

Public Awareness & Community Engagement (PACE) Committee Meeting Summary

July 15, 2026

Date:	Wednesday, July 15, 2026	Type:	Virtual (Zoom)
Start Time:	10:30 a.m.	End Time:	12:00 p.m.
Leaders	Angel H. Ruiz (PACE Co-Chair); Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos (CT Department of Public Health Resource Liaison)		
Participants:	19	Next Meeting:	September 16, 2026 (In-Person) — no meeting in August

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Administrative updates and June meeting summary approval
- 2026 PACE Work Plan: monthly progress check-in (standing item)
- This Is 4 U campaign: first reach report and choosing the next campaign message
- Newsletter: June issue distribution recap and Fall/Winter issue planning
- Youth Subcommittee: June 30 debrief, regrouping, and broader outreach
- Announcements and feedback poll

WELCOME

The meeting was held virtually on Zoom — the first meeting since the statewide campaign launched. The co-chair opened with the meeting mechanics: the chat stays open throughout, the raise-hand button shares the floor, and any acronym that goes by unexplained gets clarified, every time, no exceptions. A member volunteered to lead the mindful minute to center the room, and attendees then introduced themselves with their name, organization, and one good thing July has brought them — from new gardens and family time to a getaway in Puerto Rico. Attendees identified during the meeting included:

- **Angel H. Ruiz (PACE Co-Chair)**
- **Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos (CT DPH Resource Liaison)**
- **David Reyes (Cross Sector Consulting (PACE Support Staff))**
- **Blaise Gilchrist (CHPC Co-Chair, UCHC)**
- **Jordan Wynn (PACE Youth Lead, Ryan White Planning Council)**
- **Carl Ferris (Consumer)**
- **Danielle Warren-Dias (Consumer)**
- **Ruby Rios (ACT)**
- **Tom Alfano (ACT)**
- **Lauren Beaudry (HRA of New Britain)**
- **Val Doty (A Place to Nourish your Health (APNH) — first PACE meeting)**
- **Jean Carlos Negron (CRT — HEART Program Manager)**
- **Marianne Bucelli (CT DPH — first PACE meeting)**
- **Angelo (Consumer, New Haven)**

Co-chairs counted 19 attendees in total; the full roster will be confirmed from the sign-in chat log.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

June Meeting Summary Approval

The June 17 meeting summary, distributed by email on July 8 (holding the full-week-ahead standard) with the draft posted to the PACE page on the CHPC website, was offered for review. No corrections were raised; the summary was

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approved by motion and second (Jordan Wynn seconding), with one abstention from a member who had not attended the June meeting.

Upcoming Events

- **It's Still Hip to Talk About Hepatitis** (Teams event) — Thursday, July 23, 2026, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.; the flyer was shared in the chat.
- **Statewide Syndemic Summit** — October 2026. The Ending the Syndemic committee is building the event around tabletop exercises and Connecticut success stories; its volunteer planning team is forming now, and PACE members who enjoy event work are invited to connect with the co-chairs to be routed in.
- **Syndemic Tabletops** — held the fourth Thursday of each month; details to follow by email each cycle.

Data Systems Note

- Evaluation Web is moving to the CDC's new reporting platform, Loop. There is no firm date yet; a fresh tutorial will go out once the transition lands, so nobody needs to relearn anything alone — the group will transition together.

From Our Sibling Committees

- The Needs Assessment Projects (NAP) Committee is redesigning the statewide prevention survey for 2026, with new questions on DoxyPEP awareness and barriers to testing. When it runs, PACE will help carry it into the community the same way it carries the This Is 4 U campaign.

2026 PACE WORK PLAN: MONTHLY CHECK-IN

Co-chairs ran the standing high-level scan of the six Key Activities:

- **KA1 – General Committee Management** – on track; the June summary went out July 8, a week ahead, and was approved today. The week-ahead practice is now three months old and holding.
- **KA2 – Newsletter Production** – the June (Pride Month) issue shipped in all three languages — English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole — before National HIV Testing Day, which was the goal, and has been shared widely.
- **KA3 – Statewide Campaign** – This Is 4 U has been live statewide since June 23; the first reach report was presented today (below).
- **KA4 – Community Engagement** – the shareables page is live on ctshivplanning.org — five steps, five minutes, any agency can post. Agencies are asked to keep uploading their own promotional materials to the Resource Folder so it stays a two-way street.
- **KA5 – Youth Subcommittee** – held its first meeting June 30; regrouping and broader outreach were discussed today (below).
- **KA6 – Integrated Plan** – the 2027–2031 Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan is approved; PACE's task now is helping carry it out to the community.

