



Atlantic
Interdisciplinary
Research
Network:
Social and Behavioral Issues in Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS



AIRN Blended Leadership Committee March 9, 2017 from 9:30 – 10:30 AM Atlantic

In attendance: Marni Amirault (CAAN & AHA Centre), Larry Baxter (Community), Michelle Bowden (PHAC), Susan Kirkland (Co-Chair, Dal), Jo-Ann MacDonald, Cybelle Rieber (AIDS PEI)

AIRN Staff: Caroline Ploem

Regrets: Stacey Burns MacKinnon (PEI DHW), Julie Dingwell (Co-Chair, AIDS SJ), Greg Harris (MUN) Lois Jackson (Dal), Jeannine McNeil (PHAC), Michelle Proctor-Simms (NSACA)

Absent: Diane Bailey (Mainline), Jacquie Gahagan (Dal), Gerry Mugford (MUN), Julie Thomas (HON), Gerard Yetman (ACNL)¹

MINUTES

1) Welcome and check-in (Susan)

Susan welcomed and thank everyone for participating in the meeting and asked members for any burning issues share beyond what they are already planning to report.

- Michelle Bowden – Groups are currently working on their CAF revisions. The Minister hosted an STBBI meeting in Ottawa a few weeks ago. No details on next steps are yet available but will share.
- Larry – Going to one-day Think Tank with realize on topic of rehabilitation as prevention, looking at the 90-90-90 strategy. Larry will also be sitting on a panel at CAHR on the same topic.
- Michael – Received a community scholarship for CAHR and will be taking part in the CAHR-CATIE Learning Institute. Scholarship recipients will be paired off with CATIE volunteers and staff and will meet every evening to debrief about the sessions attended and to prepare a Community Rapporteur Session for the last day of the conference. Michael will also be working with Caroline to disseminate info about the conference through AIRN.

2) Review and Approval of Current Agenda and Minutes from February 9th.

- The agenda was minutes were approved as circulated.
- The only action item not completed was to follow-up on the issue raised by Julie re. pregnancy, drug use and methadone. Women are avoiding medical care for fear of repercussions (Julie aware of 9 women in Saint John).

ACTIONS:

- ✓ Caroline will develop a password protected page on the AIRN website to provide easy access to minutes by the ABLC and the AIRN membership.
- ✓ Keep the issue of pregnancy, drug use, methadone, and medical care on our radar.
- ✓ Ask Jeannine and Michelle for an update on the 2-day CDC Education Workshop hosted by FNIHB & Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI hosting at Membertou.

¹ 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.

3) PHAC Update (Michelle B)

- Written feedback on the CAF proposals has gone out to all the groups and discussions have been held with them regarding the revisions required –most are related to providing clarity around work plans, evaluation plans and budgets.
- There has not been an increase in funding in this region, a number of budgets have been reduced, and many groups are not happy.
- None of the funding agreements are yet in place and the hope is to do so by Apr 1/17. Groups are working on their revisions under a very tight time line. A total of 8 projects are moving forward in the Atlantic – most are 5-year projects, and one is new to PHAC.

4) AHA Centre/CAAN updates (Marni)

- Submitted the CIHR Operating Grant: HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research (2016-17) – Indigenous Stream on Feb 7/16. This is for the next iteration of the AHA Centre. Decision is slated to come out Apr 6th and all fingers are crossed.

Marni is excited about the addition of a new overarching objective in their proposal related to viewing all of their work through Indigenous Knowledge, ways of knowing, and ways of doing. While they have always worked this way, they never had an objective articulating that.

