



Minutes ☿ Monday November 13th, 2023

4pm-6:30pm

Virtually through Zoom & in-person @ the Chinook Building downtown

Council Members Present: *Ray Harris (System of Care Co-Chair, WA State Dept of Health), Hector Urrunaga Diaz (Public Health-Seattle & King County), Ron Padgett (+Caucus Co-Chair), Patricia Ogunmola (WA Dept of Corrections), Eve Lake (Membership/Operations Co-Chair, Madison Clinic), Chelimo Chesire, Genie Sheth, Samuel Jackson (Madison Clinic), Andrew Ashiofu (Council Co-Chair), John Rodriguez (+Caucus Co-Chair, Dominican Association of WA)*

Council Members Absent: *Lina Stinson-Ali (excused),*

Planning Council Staff Present: Karen Chung, Wilson Pipkin

Recipient Staff Present: Linda Coomas

Visitors Present: Morgan Feder (Lifelong, Councilmember awaiting King County Executive's Office approval), German Galindo, Sara Magnusson (Public Health-Seattle & King County), Linnae Baird (Public Health-Seattle & King County),

Italics denote Planning Council Membership.

I. Welcome, Meeting Rule Reminder, Introductions and Announcements

- Staff is getting telecom reimbursements submitted tomorrow hopefully for approval and payment for Wednesday.
- Any decisions this Council makes impacts all people living with HIV (PLWH) especially Latin@s and other disproportionately impacted populations. There have been requests to change the day of this meeting from Monday so that more PLWH can attend and be more a part of decisions which impact their health. Staff will send out a poll to gather input on this to move forward with adjusting appropriately to the need. Housing, food and cleaning supplies are large issues that need funding, and these should be focuses as well as dental. How can there be more accountability for agencies not being able to spend the money they promise to spend on these very important categories? The Recipient monitors agencies closely and there has been significant issues with staffing and other key program areas throughout COVID. The returned funds had to be reallocated to other categories to avoid penalties. The issues with housing availability are a larger conversation, do we need to loop in the Regional Housing Authority? This conversation will also continue within System of Care and NAPSRA.

II. Meeting Agenda

The agenda was approved as written by acclamation.

III. Meeting Minutes

The September minutes were approved as written by acclamation. Ron abstains.

IV. Public Comment

None

V. Recipient Report

<German Galindo left the meeting.>

- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) site visit letter has been received and the required response has been submitted. The Recipient team and Council staff are working to respond to the findings. One of the important changes required is the Council will be setting its own budget.

- Mark and Linda are doing site visits at agencies.
- The Recipient team is working on the estimate of unobligated balances and the goal is to submit this early due to staff leave. What is required for the end of the calendar year is an estimate, and then later in the fiscal year the actual plan for these unobligated balances is required.

<John Rodriguez joined the meeting.>

- The core medical services waiver has already been received for the next year due to Washington being a Medicaid expansion state. This allows for more funds to be spent on support services instead of core medical services.

VI. Executive Committee Report

- Due to the cancellation of the October Council meeting with lack of attendance, the Executive committee approved the reallocations forwarded by NAPSRA. \$398,842 was being returned in Housing, Food & Meals (Food Vouchers), Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA), Psychosocial Support, Non-Medical Case Management (NMCM)-Housing, and Medical Transportation. These were reallocated by \$160,186 for NMCM-Engagement and Retention, \$192,860 Outpatient Ambulatory Health Services (OAHS)-Treatment Adherence, and no funds allocated to Oral Health with the intention to reallocate funds to this category later in the grant year and due to there still being funds left in this category.

VII. Membership/Operations Committee Report

- This committee also reviewed the site visit letter around compliance with open required positions.
- Jen Balkus, the new lead epidemiologist for the HIV/STI/HCV program was interviewed for a non-voting Councilmember position. Ray would like to be put in contact with Jen.

MOTION: Ron moves to accept the nomination

Discussion: None

The motion passed with the following vote:

- In favor – 10 – *Andrew, Sam, Genie, Chelimo, John, Ron, Hector, Eve, Ray, Patricia*
- Opposed -0-
- Abstaining -0-

VIII. Needs Assessment, Priority Setting & Resource Allocation Committee Report

- This committee has no co-chair, and members are encouraged to step into leadership as they are able.
- This committee discussed the rapid reallocation of unspent funds for the last quarter of the grant year, according to Council priorities without prior Council approval, to ensure grant funds are being spent down to avoid penalties. The possibility of making this a policy of the Council was discussed but would need Council approval to make this annually automatic.

