

**Ryan White Planning Council (RWPC) of the Philadelphia Part A (Title I) EMA  
Positive Committee Meeting Minutes  
Monday, January 12, 2009  
12 p.m. - 2 p.m.  
Office of HIV Planning, 340 N. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 203, Philadelphia, PA 19107**

**Present:** 37(PH), 0(PA), 2(NJ)

**Staff:** Nicole Johns, Michael Milsop, Briana Morgan

**Call to Order/Mission Statement/Moment of Silence/Introductions:**

S. Hobbs called the meeting to order at 12:12 p.m. Reading of the mission statement, a moment of silence, and introductions of those present followed.

**Approval of Agenda:**

M. White presented the agenda for approval. The agenda was approved by general consensus.

**Approval of Minutes (8 December 2008):**

M. White presented the December 8, 2008 minutes for approval. The minutes were approved by general consensus.

**Report of Co-Chair:**

S. Hobbs reminded those present that anyone arriving to the meeting after 12:30 p.m. would be unable to receive tokens, and asked everyone to be respectful of the rules. He also asked anyone intending to attend the meeting to RSVP by the Friday before the meeting to ensure that there were enough lunches. M. White pointed out that the address, phone number, and website for the Office of HIV Planning were included in the meeting calendar.

**Report of Staff:**

M. Milsop stated that the Office was beginning to schedule the annual town halls and consumer feedback groups, and invited those present to participate. He went on to say that there had been a great turnout the year before, and that they would be hosting a new youth-specific town hall this spring. He went on to explain that the Planning Council used the town hall and consumer survey results almost exclusively in determining the priorities for the service categories in the previous year. He encouraged everyone present to attend, and to inform other consumers about the town halls.

**Presentation:**

- **AACO Housing Services Program** – *M. Bradley Shannon, AACO*

S. Hobbs introduced M.B. Shannon, explaining that he would be discussing the AACO Housing process. M.B. Shannon thanked those present for attending the meeting and distributed packets of information (*see – attached handouts*). He noted that he had also brought a brand-new brochure on the AACO housing program, which included information on rights, responsibilities, and steps to applying for housing (*see – attached brochure*).

M.B. Shannon explained that AACO processes housing applications for PLWHA in Philadelphia. A community member asked if AACO helps consumers find housing, or if they only pay rent. M.B. Shannon replied that AACO pays rent, and that 90% of housing slots are tenant-based, where consumers find their own housing. He noted that the other 10% of housing slots are project-based, where the consumer has to move into a particular space. He went on to say that housing slots are permanent, and that PLWHA can only lose them housing slots through things like eviction and incarceration. He added that the AACO housing program is funded exclusively by HUD, and does not receive any funding from Ryan White.

M.B. Shannon next explained the qualifications for housing (*see – attached handout*). He noted that low-income referred to anyone making less than \$41,000 a year. He continued on to review those that are not qualified to receive rental assistance through the AACO housing program. A community member asked how they know whether a consumer is actively using substances. M.B. Shannon replied that a consumer has to get documentation from his or her doctor. He went on to explain that anyone with serious mental health issues or substance abuse problems must be in active treatment to qualify for the housing program.

M.B. Shannon continued on to review the documents needed to apply for AACO housing, as well as policies specific to drug and alcohol issues as well as mental health issues. A community member asked what steps a consumer that had already completed a program could take. M.B. Shannon replied that most programs issue a certificate of completion, which could be submitted with the application. He next reviewed the rights of PLWHA applying to the program, including confidentiality. H.B. asked how long it would take for a consumer to get into housing. M.B. Shannon replied that the typical wait was 18 months, though Section 8 had a wait of approximately 6-8 years. A community member asked if there was priority for homeless people. M.B. Shannon replied that there is.

A community member asked how incarceration would affect a consumer's place on the waiting list. M.B. Shannon replied that incarceration over 30 days would take a person off the wait list.

M.B. Shannon reviewed the responsibilities of PLWHA on the housing wait list. A community member stated that it was important to see a case manager, because they keep spare copies of important documents. M.B. Shannon continued on to review the waiting list information, noting that the wait is about 18 months long. He pointed out that the homeless have a wait time of seven months. A community member asked how long the wait list is for a consumer that was recently released from prison. M.B. Shannon replied that this is a special case, and the recently incarcerated have a priority level between that of a regular person and a homeless person.

