

Public Awareness & Community Engagement (PACE) Committee Meeting Summary

May 20, 2026

Date:	Wednesday, May 20, 2026	Type:	In-Person (Chrysalis)
Start Time:	1:20 p.m.	End Time:	2:30 p.m.
Leaders	Angel H. Ruiz & Reggie Knox (Co-Chairs), Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos (CT Department of Public Health Resource Liaison)		
Participants:	19	Next Meeting:	June 17, 2026 (In-Person)

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Administrative updates and March and April meeting summary approvals
- 2026 PACE Work Plan: monthly progress check-in (standing item)
- Recruitment and partner outreach: previously incarcerated populations and a SNAP/Medicaid volunteerism letter
- June newsletter: content update and contributor coordination
- Statewide PrEP and Routine Testing social media campaign: launch plan
- Youth Subcommittee: orientation date and recruitment
- Announcements

WELCOME

The meeting opened at 1:20 PM at the Chrysalis Center in Hartford. **Angel Ruiz** (co-chair) welcomed returning members and several new members, then invited each person to introduce themselves with their name, organization, and *something good that happened this week*.

- **Angel Ruiz** (PACE Co-Chair, UCHC) – waking up sober
- **Danielle Warren-Dias** (UCHC) – laughing off a chandelier she couldn't get assembled, after realizing she was upset over something minor
- **Blaise Gilchrist** (CHPC Co-Chair, UCHC) – being called “unc” at 36, formerly “big bro”
- **Natasha Cruz** (ACT) – moving on Friday (dreading the heat)
- **Linette Torres** (Medical Case Manager, ACT (Ryan White Part B)) – coping with the heat better than usual
- **Nina Mauaride** (CT Department of Correction) – the public learning about DOC's relatively strong health services program, and an upcoming vacation with her grandkids
- **Tom Alfano** (Case Manager, ACT) – he and his girlfriend getting a house
- **Chloe Johnson** (Yale) – last work week before vacation
- **Charles Hardy** (Community Member, Middletown) – this meeting being the highlight of his week
- **Carl Ferris** (Community Member, New Haven) – going to New York City
- **Monique Davis** (Health Services Outreach Coordinator) – her rescue dog's upcoming birthday
- **Jordan Wynn** (PACE Youth Lead) – a solo trip across Puerto Rico, and his upcoming birthday on May 22
- **Jean Carlos Negrón (Carlos)** (CRT) – prioritizing himself this month
- **David Martinez** (Prevention Outreach Specialist, CRT) – his birthday Saturday, and his husband's not-so-secret surprise planning
- **Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos** (CT DPH Liaison) – planning her garden and welcoming the new season (despite the squirrels)
- **Reggie Knox** (PACE Co-Chair) – being well, thank God
- **David Reyes** (Cross Sector Consulting (PACE Support Staff)) – a lunch date that turned into warm, affirming texts the next day

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Clifford Batson (Community Member, Hartford; Peer Mentor with the Ryan White Planning Council) joined later as the NAP Committee liaison.

An attempted Mindful Minute music track ran into laptop-audio trouble; the group laughed it off and kept moving.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

March and April Meeting Summary Approvals

Jenny confirmed that both the March and April summaries had been distributed via email roughly a week in advance, with website instructions for accessing files (a direct response to member feedback in earlier meetings about wanting more time to review materials). **Blaise** moved to approve both summaries; **Jordan** seconded. Both were approved with one abstention.

Prevention Power Hour Recap

Jenny thanked attendees of the May 20 Prevention Power Hour and noted the recording is available for anyone who could not attend, along with written instructions for accessing for uploading information to Evaluation Web / EDUCT. **Luis Diaz** led the training and remains available for follow-up. She flagged an upcoming platform transition: Evaluation Web will move to a new combined reporting system tied to CDC's Loop platform. Once that transition is in place, a fresh tutorial will be circulated so members can re-orient.

