

## AIRN Blended Leadership Committee February 9, 2017 from 9:30 – 11:00 AM Atlantic

**In attendance:** Larry Baxter (Community), Michelle Bowden (PHAC), Angele DesRoches (AIDS PEI), Julie Dingwell (Co-Chair, AIDS SJ), Jacquie Gahagan (Dal), Greg Harris (MUN), Lois Jackson (Dal), Susan Kirkland (Co-Chair, Dal), Michelle Proctor-Simms (NSACA), Gerard Yetman (ACNL).

**AIRN Staff:** Caroline Ploem

**Regrets:** Marni Amirault (CAAN & AHA Centre), Jeannine McNeil (PHAC), Cybelle Rieber (AIDS PEI)

**Absent:** Diane Bailey (Mainline), Stacey Burns MacKinnon (PEI DHW), Gerry Mugford (MUN)<sup>1</sup>

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## AGENDA

### 1) Welcome and check-in (Susan)

Susan welcomed and thank everyone for participating in the meeting and asked members for any burning issues or updates they wanted to share.

- Gerard – Has been involved on the Adaptation of POCT for Pharmacies Project, led by Debbie Kelly at MUN. Training with pharmacists took place in mid-January and they are now awaiting ethics approval for the promotional materials. They hope to launch the program in the community by the end of Feb/17.
- Michelle Bowden – Provided an update on the PHAC transitional funding and CAF full proposals. This information is included under Item 3 below.
- Michelle Proctor-Simms – Continues to be involved with the harm reduction team (with DHW and NSHA) and have just completed their 2017-2018 business case for needle exchange based on the current service delivery models. They are starting to develop a provincial action plan for needle distribution/disposal services and safe consumption sites beginning in FY 18-19 (see Item 4 below).
- Julie – Was invited to a 2-day event in Vancouver hosted by the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. It will be a Knowledge Exchange Event on National Supervised Consumption Services and held Feb 16-17/17. Julie is unable to attend, but Tim Christie will be going in her place.
- Larry - As a sidebar, Larry participated in an orientation workshop series on patient engagement developed by the Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) through CIHR. He found that the level of engagement in other disease and condition areas was far behind what we have experienced in HIV. We have a lot of experience with engaging the community in research and have lots to share as SPOR improves these workshops. The next workshops in the Maritimes are in Fredericton, Saint John, Moncton and back again in Halifax. They are looking for patient representatives who have an interest and/or experience in research. More information is available [at http://www.spor-maritime-srap.ca/research-support/patient-engagement](http://www.spor-maritime-srap.ca/research-support/patient-engagement).

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<sup>1</sup> ACNL=AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador; AHA Centre=Aboriginal HIV & AIDS Community-Based Research Collaborative Centre; AIDS SJ=AIDS Saint John; CAAN=Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network; Dal=Dalhousie University; HepNS=Hepatitis Outreach Society of Nova Scotia; HON=Healing Our Nations; MUN=Memorial University of Newfoundland; NSACA=Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS; PHAC=Public Health Agency of Canada; UPEI=University of Prince Edward Island.

## **2) Review and approval of current agenda and minutes from December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

- The agenda and minutes were approved as circulated. Susan noted that all action items had been completed.

## **3) PHAC update (Michelle)**

- Transitional funding for the 2017-2018 fiscal year has been approved for the Ally Centre, Northern Healthy Connection Society, and Mainline Needle Exchange and the Native Council of PEI. The organizations were notified on February 8, 2017.
- PHAC is still waiting to move to the next step in the Community Action Fund approval process and as soon as information is received, Regional Staff will be in contact with the Atlantic organizations that applied.
- Michelle will keep AIRN up to date about future developments as they happen.

## **4) AHA Centre/CAAN updates (Marni) – Marni sent regrets – They have been focussed on the CIHR CBR Collaborative (AHA Centre) submission.**

