence/Rhythm Discussion

The initial pitch was two coordinated posts per month. Several members pushed back.

- **Danielle** raised the concept of saturating the community with similar messaging. Whereas, two posts a month risks overwhelming audiences with many different messages and asks too much of partner agencies, who may also be expected to print and distribute flyers.
- **Lauren** agreed from the recipient's perspective – audiences may tune out if they feel bombarded.
- The group converged on **one substantial post per month**, reposted two or three times within that month, with each topic held for roughly four weeks. The anchor dates or distribution dates would be the Tuesday before the CHPC meeting and the Tuesday before the month-end, so the committee and its partners have a predictable rhythm.

Members also favored a carousel (slide-over) format for posts: one hook image with four or five fact slides behind it. That gives audiences a reason to keep scrolling, and it gives agencies more material to recycle. Agencies can repost individual slides as standalone content between the full-carousel pushes.

### Format and Languages

Each monthly campaign topic will be produced in three parallel formats so every partner can use what fits their reach:

- A static carousel for Instagram and similar feeds,
- A small flyer (postcard-size) for print outreach and waiting rooms, and
- A short-form video for Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts.

Each post will be translated into English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole; the video will carry subtitles in all three languages. Emily Thompson, the CHPC communications lead, is available to help with production.

### Hashtag Strategy

To make the campaign reach measurable, the committee agreed that the hashtag had to be specific enough to isolate PACE content from general Connecticut HIV traffic.

- **Lauren** noted that specialized hashtag generators can create and verify unique tags and measure reach to a target population. She offered to bring back options.
- **Linnette** proposed **#ThisIs4U** as the anchor tag (prevention is for everybody; the "U" individualizes the message). She also suggested layering in **#U** and **#U=U** where appropriate. The group asked the tag to be verified for uniqueness on the generator before it gets locked in.
- Multiple tags can be used on each post (**#HIV**, **#CHPC**, general tags) alongside the PACE-specific tag to widen reach without losing attribution.

### Spring, Summer, and Fall Focus Areas

Members aligned on three campaign themes for the year, each tied to Needs Assessment findings and to national awareness moments:

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- **Spring: PrEP Awareness and Routine HIV Testing.** Angel emphasized that community members consistently report not knowing where to get tested or that PrEP is for everyone, not just men. The spring push will ride the wave of **National HIV Testing Day on June 27, 2026**. Given the timing, the committee agreed to move quickly on spring materials; they need not be perfect, but they need to be out the door in time.
- **Summer: Syndemic Awareness** (HIV + HCV + STD + SUD + SDOH), building on sexual-health messaging heading into the fall.
- **Fall: Sexual Health and World AIDS Day** messaging.

### Partner Tie-Ins and Existing Campaigns

Several members surfaced existing work that the statewide push can plug into rather than duplicate:

- **Walgreens / National HIV Testing Day:** Walgreens runs a national testing campaign annually. The Park Street location has closed, but members have a working relationship with the Albany Avenue store manager, with a handoff to the regional manager in progress. A coordinated outreach blitz (CRT, Connecticut's Children's, Ryan White Part C: Early Intervention Services, Prevention Case Management) around Walgreens' locations could drive people to testing on June 27.
- **CRT "Know Your Status" Campaign:** CRT outreach staff send daily messages to Grindr users offering testing, PrEP, condoms, and home test kits, and run monthly on-site testing at The Shade and other LGBTQ+ venues. This is an existing infrastructure that PACE messaging can piggyback on.
- **CRT "Art In The Park":** summer park visits across Hartford with HIV testing, food, housing connections, and wellness referrals – a strong fit/distribution venue for the Spring and Summer campaigns.
- **Barbershop Outreach:** a prior Latino Community Services model at the barbershop across from South Park paired HIV testing with free haircuts. Worth revisiting as a partner touchpoint or potential outreach approach to recommend.
- **Statewide Locator Map:** Clifford proposed a CT-wide map layering condom distribution sites, SSP (syringe services) locations, PrEP access points, and testing sites. Jenny noted DPH already tracks several of these categories and that PACE could help surface and disseminate the information. Action: follow up with Clifford and DPH on what already exists and how PACE can contribute.