A community member asked for the definition of homeless. M.B. Shannon replied that the term refers to a person without a roof over his or her head at night, but pointed out that this term does not apply to someone sleeping on a friend or family member's sofa. G.T. clarified that "homeless" meant that one was in the street or the shelter.

M.B. Shannon went on explain that a person in the program would pay 30% of their income toward his or her housing. He noted that there was a maximum rent of \$700 for a one-bedroom apartment. R. Hayward asked if two consumers could get an apartment together as roommates. M.B. Shannon replied that this is a possibility, but that the other person needs to be included on the application just as a spouse would be. R. Hayward asked what would happen if someone were already in housing and relapsed. M.B. Shannon replied that once the consumer was in the program, it would be up to the housing sponsor. A community member asked if a person in treatment that was on the waiting list would be removed if he or she relapsed. M.B. Shannon replied that they give the person one month to get back into treatment before removal from the waiting list.

T. Kaba asked if a client could stay on the housing list if they switched case management providers. M.B. Shannon replied that this was possible so long as the client remained in case management. H.B. asked how they determine if a person is homeless. M.B. Shannon reviewed the actual application, noting that shelters can certify that a person is homeless, and that a homeless outreach agency could provide documentation as well. A community member asked what would happen if a person could not get documentation that they were homeless. M.B. Shannon replied that they do not have a perfect system in place.

A community member asked if consumers could fill out applications and mail them in themselves. M.B. Shannon replied that they would need a case manager or a housing specialist to do it for them.

#### **Old Business:**

- *Winter 2009 Newsletter*

N. Johns stated that she had only received one of the articles that committee members had agreed to do, and requested others to submit articles.

- *Educational Presentation on 2/27/09 – Emergency Assistance*

N. Johns stated that the event would be held at St. Luke's Church on Friday, February 27. She went on to explain that they would be discussing emergency assistance, DEFA, food banks, and utility grants. She added that she was also looking into emergency housing subsidies, and that there were already three speakers lined up for the event. She noted that the event would take place from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., and that she would send a flier out to the Positive Committee mailing list.

#### **New Business:**

R. Hayward stated that the RWPC meeting had taken place on the previous Thursday, and that he had brought up the topic of testing in emergency rooms at hospitals. He explained that he had previously suggested that AACO train PLWHA to do testing in the ERs. He went on to say that this would empower PLWHA, give PLWHA jobs, and help test more people. He concluded that it had been suggested that he present this to the Positive Committee so that they could present the idea to AACO as a group. M. White thanked R. Hayward for his suggestion, and went on to say that he was not sure if the Planning Council would be able to do this. He noted that he would investigate the issue. R. Hayward replied that AACO works for PLWHA, and that they should be able to get training from AACO. M. White replied he would have to look into the topic and get back to him.

J.M. stated that SEPTA would be holding a public meeting at 5 p.m. that night regarding future plans, and that it would be important to let them know that there were PLWHA in Philadelphia that were dependent on SEPTA.

**Announcements:**

N. Johns stated that the Planning Council was currently looking for consumers to apply for membership for spring appointment, and applications were due by February 6. She added that the CPG was also looking for new members, clarifying that the CPG was only for those in Philadelphia. M. White stated that those present could attend all committee meetings, even if they were not RWPC or CPG members. R. Hayward asked how many terms a person could serve on the RWPC or the CPG. N. Johns stated that there was a limit of three terms for each. B. Morgan clarified that the RWPC rule was new, so the six years started from the date that the rule was passed several months ago.

S. Hobbs stated that the next Positive Committee meeting would be on February 9, and asked everyone to RSVP by the Friday before the meeting to ensure that there were enough lunches.

R. Hayward stated that it was very encouraging to see so many people at the current meeting at the start of a new year. He went on to say that the voice of consumers was vital to the process, and emphasized the importance of participation. N. Johns asked anyone wanting to be added to the Positive Committee mailing list to see her after the meeting.

M. White stated that the newsletter was open for submissions from anyone in the room. He noted that consumers could submit articles, poetry, biographies, or anything else they would like to write for the newsletter. N. Johns stated that she would need submissions for this newsletter in the coming week, but that any submissions received after the deadline could be put in the spring newsletter.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:24 p.m. by general consensus.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Briana L. Morgan, Staff

**Handouts distributed at the meeting:**

- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting Minutes from December 8, 2008
- Housing Handouts
- OHP Calendar