VOLUNTEERISM LETTER FOR SNAP AND MEDICAID WORK REQUIREMENTS

The volunteerism letter — addressing the volunteer-hours requirements people must meet to keep or regain SNAP and, going forward, Medicaid benefits — sits with the Executive Committee and is under DPH legal review for grant alignment. This is the path the committee mapped in June: nothing is stuck; the letter is moving through the process, which is encouraging, and it comes back to PACE once review is complete. It will then be shared with members for distribution in the community.

THIS IS 4 U CAMPAIGN: FIRST REACH REPORT

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The co-chair framed the campaign, launched statewide June 23, as a small ember the whole committee must blow on together to build into a bonfire. Past campaign metrics always had a marketing firm behind them — media buys, managed partnerships, paid promotion. This is PACE's first wide grassroots campaign, with partner agencies posting from their own accounts and the committee counting posts and likes by hand off the public tag pages. The number is not the biggest ever; it is the first one that is entirely ours, and the baseline everything builds on.

The Numbers

- **Facebook (counted July 7):** five partner posts, with 11 likes and 5 shares.
- **Instagram (counted July 9):** two partner posts with 15 likes — Circle Care Center posted on launch day, June 23, and picked up 11 likes; Family Centers Cares added 4 more.
- **All together: seven partner posts, 26 likes, 5 shares** on the anchor hashtags #ThisIs4U and #ThisIs4UCT. Circle Care Center and Family Centers Cares were thanked on the board by name.
- **Measurement caveats:** the hashtag counts posts, not people reached — reach rides on each agency's followership, which is why self-reporting matters — and posts that skip the hashtag don't show up in the count at all.

Strengthening the Reporting

- Building on Monique Davis's suggestion from June, a shared post-link sheet was introduced (link shared in the chat, and to be included in the pre-meeting email blast): agencies drop their post links and follower counts there after every post, so reach can be gauged from each agency's audience rather than likes alone.
- **Motion carried:** the committee moved, seconded, and approved a standing hashtag count date — the Friday before each monthly PACE meeting — so every reach report compares like to like and each meeting opens with a benchmark showing whether reach is growing or stagnant.

Live Posting Walkthrough

David Reyes demonstrated the posting workflow end-to-end on screen: go to cthivplanning.org → Resources → Social Media Shareables; open the campaign folder and pick a language; open the Canva template link and add your agency's logo; download (and unzip) the slides; create an Instagram post with all six carousel slides; paste the recommended caption ("PrEP isn't only for one community — it's for anyone who wants it," plus your agency's link); and add the tracking hashtags, layering in any additional hashtags to extend reach.

- Members were honest that the multi-step process is a real barrier for less tech-comfortable folks. Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos will work on a step-by-step video tutorial of the Canva workflow to supplement the written instructions.
- **Post-together idea (Danielle Warren-Dias):** at in-person meetings, run a live group posting moment — a working QR code delivers the image to each phone, with the caption and hashtags ready to copy — so 30–40 people post simultaneously instead of promising to "do it later." Simultaneous posting also works with the platforms' algorithms rather than against them. The committee embraced the idea for the September in-person meeting.
- **Branding flexibility:** Val Doty, who runs social media for APNH, asked whether agencies may adapt colors and fonts. Yes — as long as the information and hashtags stay the same, agencies are encouraged to adapt the look to their own brand: a grassroots message taken up and carried in each messenger's own voice.

Lessons Learned from Launch

- Expand beyond Instagram and Facebook to LinkedIn (Blaise Gilchrist is already posting there) and TikTok.
- Pair the six-slide carousel with a condensed one-pager for people who won't click through a full series — while keeping the carousel as this run's measurable baseline.
- Coordinate posting windows (noon–1 p.m., or 8–9 a.m. and 5–6 p.m.) so agencies post at the same time and the tag surges together.