## **5) Update on Provincial Opioid and Harm Reduction Working Groups (Michelle)**

- Michelle has been working on the HR WG being chaired by Elaine Holmes (Director of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control at DHW). The mandate of the work group is to focus on two services: needle distribution and disposal and safe consumption sites.
- Just completed a business case for 17-18 to sustain the current level of service provided by NSP. This has been submitted to the leadership which is also reviewing the business cases of all other 6 working groups. Hoping for a good outcome. The \$ needed to sustain current service delivery does not mean providing the same level of funding. Need to consider the increases in the number of clients, supplies distributed, and transportation costs. Hoping that this will be in place by April 1<sup>st</sup> and that the groups will be clear about funding allocations for the year.
- Just embarking on developing an action plan that will support the development of a preferred provincial model for needle distribution/disposal services and safe consumption sites. This needs to be ready in time for the Sept-Oct business planning cycle to be put in place for FY 18-19 and beyond.
- Michelle, Elaine Holmes, Lois, Diane, Susan and Caroline will be meeting Feb 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss the potential for AIRN to be involved in this work.
- Lois – Is working on proposal to REACH 2.0, titled “Moving towards a wider range of harm reduction services in Nova Scotia” (\$30,000). The main goal of this work will be to understand the perceptions of people who use drugs (PWUD) and key stakeholders concerning the feasibility of moving towards a wider range of harm reduction services in Halifax and Sydney, Nova Scotia — e.g. no cost naloxone for PWUD, community detox, supervised drug consumption sites, supportive housing, and a wellness navigator. In Halifax, they will be asking about perceptions of integrating needle distribution and disposal in different community agencies and facilities (e.g. pharmacies, Emergency Departments). In Sydney, will be asking folks about community-based low threshold opioid substitution program.

## 6) AIRN Highlights (Dec/16 – Jan/17) (Susan & Caroline)

### a) Abstracts Submitted

Both build on the Mainline Evaluation, but one is more extensive in terms of talking about the opioid crisis and the broader harm reduction context.

- Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA-Halifax-June/17): *Evaluation of Mainline Needle Exchange: Implications for Atlantic Canada's Harm Reduction Landscape in the Context of a Changing and Growing Opioid Epidemic* – *Accepted*
- Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR – Montreal – April/17): *Reducing Harms for People Who Use Drugs in Atlantic Canada: The Need for Enhanced Harm Reduction and Innovative HIV/STBBI Testing Services* – *Notification pending*

Lois noted that she also had an abstract accepted for CPHA – i.e. a symposium/panel discussion on *Public Health and Harm Reduction: Current Challenges and Future Needs*. She is trying to find some money for community members to sit on the panel.

Lori Root (NSACA) is going to CAHR, as is Larry Baxter and perhaps Michael Liddell.

### ACTIONS:

- ✓ Lois and Caroline will update the group when the date of their presentations has been determined.

### b) Update on AIRN's current CIHR CBR Collaborative Centre Funding (Caroline)

- At the last meeting, we talked about \$220,000 left from the existing CBR Grant and that the REACH Leadership was asked to consider different options for allocating funds to keep staff positions in all five regions.
- Since the funding agreements were signed at different times, the decision boiled down to either: (1) splitting the \$ evenly across regions (= different end dates) or (2) splitting the money so that all regions had the same end date.
- We are pleased that the decision was to split the money so that all regions have an end date of Dec 31/17. It made the most strategic sense and also the one most in AIRN's favour because our funding agreement was the first one to end. Caroline's contract has been extended for another year.

### c) CIHR Collaborative 2.0 Funding Application Submission

- Susan reported that this was just submitted on Feb 7<sup>th</sup> and it involved a lot of work from the regional coordinators. Caroline did a great job in assembling a team for the Atlantic Region. Thank you to Gerard who agreed to be the co-lead of the CBR Collaborative 2.0 with Susan. This is a very exciting initiative and our sole source of funding. Believes that the grant submitted was the strongest ever, both from the Atlantic region (30 team members) and nationally (137 team members). In the Atlantic, we've pulled in some excellent new members who have not traditionally been involved with AIRN or REACH, but have much to contribute.

**d) “A Smart Age with HIV: Challenges for clinical care of an aging population”**

- Susan noted that her colleague, Dr. Giovanni Guaraldi, was in Halifax for meetings related to their HIV, Aging and Frailty work and that AIRN took the opportunity to offer a presentation and webinar while he was here.
- Uptake was excellent (77 registrants from across Canada and 1 from Germany) and we received only positive feedback. The webinar recording and slide presentation have been uploaded to the AIRN website at <http://www.airn.ca/recorded-webinars.html>.
- The event resulted in 19 new AIRN members and an increased national visibility for AIRN through widespread participation and promotion.
- Larry wondered about the attendance of HIV specialists at the in-person presentation. Susan noted that it remains a challenge to engage HIV clinicians during the day. Invitations were sent out to all HIV specialists in Atlantic Canada. Dr. Lisa Barrett was planning to attend, but was unable to and sent her Research Assistant.
- Susan is looking to submit a proposal to CANFAR to build on her international collaboration on HIV, Aging and Frailty. They are looking to use the Italian database and creating applications of the HIV and Frailty Index in Canada.

