



**RYAN WHITE CARE COUNCIL
MINORITY ADVOCACY COMMITTEE
METRO CENTER – TAMPA
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2009
11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order by Ramon Baez, Chair, at 11:15 a.m.

ATTENDANCE Members Present: Ramon Baez, Robert Bailey, Ann DePoole, Laura Dunn, Anthony Frederick, Catheline Lamour, John Melartin, Lewis Williams

Members Absent: Lolita Emanuel-Brown, Tonicia Freeman, Brenda Grove, Millie LaTorre, Andrew Maldonado, Darlene Smith, JaDawn Wright

Guests Present: Gustavo Bardelli, Edward Ford, Jerry Nealy, Tyrone Williamson

Grantee Staff Present:

Health Councils Staff Present: Nicole Brown

CHANGES TO AGENDA There were no changes to the agenda.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES The minutes for November 13, 2009 were approved with one change (**M:** Melartin, **S:** Dunn). There were 8 yes votes, 0 no votes and 0 abstentions.

WEST CARE PRESENTATION Ann gave a presentation on the MAI (Minority AIDS Initiative) funded services provided by West Care. She said that she works with HIV positive clients that have or have had a substance abuse problem. She meets with the client at a location convenient for the client and can work with someone up to two times a week. She is currently also going to the county jails and encouraged MAC members to refer her any clients that could benefit from substance abuse counseling. She stated that her funding for Hispanic clients is currently under utilized.

MAC DISCUSSION GROUPS Ramon announced that he held a discussion group based off of the MAC survey. He stated that he was surprised to see that the survey data was validated by the clients he spoke to but for different reasons then he was expecting. For example most clients that filled out the survey stated that they didn't know anyone that should get tested or

that knew their status and that weren't in care. Members had a hard time believing this data but Ramon said that the clients in the discussion group validated this because they're afraid of stigma and don't talk with anyone about their status or about HIV in general. Other issues Ramon stated that were discussed in the group were not taking medications at a specific time, not disclosing to sex partners due to fear of rejection and fear of sharing status with members of their support system. Members discussed how much stigma plays a role in clients' lives. There was discussion on making issues surrounding stigma a committee focus. Stigma was cited as a major barrier to clients getting care and to the spread of the disease. Methods shared to combat stigma were having celebrities open up about the people with HIV in their lives, promoting HIV awareness in the media, holding events for people that are infected and affected and building clients' self-esteem.

**CARE COUNCIL
REPORT**

John shared that at the Care Council meeting it was announced that MAI funding is going to be part of the Part A grant award next fiscal year. There will also be an additional dental provider in Pinellas County starting in December. It was also stated that there are changes in the new federal legislation that pertain to counseling, testing and outreach in Part A. The Grantee's office is waiting on more details.

CLIENT INPUT

There was no client input shared.

**OTHER
COMMITTEE
REPORTS**

The Membership Committee is hoping to recruit an additional Hispanic Care Council member. The Membership Committee will also be combining with the Client Services Committee in December.

Both the Rural Issues Committee and the WICY&F Committee had successful November community events with 50 infected or affected attendees.

**COMMUNITY
CONCERNS &
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members shared information on upcoming community events.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Minority Advocacy Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.