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NEXT CAMPAIGN MESSAGE: WHAT THE ROOM CHOSE

To avoid rerunning covered ground, the co-chair first recapped the Spring Six — PEP (the 1 in 4), long-acting injectable medications, prevention services for people who use drugs (carefully worded to meet current federal language standards), PrEP is for everyone, and where to get tested. Then the remaining gaps from the 2025 Ryan White Needs Assessment were put on the table:

- **Reproductive health resources** — 28.9% do not feel informed, climbing past 35% among men, the largest gender gap in the survey.
- **Relationship safety** — 24% do not feel informed about intimate partner violence resources.
- **Condoms and sexual health** — almost 39% report never using condoms, speaking directly to the fall season.
- **Partner services** — nearly 20% do not feel informed about partner services and how they work (timely, following the morning main-meeting presentation on partner services).
- **Also on the table:** hepatitis C testing and treatment (13.7%).

Consensus: after a silent-minute chat vote and discussion, the committee agreed to lead with condoms and sexual health paired with reproductive health — the two naturally interlock, and reproductive health opens an avenue to audiences the committee hasn't reached — with relationship safety following close behind.

- **Timely alignment:** Marianne Bucelli is re-engaging a sexual assault services partner to present a refresher at the September meeting on sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and their intersection with HIV, PEP, and PrEP — landing right alongside the new campaign material.
- **Production plan:** Emily Thompson (Cross Sector Consulting), the campaign's content creator, will build both a swipe carousel and a one-pager for each of the top two topics — condoms and sexual health, and relationship safety — with recommended posting times built in. The debut at the September in-person meeting will be tied to Danielle's live post-together ask.
- **The path:** drafts go to members by email through July and August, using the same review protocol as the meeting summaries, so everyone sees the materials before they ship. The finalized campaign debuts at the September meeting.

NEWSLETTER: JUNE DISTRIBUTION RECAP AND NEXT ISSUE**How June Moved (Mailchimp)**

- The announcement was opened by 16.1% of the listserv — 66 readers — with a 4.9% click-through rate (110 total clicks across the issue's links). Website and interactive-edition numbers have been requested from Emily Thompson, so the fuller picture lands at a future meeting.
- This is a baseline, and it is real: 66 readers are 66 people the committee was not reaching before. The growth ask is for partner agencies to spread the word — sign up for the listserv or share the newsletter with colleagues.

Photo Items

- A standing submission form for Connecticut photos — places rather than people — is now live through the Resource Folder (link shared in the chat).
- When the committee meets in person, signed photo releases will live at the check-in table; if a face is identifiable, the form is needed so images can be used.
- The photo booth idea from June is headed to the Executive Committee for a look; the committee will report back.
- Danielle Warren-Dias suggested printed copies of the newsletter at in-person meetings — people less familiar with the online version regularly request them. Welcomed.

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Fall/Winter Issue: Recurring Blocks

- Committee feature: the Needs Assessment Projects (NAP) Committee, which has asked PACE to carry its HIV workforce one-pager series — continuing right on schedule.
- This Is 4 U placement, with two strong new topics to feature.
- Youth Subcommittee recruitment push.
- Resource Folder promotion — agencies are asked to share campaigns, event flyers, and brochures there rather than starting from scratch; sharing keeps everyone on the same track.
- Closing interactive puzzle — people actually do the puzzle. This issue's will be a crossword built from the issue's own articles, so it doubles as a fun quiz that rewards careful reading.

Article Leads Already in Motion

- **Lauren Beaudry — food pantries**, landing squarely on the needs assessment's top support need (37.8% of clients need help paying for food). Planned as a destigmatizing video walkthrough of a food pantry, filmed on a phone with the voiceover recorded after. Ruby Rios volunteered to help with the recording — thank you, Ruby!
- **Chloe Johnson — HIV and aging** (the Yale project), a statewide resource list, stigma, and art and human pieces.