Upcoming Events

- **National HIV Testing Day** – Saturday, June 27, 2026. Members with campaigns or outreach events tied to the day are asked to let PACE know so the committee can amplify communications.
- **HIV Symposium** – Tuesday, June 23, 2026, 8 AM to 3:30 PM. Flyers are posted outside the meeting room.
- **Statewide Syndemic Summit** – October 2026 (exact date to be confirmed). Focus areas include STI, linkage, leasing/housing, and PACE's community-engagement role.
- **Crimson Table Talks** – fourth Thursday of every month, hosted by the DPH. Details will be shared by email as they are confirmed.

2026 PACE WORK PLAN: MONTHLY CHECK-IN

Angel walked the committee quickly through the six Key Activities, keeping the check-in high-level. New members were re-grounded in the PACE charge: recruit, retain, and mobilize the community for the planning consortium; coordinate marketing initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and health-communication strategies; and connect every activity back to the Integrated Care Plan and to the voice of people living with and at the highest risk of HIV in Connecticut.

- **KA1 – General Committee Management:** on track. March and April minutes were approved this month. Pre-meeting distribution of materials a full week ahead is now the standing practice.
- **KA2 – Newsletter Production:** June issue actively in development – the focus of today's newsletter discussion (below).
- **KA3 – Statewide Campaigns:** the PrEP and Routine Testing carousel campaign – a direct response to Needs Assessment findings – was delivered by consultant Emily Thompson and is ready to launch May 26.
- **KA4 – Community Engagement:** the social media resource folder is live; members are asked to actively contribute campaigns and materials.
- **KA5 – Youth Subcommittee:** recruitment, outreach, and agenda materials are in Blaise and Jordan's hands; orientation date to be set today.

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- **KA6 – Integrated Plan:** on track for submission in June. PACE’s role is to disseminate survey results and updates back to the community via the newsletter, surveys, and meeting.

Angel noted that the buddy system being adopted by the broader CHPC for a new-member onboarding originated from this committee – a quiet but real example of PACE work landing.

STATEWIDE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN CONCEPT

Two recruitment threads ran through the work-plan discussion and warranted their own attention.

Reaching Recently Incarcerated Community Members

Carl Ferris raised the idea of pulling in members who have recently been released from incarceration, given how directly their experience speaks to the work. **Nina Mauaride** (DOC) confirmed that updated PACE recruitment materials and CHPC flyers could be placed in the Correctional Institution’s health-services area and routed through the DOC social workers – they cannot release inmate information outward, but they can absolutely bring information inward. **Blaise** noted that a **colleague** works for the CLC program (transitioning and linkage to care) and is already connecting recently released individuals to community services – a strong handoff point. **David** will send updated recruitment materials to Blaise and Nina.

Letter of Volunteerism for SNAP and Medicaid Work Recruitments

Danielle Warren-Dias proposed developing a PACE letter of volunteerism that members and community participants could submit to DSS to satisfy the SNAP work requirement – and, beginning in January, the parallel Medicaid work requirement. The rules are causing real disruption in her office:

- Roughly 384,000 people in Connecticut are at risk of losing SNAP, under the new rule; an early cohort of 84,000 was already cut off.
- The requirement is 80 hours per month (20 hours per week) of work, school, or documented volunteerism – a point many people are confused about.
- Connecticut residents over 65 can enroll in state university classes (including Yale courses) tuition-free, another pathway worth highlighting.
- Parents of children under 14 should be waived, but many are being kicked off anyway and forced to prove eligibility after the fact.

The committee endorsed pursuing the letter as a dual-purpose tool: it would help keep community members in care and would function as a recruitment mechanism for PACE and other CHPC committees. The plan is to surface the idea at the Executive Committee for hammering out, write a plain-language policy explainer into the newsletter, and reference the recent statewide webinar (which was recorded) for accurate eligibility details. **David** offered to draft an explainer with Danielle once eligibility specifics are confirmed.

JUNE NEWSLETTER: CONTENT UPDATE

Angel noted the June production window is short, so the committee worked to lock in confirmed pieces and a small bench of additions.

Confirmed Contributors

- **Monique Davis** – sexual health perspective piece, already submitted to Jenny.
- **Jordan Wynn** – a poem from his college work, will be finalized shortly.
- **Charles Hardy** – a flyer for the newly formed Community Advisory Board at Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC). Work in progress; will be included for June if finalized in time, otherwise rolled to the fall issue.