**ACTIONS:**

- ✓ While some are already aware of this work (e.g. Drs. Lisa Barrett, David Haase & Lynn Johnson), Caroline will send a link to the webinar recording on to all Infectious Disease/HIV specialists across Atlantic Canada.

**e) EVALUATE THIS! 2017: A Pilot Flipped Workshop in Evaluation for Community Based Organizations with work in HIV/AIDS across Canada.**

- AIRN is working with REACH to build capacity in evaluation in CBOs across Canada. AIRN put a call out through the listserv and received an application from Choices for Youth, in partnership with the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador (ACNL) and Eastern Health. Choices for Youth is a non-profit organization that aims to empower at-risk youth in St. John’s through supportive housing, education and employment programs. They also provide a satellite need exchange program for ACNL’s SWAP (Safe Works Access Program) and provide STI testing.
- Over the next 3-6 months, Caroline will be working with and coaching the team in NL to evaluate *Choices for Youth’s* program that provides satellite sites for needle exchange, counselling & STI testing. The satellite sites are part of ACNS’s SWAP and funded by Eastern Health.
- The first meeting was held online February 8<sup>th</sup> and provided an opportunity for the 5 teams across the country to meet, discuss the projects they are evaluating, and learn more about the purpose of the workshop, the key components involved, and about how to develop a logic model and evaluation plan. The next meeting will involve a coaching call to discuss the team’s project description, logic model and evaluation plan.
- Gerard noted that the evaluation initiative is very timely as the province is trying to get a handle on the opioid crisis and move forward with its strategy.
- Susan is feeling very positive about the initiatives happening through REACH that are very relevant to our region.

## 7) Grants in Development

- “HIV, Aging and Frailty” (Susan) – being submitted to CANFAR (deadline Feb 24<sup>th</sup>) which builds off the previous work done with Giovanni Guaraldi. Some trepidation in meeting the deadline, but if it does not happen, will likely be submitted to CIHR at a later
- “Moving towards a wider range of harm reduction services in Nova Scotia” (Lois) – being submitted to REACH 2.0 – Hoping to submit in next couple of weeks. REACH has a relatively quick turn-around time, so should hear shortly.

## 8) Grants Recently Funded/Pending

### a) Recently Funded

- MAC AIDS (Cindy Maclsaac) – “Halifax Area Network of Drug Users” (HANDUP) (\$25,000).

### b) Pending Decisions:

- NSHRF – “GANS - “Shedding Light on Problem Gambling among Opioid Dependent Populations” (Decision: On hold) (Cindy)
- CIHR Operating Grant: HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research (2016-17) – (Decision: Feb 28/17)
  - “New Technologies and Chemical Culture: Examining Deployment and Effects Among MSM” (Matt Numer)
  - “The Canadian HIV Stigma Index CBR Project” (Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco)
- Public Health Agency of Canada: HIV and Hepatitis C CAF (Decision: TBC/17)
  - “Ending HIV Stigma in Canada: Adapting and Applying Contact-Based Interventions” (REACH)
  - Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD) – For strategic partnership with the Canadian Positive People Network (CPPN)
  - “Building capacity of community-based organizations across Canada to provide supervised injection services for people who use drugs” (Dr. Peter Centre)
  - “Hep C and Me Transitional Funding” (Mainline)
- CIHR CBR Funding Application (2018-2022) (Decision: April 6/17)

## 9) Ongoing Research Projects

- Catalyst Grant: “Moving Beyond Piloting POCT: A Social Ecological Exploration of Barriers and Facilitators to Scaling up HIV POCT in Canada” (Jacquie)

Jacquie reported that Alex is focusing on completing the ethics proposal to Dalhousie University to release funds. Once that is done, they will be hiring a PRA to get started.

- Trans Priorities Project (Caroline via Zack)
  - Phase I: Interviews/focus groups conducted with 78 trans women from 5 urban centres to explore their experiences with research, research priorities, and opportunities for greater community connection. The data analysis is almost complete and they are working with a design company to develop 3 community snap shots summarizing key findings in English and French. They are hoping to release these in summer 2017.