### Cross-Agency Sharing

**Jenny** made a clear call to members: if your agency is running an HIV testing or outreach campaign, please send it to PACE so the committee can amplify it through CHPC channels, DPH, and the social media resource folder. PACE wants to function as the state's amplifier – agencies keep the credit, and the community gets the message more times and through more voices.

### JUNE NEWSLETTER: CONTENT UPDATE

#### Confirmed Contributors

- **Chloe Johnson** (Yale HIV and Aging Project) confirmed a feature on the project's collaborative care model. The project trains primary care providers to screen HIV patients aged 50+ for geriatric conditions using the **4S screening tool** (covering polypharmacy, falls, cognition, and the broader geriatric assessment). The team has built a note template in EPIC that clinics can adopt, a provider education module, patient-facing educational materials, and a project website. The contribution ties the newsletter directly to the aging population living with HIV – a growing cohort in Connecticut.
- **Jordan Wynn** – poetry contribution from his college work.

#### Content Ideas Carried Forward from March

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- **Historical HIV Perspective** – Chrissy’s 1988-1989 “Out church has AIDS” pin and a timeline of the epidemic remain on the list, though the group flagged that a historical arc has been produced before and should be kept fresh or concise.
- **StoryCorps-Style Paired Interviews** – two-person conversations about testing, food security, or a personal experience, held to roughly **3-5 minutes** so audiences will actually listen through.

### New Ideas from April

- **Accessibility and ADA Alignment** – Clifford raised the need to build in options for readers with vision or hearing differences (for example, audio versions of articles or interviews, and consideration of Braille or captioning). David will explore with Emily how to layer audio and accessible formats onto future newsletters.
- **Food Pantry POV Video (“Day in the Life”)** – Lauren offered a story about her pantry, which runs like a real grocery store (name-brand items, diaper distribution, pet food). Linette Torres suggested filming in first-person point of view using Meta camera-glasses: viewers experience the visit through the shopper’s eyes without seeing the shopper’s face. The goal is to strip stigma off food-pantry use – especially for college students, working people, and anyone who assumes pantries are “not for them.”
- **Real-Time Reader Engagement** – Carlos proposed a channel for readers to respond to specific topics. The group discussed reposting each newsletter as a blog on the website with comment threads, and keeping the existing “tell me your story” email link visible in future newsletters.

### YOUTH SUBCOMMITTEE

Blaise Gilchrist and Jordan Wynn continue to lead Youth Subcommittee planning. Two youth members have already been identified, and a recruitment flyer is ready to share. The committee asked all members to refer anyone between **17 and 24** years old; Jenny will include the flyer in the follow-up email so members can forward it or pass along contact information for outreach.

### OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were asked to complete the meeting feedback poll before leaving

The consolidated follow-up email from Jenny will have the March summary link, Prevention Power Hour registration, Integrated Plan SurveyMonkey link, Youth Subcommittee flyer, and a reminder to submit materials to the social media resource folder.

### ATTENDANCE

Angel Ruiz, Blaise Gilchrist, Carl Ferris, Charles Hardy, Chloe Johnson, Clifford Batson, Danielle Warren-Dias, David Martinez, David Reyes, Jean Carlos Negron, Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos, Lauren Beaudry, Linette Torres, Mena Sgambato-Prokop, Ruby Rios, Tom Alfano.

### MEETING FEEDBACK

Summary Table from Interactive Meeting Feedback Poll (n=9)				
Questions	Yes (A)	No (B)	Unsure (C)	(D)

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1	CHPC Member?	27%	73%	*	*
2	I understood the meeting information and materials	100%	0%	*	*
3	The meeting felt inclusive and respectful of all voices	100%	*	*	*
4	I would give this committee meeting a grade of...	100%	*	*	*
5	One thing I liked about the meeting was: the pacing and engagement with the group and campaign work; the open discussion; inclusion and team participation; the activity; input of all committee voices, members, and staff; the different discussions; participation; feeling comfortable sharing; the engagement of the committee members.				
6	One suggestion to IMPROVE the committee meeting is: no need for improvements; cut the side chatter down; provide sticky notes for questions people may not want to speak aloud for time purposes; more email communication; great job; nothing (multiple response).				

DRAFT