MOTION: Chelimo moves to approve this recommendation from the committee to give the Recipient authority to rapidly reallocate funds during the final quarter of the grant year.

Discussion: None

The motion passed with the following vote:

- In favor – 10 – *Andrew, Sam, Genie, Chelimo, John, Ron, Hector, Eve, Ray, Patricia*
- Opposed -0-
- Abstaining -0-

- Oral Health was discussed as a priority for these rapid reallocations, but this was not voted on by committee.
- This committee has been discussing raising the financial eligibility for Ryan White Part A (RWPA) services to 500% of the federal poverty level (FPL) to align with Ryan White Part B (RWPB) at the state level. This change would allow approximately 70-80 clients to access services.
- It was highlighted that the data was not clear around the impact of COVID and the need in the community, and the committee did want the discussion to be brought to the Council. There were

concerns expressed about this change causing a dilution of services or if agencies have capacity to welcome these clients. A story was shared regarding having to choose between rent, food and medications due to the rising costs of everything, and this raising of financial eligibility would help ease this for more PLWH.

MOTION: Sam moves to approve moving the financial eligibility level from 400%-500% of FPL. Ron seconds

Discussion: the most ideal time to start this change would be with the new contract year beginning March 1st, 2024, so new contracts are not needed. Changes like this would usually be done during a request for applications (RFA) cycle, but the Recipient team is willing to do this at the beginning of the grant year.

Sam agreed to amend the motion to include this date.

The motion passed with the following vote:

- In favor – 8 – Ron, Hector, Sam, Eve, Ray, Genie, Patricia, Andrew
- Opposed -0-
- Abstaining -2- Chelimo, John

IX. Continue Housing Conversation

- Mark has presented previously on data around Housing, what strategies are available to the Council and which strategies are outside the Council’s responsibility.
- With advocacy in mind, what are the goals the Council would like to achieve regarding outreach and relationship building with larger entities like the Regional Housing Authority? The overarching goal should be to make fewer people unhoused because it is not just PLWH who are experiencing homelessness. This has been a problem in King County for over a decade and it is growing. There need to be multiple approaches to this, and maybe conversations held across Ryan White bodies. More folks with data and experts to build across silos is important to continue this conversation and build solutions and progress.
- What is going on with Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA)? Data would need to be gathered.
- The Regional Housing Authority is currently going through a restructuring.
- This is a systemic issue which is going to require conversations and pressure from everyone.
- Council staff will get back regarding specific policy, but the Council can do anything it would like except utilize RWPA for lobbying or legislative work. Staff will research both King County and Ryan White policy regarding this.
- Look into the example of Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative. This is going to require out of the box thinking and solutions.
- Check in with Dow Constantine’s Office.
- Sustainable, accessible, affordable, available housing is the highest goal, as bed nights can be very unstable.
- Can there be accountability to create access for housing units remaining vacant?
- An ad-hoc committee was suggested as a possible step forward. It may be better to assign this to a committee that already exists to not increase the burden of number of meetings.
- A letter to Dow or presence at a meeting was suggested as a step forward for staff to research and implement.
- Staff will work to engage with the housing authority, and this will go better if a committee would put together what such a meeting would look like, what questions would be asked.

X. System of Care Committee Report

- Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) was sent back from the Council to the committee for further review and updates. Language was changed to 2 business days to allow time for both human error and the urgency of the situation. The committee is bringing this back before the Council for approval.

MOTION: Ray moves to approve these revised standards.

Discussion: None

The motion passed with the following vote:

- In favor – 10 – *Sam, Andrew, John, Genie, Ron, Ray, Hector, Patricia, Eve, Chelimo*
 - Opposed -0-
 - Abstaining -0-
- Medical Transportation standards were also reviewed, updated and approved for forwarding to the Council. There was discussion regarding other online transportation services like e-bikes and scooter rental services, but this was held off from being incorporated due to questions around liability. As more information becomes available regarding this liability, these standards can be revisited. It was noted that accident and fatality rates on scooters and e-bikes is very high. The intake language was pulled from other standards to increase standardization

<Ron Padgett left the meeting.>

MOTION: Ray moves to approve these revised standards.

Discussion: None

The motion passed with the following vote:

- In favor – 9 – *Sam, Andrew, John, Genie, Ray, Hector, Patricia, Eve, Chelimo*
- Opposed -0-
- Abstaining -0-

XI. Adjourn

XII. Action Items

- **Council staff will investigate how to engage with County level elected officials, reach out to the housing authority to work toward meeting with them.**

NEXT MEETING: Monday, December 11th, 2023 virtually through Zoom and [downtown at the Chinook Building.](#)