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- **Clifford Batson (NAP Committee Liaison)** – a short summary of NAP’s current work, due by June 2. Aligning PACE and NAP this way builds on the collaboration Clifford helped develop between the committees.
- **Arthur Harris** – agreed to contribute a piece, filling the personal-perspective slot that Lauren’s food-security story has vacated. The form is still open; Arthur will work with David and the PACE team to decide between writing his own story or responding to prompt questions.

Lauren Beaudry’s food-security first-person piece (filmed POV through Meta camera-glasses, originally discussed in April) is shifting to the fall issue – the topic remains important, but the timing is not right for her now.

New Content for June

- **PrEP medication chart** – a small, visual reference of the available options (oral daily, injectable every two months, twice-yearly injectable) with a short prompt directing readers to local access points. Ties directly to the launch campaign and to community feedback that many people still believe PrEP is only for men who have sex with men.
- **PACE highlights** – a feature on the PrEP and Routine Testing campaign launch (May 26), the social media resource folder, and the Youth Subcommittee – so PACE’s own work is visible in the issue we produce.
- **SNAP and Medicaid policy explainer** – plain-language update on the changing work requirement, eligibility, and waivers (per the volunteerism-letter discussion above).
- **Community photos** – members are invited to drop summer photos from across the state into a shared folder. Include people only with photo releases; also welcome are murals, graffiti, neighborhood scenes, the Chrysalis Center itself, and gardens. Photo submission deadline: June 2.
- **A puzzle, color-by-number, or word search/crossword built around Integrated Care Plan vocabulary, with answers seeded inside the newsletter** – a quiet way to pull readers deeper into the content.
- **QR code linking to the Prevention Power Hour recording.**

Cross-Committee Article Series

Clifford Batson floated the idea of inviting each CHPC committee to contribute a feature article highlighting their own work – a way to build collaboration across committees and give new members an at-a-glance way to understand what each committee does. The group landed on building a small archive (a “bank”) of submissions rather than scrambling each cycle: PACE will blast the invitations to other committees through Executive, give them time, and pull from the back in future issues.

Translation and Accessibility

Newsletter content will continue to be translated into English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. The committee discussed using ChatGPT as a translation aid (with explicit prompting to render terms at fifth- or sixth-grade reading level and to handle medical terminology around HIV correctly), while keeping the existing third-party Creole translator in the loop, given how reliably she delivered in February. Accessibility for readers with vision or hearing differences (raised by Clifford in April) remains an ongoing thread.

STATEWIDE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN: LAUNCH – [SEE MATERIALS IN THE APPENDIX](#)

The PrEP and Routine Testing carousel campaign – designed by Emily Thompson to PACE’s spec after the April discussion and built directly off the Needs Assessment data points – was reviewed in detail. Materials live in Canva and will be uploaded to the social media resource folder so any partner agency can pull them down, tweak their own logo, and post.

Format

- **Instagram-style carousel:** one hook image followed by fact slides that audiences can swipe through.
- **Customizable:** agencies can add their logo, location, and event details before posting.

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- **Downloadable from the social media resource folder**, which doubles as a quiet driver to the resource-folder

Rollout Cadence

- **First push:** Tuesday, May 26 (after memorial day weekend) through June 2
- **Second push:** Tuesday, June 16 (Tuesday before the next PACE/CHPC meeting).
- **Third push:** Friday, June 26, aligned with National HIV Testing Day (June 27th)

Hashtag Strategy

The anchor hashtag is **#ThisIs4U** (the idea Linette Torres brought back in April), with related hashtags like #U and #U=U layered in. Members were asked to apply the hashtag consistently so PACE can measure engagement.

Resource Folder Adoption

The committee was candid that the social media resource folder is underutilized – dashboards are everywhere and members can get “Smartsheet’d to death.” Treating this campaign as a pilot to drive resource folder usage is deliberate: if PACE members use it consistently, other committees will follow. Members were also reminded to upload their own materials (photos from testing days, agency flyers, campaign assets) so the folder grows into a real shared library rather than a static asset pile.