- Phase II: Focused on consultations with researchers and service providers to understand their perspectives on research priorities. 95 people completed an online survey.
- Recently started KI interviews with researchers and service providers and are in the midst of recruitment & data collection.
- Hope to complete Phase II data collection in early spring and are keeping busy with abstract submissions and presentations.
- There will be an in-person team meeting at CAHR to identify new opportunities to share results with community members and to discuss project next steps.
- “Grinding Against HIV Prevention Discourse: A critical exploration of risk among user of mobile gay cruising apps” (Caroline via Matt Numer)
  - They are finishing up the final report, which should be ready in the next week or two.
  - Planning to hold a community consultation/presentation at the Halifax library on March 22<sup>nd</sup> (Details to follow).
  - Matt has a book chapter in press and is hoping for book launch in Halifax in the spring/summer.
  - CIHR CBR Grant results due back Feb 28, hoping for a good result!
- “A New APPROACH to HIV Testing: Adaptation of POCT for Pharmacies to Reduce risk and Optimize access to Care in HIV” (Caroline via Debbie Kelly)
  - Training with pharmacists has just been completed.
  - Currently waiting for ethics approval for the promotional materials. Once the approval comes in, the official launch will be Valentine’s Day... which also ties into Reproductive Health Week.
- Others?
  - Julie reported that AIDS Saint John has initiated discussions with pediatricians and Infectious Disease Specialists to talk about pregnancy, drug use and methadone. They are experiencing a number of women still using or just recently on methadone who are far along (e.g. 24 weeks) their pregnancy but have not received any medical care out of worry about repercussions. Need to get info to women that they get very fertile once off drugs and on methadone. The government will not cover the birth control patch. There are 9 women that Julie is aware of. It cannot just be an issue in St. John. AIRN will follow up with Cindy and Diane.
  - In PEI, women have been known to get pregnant to get on the methadone program. Gerard is also aware of a case in Western Regional Office and will follow-up to learn more from colleagues.

**ACTIONS:**

- ✓ Keep this issue on the radar. AIRN will check around the region
- ✓ Julie will send out the initial meeting notes to Caroline and we can start talking about what is going on in our regions.

## 10) Current and Upcoming Research Funding Opportunities (links included below)

- [NIH \(International\) - Multidisciplinary Studies of HIV/AIDS and Aging](#) – Next deadline: June/17
- REACH 2.0 HIV Stigma Initiative (\$100,000 – to be launched early/17)
- CIHR Centre for REACH in HIV/AIDS (REACH 2.0 Objectives) – Ongoing
- [CANFAR](#) – Deadline: Feb 24/17 \$25,000 per year or \$160,000 over two years
- [NSHRF 2017 Funding Competition](#) (deadline: Mar 22/17)
  - [Establishment Grant](#) (\$50,000 per year for up to three years)
  - [Development/Innovative Grant](#) (\$15,000 for one year)
- Others?

## 11) Recently Held/Upcoming Events (see <http://www.airn.ca/event-calendar.html>)

- [A Smart Age with HIV: Challenges for clinical care of an aging population](#) – Jan 13/17
- [African, Caribbean & Black Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day "Panel Discussion"](#) – Feb 8/17 [Halifax]
- [Evaluate This! 2017 Flipped Workshop \(Session 1\)](#) – Feb 8/17 [Online]
- [Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network Atlantic Webinar: "Culturally Safe Programs and Services"](#) – Feb 13/17 [Online]
- [6th Canadian Symposium on HCV](#) – March 3/17 [Banff]
- [CAHN Education Day and AGM](#) – March 3-5/17 [Banff]
- [CAHR 2017](#) – Apr 6-9/17 [Montreal]
- [CANAC 2017 25th Annual Conference: HIV Nurses at the Forefront](#) – May 4-6/17 [Regina]
- [25th International Harm Reduction Conference](#) – May 14-17/17 [Montreal]
- [Canadian Public Health Association 2017](#) – June 6-8/17 [Halifax]
- [Community Health Nurses of Canada \(CHNC\) Annual Conference](#) – June 20-22/17 [Niagara Falls]
- [CMHA Mental Health for All Conference](#) – Sept 18-20/17 [Toronto]
- [World Hepatitis Summit](#) – Nov 1-3/17 [Brazil]
- [Issues of Substance Conference](#) – Nov 13/17 [Calgary]
- [CATIE Forum and Annual Meeting](#) – Nov 23-24/17 [Toronto]

## 12) Anything else?

- Susan thanked the group for their contributions and an excellent discussion. Compared to where we were a year ago, things are looking very positive. We are gaining momentum and moving at a rapid pace.

**Next meeting:** March 9<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 – 11:00 am.