



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION ON HIV



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HIVCOMM@LACHIV.ORG • <http://hiv.lacounty.gov> ORG • VIRTUAL WEBEX MEETING

Presence at virtual meetings is recorded based on the attendance roll call. Only members of the Commission on HIV are accorded voting privileges and must verbally acknowledge their attendance in order to vote. Approved meeting minutes are available on the Commission's website; meeting recordings are available upon request.

**PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

January 4, 2021



The Public Policy Committee acts in accordance with the role of the Commission on HIV, as dictated by Los Angeles County Code 3.29.090. Consistent with Commission Bylaws Article VI, Section 2, no Ryan White resources are used to support Public Policy Committee activities.

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	PUBLIC	COMM STAFF/ CONSULTANTS
Lee Kochems, MA, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Eduardo Martinez (<i>Alt.</i>)	Leopoldo Cabral	Cheryl Barrit, MPIA
Katja Nelson, MPP, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Ricky Rosales	Michaé De La Cuadra	Carolyn Echols-Watson, MPA
Pamela Coffey/Alasdair Burton	Tony Spears (<i>Alt.</i>)	Kevin Donnelly	Jane Nachazel
Jerry D. Gates, PhD		Jennifer Gjurashaj	Sonja Wright, MS, Lac
Bridget Gordon		Lambert Talley	
Nestor Kamurigi (<i>Alt.</i>)			DPH/DHSP STAFF
Martin Sattah, MD			None

*Some participants may not have been captured electronically. Attendance can be corrected by emailing the Commission.

CONTENTS OF COMMITTEE PACKET

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- 2) **Agenda:** Public Policy Committee Agenda, 1/4/2021
- 3) **Minutes:** Public Policy Committee Meeting Minutes, 12/7/2020
- 4) **Statement:** Diane Feinstein, 12/29/2020
- 5) **Recommendation:** Ending the HIV Epidemic Regional Meeting: Taking Strategic Action to Address Substance Use in California, December 2020
- 6) **Priorities:** 2020 Policy Priorities, 6/11/2020
- 7) **Bill:** Assembly Bill 2218, Transgender Wellness and Equity Fund, 9/26/2020
- 8) **Memorandum:** State Legislative Agenda for the 2021-22 Session, 12/22/2020
- 9) **Memorandum:** Washington – Passage of the Fifth COVID-19 Relief Bill and Federal Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations (H.R. 133, as amended), 12/28/2020
- 10) **Fact Sheet:** Telehealth and COVID-19, December 2020
- 11) **Memorandum:** HHS Threat to CA Over Weldon Amendment, 12/17/2020

CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS AND CHECK-IN, CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENTS:

- Ms. Nelson welcomed all and called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm.
- Attendees checked in with many wishing all a good 2021 and welcoming the new administration.
- Mr. Kochems attended from his mother's house in Cleveland. His stay there will be extended for a month or two. The foot of snow has melted and everything is green. COVID-19 rates in Ohio have been stable.
- Mr. Burton just received the second of two doses in the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine trial. He did not know whether he was in the vaccine or the placebo arm of the trial, but has had no side effects to date. At today's appointment, he was

advised that any trial participants who become eligible for any approved COVID-19 vaccine should call in and they will be told whether they are receiving vaccine or the placebo. They can then decide next steps with their physician.

- Nestor announced he recently married. He just received his new identification yesterday to officially change his name from Rogel to Kamurigi. Everyone offered congratulations.
- Dr. Sattah was trying to stay positive and thankful for all we have – especially the vaccine. He hoped the administration would distribute it efficiently in the next few months as he expected it would be a big turning point in the pandemic.
- Mr. Donnelly said it was good to know we’re all working to make this a better world for everyone. While people may speak of “going back to normal,” he hoped we would not go back to normal because normal wasn’t working – but to do better.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION #1: Approve the Agenda Order, as presented (***Passed by Consensus***).

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

MOTION #2: Approve the 12/7/2020 Public Policy Committee Meeting Minutes, as presented (***Passed by Consensus***).

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

- 3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS COMMISSION ON ITEMS OF INTEREST WITHIN COMMISSION JURISDICTION:** There were no comments.

III. COMMITTEE NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

- 4. OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMISSIONERS TO RECOMMEND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS, OR ITEMS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ACTION DUE TO AN EMERGENCY, OR IF NEED FOR ACTION AROSE AFTER POSTING AGENDA:** There were no items.