YOUTH SUBCOMMITTEE

Blaise Gilchrist and **Jordan Wynn** set the orientation and first Youth Subcommittee meeting for **Tuesday, June 2nd (evening)** – evening timing so school-age members can attend. Recruitment materials and the meeting agenda are ready. Members were asked to refer anyone aged 17-24 who might be a good fit; passing names directly to Blaise and Jordan is the fastest path in.

Danielle raised a useful note from the epidemiology: new HIV cases skew toward ages 23 to 29, range slightly older than the 17-to-24 youth definition. Jordan and Blaise acknowledged the data point and clarified that the chosen range is about reaching the youngest, most out of touch with current youth culture cohort first; lived experience candidates outside the strict range would still be welcomed in.

Carl Ferris offered a newsletter lead: a young man he knows in New Haven who was perinatally exposed (a twin pair, one born with HIV, one not) and who does interviews about that experience. A first-person twin perspective story – paired with the mental-health angle of being a long-term survivor – would be a strong piece for a future newsletter.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Members were asked to complete the meeting feedback poll before leaving
- Follow-up email will include: the campaign carousel and posting instructions, the photo-submission folder link, the SNAP/Medicaid webinar recording, the Youth Subcommittee orientation materials, and the cross-committee newsletter article invitation.

ATTENDANCE

Angel Ruiz, Blaise Gilchrist, Carl Ferris, Charles Hardy, Chloe Johnson, Clifford Batson, Danielle Warren-Dias, David Martinez, David Reyes, Jean Carlos Negrón, Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos, Jordan Wynn, Linette Torres, Monique Davis, Natasha Cruz, Nina Mauaride, Reggie Knox, Tom Alfano

MEETING FEEDBACK

Summary Table from Interactive Meeting Feedback Poll (n=8)					
Questions		Yes (A)	No (B)	Unsure (C)	(D)
1	CHPC Member?	50%	50%	*	*
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: information; interactive; speaking about newsletter; informative; the inclusion and the open discussions; good flow and engagement; including everyone in feedback; I loved everything				
6	One suggestion to IMPROVE the committee meeting is: n/a; n/a; great job; not any to share; nothing; none; nothing				

APPENDIX A – PrEP and Routine Testing Campaign Images

DRAFT



KNOW YOUR OPTIONS.

In our community, **critical gaps remain** in awareness of HIV prevention and care. Swipe to see what you might be missing — and where to get help.

- PEP
- Injectable Meds
- Syringe Services
- PrEP
- Free Testing

CTHIVPlanning.org

FACT 02 OF 04

HIV MEDS HAVE CHANGED

1 IN 5

haven't heard of long-acting injectable HIV medications

Today, HIV treatment can be a shot every 1–2 months instead of a daily pill — but awareness remains low.

CTHIVPlanning.org

→ ASK YOUR PROVIDER

FACT 04 OF 04

PREP IS FOR EVERYONE

PrEP ISN'T JUST FOR MEN.

- Women & people who can become pregnant
- Trans & nonbinary individuals
- People who inject drugs
- Partners of HIV-positive people

PrEP is up to 99% effective when taken as directed. Ask your doctor, clinic, or pharmacist if it's right for you.

CTHIVPlanning.org

→ ASK YOUR PROVIDER

FACT 01 OF 04

HEARD OF PEP?

1 IN 4

people in our community have never heard of PEP

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) is emergency medicine taken within 72 hours of a possible HIV exposure. It's highly effective — but only if you know it exists.

CTHIVPlanning.org

→ ASK YOUR PROVIDER

FACT 03 OF 04

SYRINGE SERVICES SAVE LIVES

1 IN 3

community members don't know about syringe service programs

Syringe services are safe, legal, and reduce HIV transmission. They also connect people to healthcare, testing, and treatment — no judgment.

CTHIVPlanning.org

→ ASK YOUR PROVIDER

WHERE TO GET TESTED

KNOW YOUR STATUS.

Routine HIV testing is fast, confidential, and often free. Here's how to get started:

- 1 Visit gettested.cdc.gov to find a testing site near you in Connecticut.
- 2 Call your primary care provider — HIV testing is part of routine care for ages 13–64.
- 3 Use a home test kit available at pharmacies or through local health departments.

CTHIVPlanning.org

→ ASK YOUR PROVIDER