



Meeting of the
POLICY COMMITTEE
Matthew Lesieur and Darryl Ng, Co-Chairs

May 14, 2010
Cicatelli, 505 Eighth Avenue at 35th Street, 20th Floor
10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Members Present: Gregory Cruz, Elaine Greeley, Matt Lesieur, Kali Lindsey, Wanda Mitchell (alt. for Andresa Person), Lucky Michaels, Darryl Ng, Jan Carl Park, Jim Shields (alt. for Dorella Walters), Lyndel Urbano (alt. for Sean Cahill, PhD)

Members Absent: Susan Alston, Kareem Clemons, Lorna Littner, Esther Lok, Paul Meissner

NYC DOHMH Staff Present: Nina Rothschild, DrPH

Material Distributed:

- Agenda
- Minutes from the April 16, 2010 Meeting
- Policy Committee List of Open and Closed Items

Welcome/Introductions/Moment of Silence/Review of the Meeting

Packet: Matthew Lesieur and Darryl Ng welcome meeting attendees. Committee members introduced themselves and observed a moment of silence. Nina Rothschild reviewed the contents of the meeting packet.

List of Open and Closed Items: Jan Carl Park reviewed the list of open and closed items.

- Thirty Percent of Income toward Rent: current law requires PLWHAs in New York City to pay all but \$330 of their monthly income toward rent, leaving them with approximately \$11 per day for food, medicine, and co-pays for visits to doctors. The Planning Council already sent a letter to Governor Paterson urging him to sign a bill into law that would change the \$330 per month rule. Mayor Bloomberg opposes

the bill, arguing that the proposed legislation would cost the City \$150 million per year when it is already struggling to close a \$4.5 billion budget gap.

- **Overturning the Ban on Blood Donations by MSM:** the Planning Council and other organizations are urging the FDA to look at the science and reexamine the ban.
- **Ryan White Appropriations:** the New York EMA received a score of 97 in its grant application to HRSA this year and an increase in its Part A funding. We were asked to provide a four-page supplement on linkage to care. Since we already have expanded testing in the Bronx and linkage to coordinated care, we were able to submit a very good response to this set of questions. The Planning Council has already sent a letter to Senator Tom Harkin and Representative David Obey requesting an increase in Ryan White appropriations, and Nina Rothschild agreed to send the same letter to Rep. Steve Israel. Matt Lesieur and Jan Carl Park continue to attend CAEAR Coalition meetings. Linking this work to the increase in Ryan White funding is important so that the Planning Council and the grantee are aware of the value of the CAEAR Coalition contribution.
- **Mayor Bloomberg's Proposal to Eliminate 248 HASA Case Managers:** the Mayor proposes to reduce the number of HASA case managers by 248. Matt Lesieur stated that he would draft a letter on this topic and forward it to Nina Rothschild.
- **Medicaid Managed Care for PLWHAs in NYC:** CMS (the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services) approved a waiver in January mandating the enrollment of PLWHAs on Medicaid in New York State into managed care. PLWHAs who do not choose a Medicaid managed care plan within 60 days will be auto-assigned into a plan. NYS is waiting for approval from Governor Paterson to begin enrollment.
- **Health Care Reform and PLWHA:** New York is eligible for \$287 million for an insurance pool for high-risk individuals. Although health care reform may mean that more PLWHAs will be covered under Medicaid, we need to communicate to Congress that we still need Ryan White funding for the undocumented.

New York State Budget and New York City Budget: NYS is still operating week to week on extender bills. Legislators in Albany are nowhere near an agreement on the budget. NYC will eventually benefit from the national economic recovery. Tourism and real estate are doing better. However, a two-year lag period usually occurs between when the recovery begins and the benefits are felt. Tough times still lie ahead.

The Mayor has proposed a \$62.9 billion budget with no new taxes. He has created a new midtown/downtown police budget, and the money has to come from somewhere else. Every City agency has to cut its budget. Eleven

thousand City workers may be cut. Libraries, senior centers, and day care centers may have to close. DOHMH will cut its HIV contracts by \$800,000, and HASA may cut case managers. Planning Council Co-Chair Charles Shorter will testify at the City budget hearings regarding the impact of the proposed cuts to prevention and HASA on PLWHAs. Oral or written testimony can be submitted.

HRSA 24-Month Cumulative Lifetime Cap on Ryan White-Funded

Housing: Under former President Bush, HRSA was going to implement a policy entitling PLWHAs to a cumulative lifetime cap of 24 months in Ryan White-funded housing. HRSA Administrator Mary Wakefield suspended the cap, and HRSA is working on a new policy. Meanwhile, HRSA is encouraging grantees to make housing services temporary and transitional, rather than permanent. The Planning Council is already on record for opposing the lifetime cap. We support local decision-making on this issue. Committee members agreed that the PC should draft a response asking for a broad policy allowing for considerable local latitude. The grantee did have contractual challenges with the housing services vendor, including 35% under-spending, but the need for housing services is very real. The grantee needs to reexamine this housing services category. Mr. Lesieur advocated for construction of new housing units, rather than simply an increase to the MRA. Nina Rothschild agreed to draft a letter for the Planning Council asking HRSA for a housing policy with very broad local latitude.

Follow-Up:

- Nina Rothschild will send Harkin/Obey letter to Rep. Steve Israel.
- Matt Lesieur will draft a letter on the proposed cut of 248 HASA case managers and send it to Nina Rothschild.
- Nina Rothschild will draft a letter for the PC asking for broad local latitude in decision-making regarding housing funds for PLWHAs.

Review of the Minutes:

The minutes from the April meeting were approved with no changes.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.