IV. REPORTS

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/STAFF REPORT

- Ms. Barrit acknowledged we are seeing a great surge in COVID-19 cases which is taxing the capacity of our hospitals. As public health advocates and Los Angeles County (LAC) employees, we are asking everyone to do what they can to minimize the risk of transmission. Staff will continue to work from home and meetings will remain virtual for at least the first quarter.
- LAC employees continue Disaster Service Workers (DSW) work. Department of Public Health (DPH) staff continue contact tracing and were gearing up for mass vaccination clinics but, so far, Commission staff had not been deployed.
- The Executive Office has been stern in prohibiting Commission staff from going into the office at all due to the notable increase in cases, e.g., Ms. Barrit had to reschedule an appointment to discuss installation of plexiglass.
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) were also working hard and starting to plan community vaccination clinics with LAC. To date, the federal government has been releasing vaccines to local governments, but has not necessarily released funds for staffing. Consequently, Community Health Clinics (CHCs) providing vaccination clinics may be self-funding operational costs. That is something to consider in reviewing our safety net in 2021.

a. Committee and Caucus Updates

- The Commission meeting will be 1/14/2021. The County Counsel has been invited to provide the Commission’s usual annual update on the Brown Act. DHSP was also invited to offer an update on the final Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) Plan submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). It was not yet on the DHSP website, but should be posted prior to the meeting for review.
- Commission staff have referred to DHSP reports of access challenges for the new Emergency Financial Assistance launched at the end of 2020. Mario Pérez, MPH, Director, DHSP with offer an EFA update as part of his regular report. Anyone experiencing any barriers should advise the Commission or DHSP staff. Issues were being tracked.
- Ms. Barrit was working on the Commission’s Annual Report and hoped to have a draft for the January Commission.
- Staff were working on developing 2021 Work Plans for all Committees and Caucuses.
- Mr. Donnelly asked about the Oath of Office. Ms. Barrit replied terms end in June so generally it is given in July.
- Ms. Nelson asked if the Commission would be kept up to date on vaccine distribution. Ms. Barrit replied that Franklin Pratt, MD, MPHTM, Vaccine Preventable Disease Control, DPH, was invited to report at the Commission meeting on COVID-19 and HIV, specifically including vaccine information such as drug interactions and overall safety.

- ➡ Ms. Nelson will share her perspective on FQHC issues during Dr. Pratt's Q/A.

6. CO-CHAIR REPORT

a. Co-Chair Nominations/Elections

- Ms. Nelson was nominated and accepted at the December 2020 meeting. She nominated Mr. Kochems. He noted the Public Policy Committee has been supporting diversity and empowerment. He and Ms. Nelson would support anyone interested who felt they needed more experience, but he was willing to serve if no one else chose to run.

MOTION #3: Elect Lee Kochems, MA and Katja Nelson, MPP as the 2021 Public Policy Committee Co-Chairs (**Passed by Consensus**).

b. Act Now Against Meth (ANAM) Update

- Ms. Nelson noted this has been added as a standing item. Staff were in contact with Richard Zaldivar for any updates.
 - The packet includes a 12/29/2020 *Los Angeles Times* op-ed on the issue from Diane Feinstein as well as a report from the Center for HIV Identification, Prevention, and Treatment Services (CHIPTS) which addresses substance use overall.
 - Ms. Echols-Watson was working on scheduling several key Substance Abuse and Prevention Control (SAPC) staff to attend the next Planning, Priorities and Allocations (PP&A) Committee for updates on prevention and treatment. SAPC has a meth task force with an arm each for prevention and for treatment. PP&A meets the third Tuesday at 1:00 pm.
- ➡ Anyone with suggestions may forward them to staff.

c. Review of Policy Priorities

- Ms. Nelson noted the prior four years focused on protection, but the Biden administration bodes well for growth.
 - Ms. Barrit commented that the legislative cycle is two years. If there are 2021-2022 gaps, this would be the time to bring those to the Board's attention. The cycle's agenda was in the packet.
 - Mr. Kochems suggested adding an item pertinent to priority COVID-19 needs, e.g., many PLWH are in the health field, 50% are over age 50, and/or have multiple co-morbidities. Consequently, they should be considered as care develops.
 - Likewise, advances made in the context of COVID-19 should carry over into HIV care, e.g., telehealth, vaccine research.
 - Regarding vaccine studies incorporating PLWH, Mr. Burton noted Phases I and II are safety studies so no one with other conditions is accepted. Phase III studies do accept PLWH, but PLWH must volunteer to achieve representation. Mr. Kochems related that PLWH were not initially accepted, but advocacy opened the Phase III studies to PLWH.
 - Mr. Kochems suggested attaching the Black African American Community (BAAC) Task Force recommendations, but Ms. Barrit noted many pertained to DHSP contracting issues. Instead, she suggested adding, "All policy directives and priorities will be coming from an anti-racist perspective."
- ➡ Develop draft item on COVID-19 including access to care; and application of COVID advances to HIV, e.g., like use of telehealth, breakdown of barriers like renewal of Medi-Cal without resubmission, and a renewed focus on vaccine research. Call attention to areas that have suffered from lack of focus such as Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).
- ➡ Develop item on racism, including social justice, social equity, inclusion, and empowerment at the local, state, and federal level. Reach out for input to the BAAC Task Force. It was in the process of developing specific recommendations per Committee. Add, "All policy directives and priorities will be coming from an anti-racist perspective."
- ➡ Develop item on aging issues with its themes of data collection, expansion of prevention and care services with integrated care, and workforce development.
- ➡ Incorporate attention to women, the transgender population, and the indigenous population.
- ➡ Staff will draft updated 2021 Policy Priorities and disseminate for review to Co-Chairs, get feedback, then send back out to full Committee, get feedback, and finally forward to Executive Committee.