- CAAN had two CIHR Operating Grants in HIV/AIDS Community-based Research Funded:
 - *The GIPA Homefire: Understanding APHA Leadership towards a Wholistic Response to STBBIs* (Renee Masching, PI; Mani Amirault, CI).
Looks at expanding a culture-based model of GIPA that is relevant to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada. Wants to evaluate how GIPA impacts APA health and well-being.
 - *Connections With the Land: Developing Gender Appropriate Two-Eyed Seeing Land-based Wellness Interventions, Wise Practices, Research Methodologies, and Knowledge Translation and Exchange for Indigenous People With Lived HIV and/or HCV Experience* (Alex King & Renee Masching, Co-PIs)
- Abstract was accepted for a poster at CAHR. It will articulate lessons learned from the first iteration of the AHA Centre, and talk about finding AHA's identity as a centre separate from CAAN. This has been a big struggle in the past five years.
- On the Wednesday before CAHR (Apr 5), CAAN and the AHA centre will be holding a satellite session with COCQ-SIDA comprised of 2-3 panels. The CAAN/AHA panel will be focussed on research capacity bridging (i.e. Capacity bridging extends beyond building the capacity of community to work within the academic structure but also building the capacity of researchers to work with community).

5) Update on Provincial Harm Reduction Working Group (Susan)

- Before asking for input from the group, Susan provided an update on conversations held between AIRN and the Provincial Harm Reduction Working Group (HRWG).
- The Province has established a number of working groups to address the opioid crisis. The HRWG is led by Elaine Holmes (Department of Health and Wellness) and they are interested in preferred provincial models for: (1) Needle distribution and disposal services; and (2) Safe Consumption Sites.

- As mentioned at the last ABLC meeting, the HRWG asked AIRN if we were able to do some of this work for them. We have had two meetings to discuss what kind of role we can play and what that might look like.
- They are looking for a business case built on environmental scans and literature reviews to arrive at preferred models that could be rolled out provincially. The work will be very labour-intensive and will need to be completed by Sept/17 so that they can use it in budget planning for 2018-19.
- When we first met with them, we indicated interest but emphasized that—with a staff of one—we did not have the capacity to do it without additional monies. The HRWG then went back to the Province and got some funding.
- There is approximately \$50,000 - \$60,000 to complete this work in the next 5-6 months. AIRN is proposing to carry out this work very similarly as it did for the *Landscapes* project. We would work with San Patten and an Advisory Committee of AIRN and provincial members that would meet monthly to direct and oversee this work.
- The group was asked for input and feedback on how they see the AIRN membership and leadership committee being engaged in this work and how we might effectively get this work completed by September?

They were asked to keep in mind that Lois has submitted a proposal to REACH that AIRN will be supporting in-kind that involves understanding the perceptions of people who use drugs and key stakeholders about the feasibility of a broad range of harm reduction services — including safe consumption sites — in Halifax and Sydney.

- The following points were raised by the group:
 - Since this project will likely be of interest to other Atlantic provinces, we should not limit the Advisory Committee to people in Nova Scotia.
 - We will need to move and work quickly.
 - Looking at an Advisory Committee of 3-4 from government and 4-5 from AIRN (from ABLC and/or membership). The ABLC will be updated regularly and the process will be open. We will seek to get input from as many people as possible.
 - It was suggested that we hold an AIRN open-membership call on a topic that feeds into the report.
 - Increasing our ties with the provincial government is a great opportunity for AIRN's longer-term sustainability.
 - Jo-Ann volunteered to be on the Advisory Committee.
 - It is recommended to ask Julie Thomas to be on the Advisory Committee to bring the First Nations perspective. She also sits on the HRWG so is very aware of the issues.
 - Michael expressed interested in being on the committee and was wondering if any written information was available to learn more. Since we are still at the discussion stage, nothing is yet available except for a couple of paragraphs prepared by Michelle Proctor-Simms.

ACTIONS:

- ✓ Caroline will send the brief description prepared by Michelle to the ABLC.
- ✓ Consider Julie Thomas for the Advisory Committee.