New Ideas from the Brainstorm

- Fall photos of Connecticut — foliage and community shots, pointing the issue toward an early-October release, when fall vibes peak.
- Another poem from Jordan Wynn.
- A first-person "getting on PrEP" story, told interview-style — what the process was actually like.
- Carl Ferris will collaborate with Chloe Johnson (David reconnecting them) on an aging-with-HIV piece, drawing on the study Carl participated in — including fall-prevention tips for older adults, a timely (and gently punny) fit for the fall issue. Carl also invited members and consumers to participate in the aging study: transportation to New Haven can be provided and participants are compensated.
- Danielle Warren-Dias proposed highlighting new and innovative programs, starting with the mobile pharmacy (under Yale) — "a pharmacy on wheels" offering PrEP, DoxyPEP, rapid start, and everyday medications right where people are, now expanding toward Hartford. The committee saw it as a strong, community-oriented, syndemic-spanning feature; the program's schedule and locations will be researched for the piece.

Every idea goes into the leads list with the contributor's name next to it; members who pitched a piece should watch for David's follow-up email.

YOUTH SUBCOMMITTEE

The subcommittee held its first meeting June 30 — the honest version: the room was small, and the youth who were expected could not attend, so the leads used the time to plan. The materials, charge, roles, and agenda all held up and are ready to use again; enrollment stands at two of the five-youth goal, and the gap is outreach, not materials. The plan is to regroup with a broader outreach push first, then set the next date from strength.

- A new general-purpose CHPC recruitment flyer has been drafted — leading with general membership and including the committee lanes and the Youth Subcommittee — for state university bulletin boards and email listservs (Jordan Wynn's CCSU idea), Blaise Gilchrist's adolescent department, and members' campus connections. Referrals (ages 17–24) go directly to Blaise, Jordan, or David.
- **Recruitment strategies (Danielle Warren-Dias):** tie participation to the community-service hours high schoolers need to graduate, recruiting through partner agencies that serve women and families with high-school-age kids rather than through school counselors; adapt the volunteerism letter to document youth participation for high

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school community service; and create a version for community colleges inviting social work, community health worker, and human services students to gain real-life experience. Cast the net wide — recruit fifty to seat five.

- **Branding guidance (Marianne Bucelli, DPH):** flyers kept under CHPC branding do not need DPH review; adding the DPH logo triggers review by Markcom (DPH's marketing and communications team) and its branding standards. The committee will keep materials under CHPC to keep things moving. Marianne asked for the draft flyer to be re-sent for another look, noting the current version is visually busy.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Carl Ferris shared that he spoke on a panel on aging with HIV at a symposium earlier this month, alongside providers and fellow advocates — a great experience, and a reminder of how much the lived-experience voice adds. The room agreed the real stories are always the favorite part.
- A training on medical case management roles and responsibilities is coming through the AETC [confirm]; there is a new enrollment system, and members were encouraged to register.
- **Jean Carlos Negrón (CRT):** Friday, July 24 — HIV and Hep C [confirm] testing at Barnard Park, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., with food and gift cards for those who get tested. Friday, August 7 — HIV testing, 8:00 p.m.–12:00 a.m. [venue to confirm]. Saturday, August 8 — CRT community resource fair and workshop at 330 Market Street, Hartford, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.; agencies interested in a table should reach out to Jean Carlos, who shared his contact information in the chat.
- David Reyes closed by highlighting the agencies' This Is 4 U participation — not perfect, but relevant to the community, with real effort and creativity on display — and promised clearer instructions for the next campaign round based on the feedback received.
- Members completed the interactive feedback poll before leaving, and the meeting wrapped just before noon — right on time. Over the summer break, four small asks: drop your agency's post links in the shared sheet, send Connecticut photos through the form, hand the recruitment flyer to anyone who touches a campus, and watch for David's email if you pitched an article. There is no PACE meeting in August; the next meeting is Wednesday, September 16, in person.

ATTENDANCE

Angel H. Ruiz, Angelo [last name], Blaise Gilchrist, Carl Ferris, Danielle Warren-Dias, David Reyes, Jean Carlos Negrón, Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos, Jordan Wynn, Lauren Beaudry, Marianne Bucelli, Ruby Rios, Tom Alfano, Val Doty [+ remaining names from the sign-in chat log — 19 attendees total]

MEETING FEEDBACK

[Summary table from the interactive meeting feedback poll to be inserted once results are compiled.]