V. PRESENTATION

7. TRANSGENDER WELLNESS FUND (AB 2218): Michaé De La Cuadra

- Michaé De La Cuadra, Manager, Policy and Community Engagement, TransLatina Coalition, presented with a PowerPoint on the bill which was in the packet. A 2018 Trans Policy Agenda comprehensive report included a survey regarding policy priorities of over 200 transgender people statewide. Some 40 recommendations resulted including additional allocations. The remainder of 2018 was focused on developing an approach for moving forward.
- In 2019, the Coalition began to develop a bill and related budget proposals. Initial proposals were met with concern about the lack of data to support a budget proposal, e.g., population size. Groups from across the state were brought together to address those issues – growing from an initial three members to over twenty.

- A bill number was assigned in February 2020 sparking a focus on language and strategy. With the global pandemic, the approach shifted to advocacy for attaining emergency health services resources for an increasingly impacted population. The language in the bill is purposely vague to ensure it could be used for holistic services like hormones, mental health, and housing, and arts and wellness programming – not just strictly medical health. That created some pushback.
- Even so, it passed the legislature and, after more advocacy, Governor Gavin Newsom signed it on 9/26/2020. Pushback often included the need to focus solely on COVID-19, but advocacy emphasized that health services do relate to COVID-19.
- While the bill was passed, the Appropriations Committee removed the \$15 million identified in it so it is now an empty fund. Assemblymember Miguel Santiago, who sponsored the bill, has committed to help with the budget request. The budget is finalized in June so advocacy has begun for the \$15 million. The effort to pass the bill was intentionally led by trans identified people or trans led organizations so there were few allied groups. For this effort, there will be a space for general meetings which were expected to start shortly. Allies will be welcome to participate in those activities.
- Bill co-authors include Assemblymembers Wendy Carrillo and Blanca Rubio, and Senator Scott Wiener. Holly Mitchell has also been very supportive and they met with all the Supervisors' staffs with those for Barger, Kuehl, and Solis most helpful. They hoped to identify physical space to expand services, e.g., case management, re-entry, workforce development, anti-violence support, drop in center with daily food distribution and clothes, legal help, and peer navigation.
- Mr. Kochems noted the bill was on the Legislative Docket as a support.
- ➡ Michaé De La Cuadra will forward any support letters, et cetera, and meeting information to staff.
- ➡ Initiate AB 2218 Funding Work Group to develop HIV-specific letter to Board of Supervisors (Board) to support funding. It will include encouragement to share the letter with others. Members will include a Public Policy Co-Chair and Michaé De La Cuadra with members of the Transgender Caucus, especially Frankie Darling-Palacios, invited.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. **LEGISLATIVE DOCKET:** Ms. Nelson noted that the Docket was beginning to be developed.
9. **STATE POLICY AND BUDGET UPDATE:** The vaccination priority committee was meeting virtually on Wednesdays and was open to the public.
10. **FEDERAL POLICY UPDATE:** There were no additional items.
11. **COUNTY POLICY UPDATE:** The Quarterly STD Report from November reflected a decline in Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) cases, but that is due to reduced capacity because of staff shifts to COVID-19 work. Congenital syphilis, however, was up 120%. Only four of seven STD clinics were open in order to shift staff to hospital support.

VII. NEXT STEPS

12. **TASK/ASSIGNMENTS RECAP:** There was no additional discussion.
13. **AGENDA DEVELOPMENT FOR NEXT MEETING:** There was no additional discussion.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

14. **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC AND COMMITTEE TO MAKE ANNOUNCEMENTS:** There were no announcements.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

15. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 3:12 pm.