6) Funding Applications Submitted and Under Development (Updates)

a) Recent Decisions (since Feb 9/17)

- CIHR Operating Grant: HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research (2016-17) – General Stream
 - “The Canadian HIV Stigma Index CBR Project” (Francisco Ibáñez-Carrasco) – *Funded*
Very excited that after multiple submissions, the Canadian HIV Stigma Index CBR Project has been funded! It is being led by Francisco at OHTN and all of the regions will be very involved. It is a 3-year, \$450,000 project.

Susan and Larry will be the leads for the Atlantic Region and AIRN will be responsible for the regional aspects of the project. This will include the recruitment, hiring and support of Peer Research Associates, assisting with participant recruitment and all relevant aspects of the project at the regional level.
 - “New Technologies and Chemical Culture Among MSM” (Matt Numer) – *Declined*
- CIHR Operating Grant: HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research (2016-17) – Indigenous Stream
Marni reported on this under Section 3 (see above)

b) Pending Decisions:

- CIHR CBR Funding Application (2018-2022) (Decision: April 6/17)
- Public Health Agency of Canada: HIV and Hepatitis C CAF (Decision: April/17)
 - *Ending HIV Stigma in Canada: Adapting & Applying Contact-Based Interventions (REACH)*
This is another project which ties in to our regional priorities and in which AIRN will be heavily involved. The proposal is currently at the revision stage, but will most likely be moving forward.
 - *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)
- *Moving towards a wider range of harm reduction services in Nova Scotia* (Lois) – REACH 2.0
- CANFAR Innovation Research Grant competition “*HIV Point of Care Testing in Community Pharmacies*” (Debbie Kelly) (Decision: August/17)

c) Under Development:

- *New Technologies and HIV/AIDS: A critical inquiry into pharmaceutical sex and the culture of gay hookup apps* (Matt Numer) – Establishment Grant being submitted to NSHRF
Looking at how social networking apps (like Grindr) and advances in HIV prevention and treatment (e.g. being on PrEP; being Undetectable) impact gay and other MSM’s sexual health and risk taking behaviours. It is also aimed at informing potential online interventions for Nova Scotia’s Public Health and outreach workers.
- *HIV, Aging and Frailty* (Susan)

7) 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 – on hold pending outcome of PHAC Stigma Project)
- CIHR Centre for REACH in HIV/AIDS (REACH 2.0 Objectives) – Ongoing
- [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?

8) Ongoing Research Projects

- EVALUATE THIS! 2017: A Pilot Flipped Workshop (Caroline)
 - This is a REACH-led capacity building initiative for CBOs across Canada – Caroline is working with a team in NL (ACNL, Eastern Health, and Choices for Youth) to evaluate the Choices for Youth satellite site for needle exchange, counselling and STI testing.
 - Two meetings have been held so far. The most recent one involved a coaching call with David Seekings (Manager of Evaluation for REACH) and the Atlantic Team to discuss the draft logic model. The next coaching call will be held mid-April. In the meantime, Caroline will continue to support the team to revise the logic model and develop an evaluation plan.
- “Halifax Area Network of Drug Users” (HANDUP)
 - While in its early stage, HANDUP is up and running and are on Facebook.
 - On May 1-2, D180 and Mainline will be hold a community consultation and workshop in celebration of Mainline’s 25th Anniversary. Caroline and Lois are both sitting on the Planning Committee, along with Diane, Cindy, Natasha and Patti Melanson (MOSH)
On May 1st, the President of Canadian Association of People Using Drugs (Jordan Westphal) and Ann Livingston, a well-known advocate from Vancouver’s Downtown East Side (DTES) and co-founder of VANDU will facilitate a session with HANDUP members to present on the opioid crisis and response in the DTES and to look at the needs in Halifax.
On May 2nd, there will be a workshop consisting of keynote presentations, panel presentations and group discussion on moving harm reduction forward.
- Catalyst Grant: “Moving Beyond Piloting POCT: A Social Ecological Exploration of Barriers and Facilitators to Scaling up HIV POCT in Canada” (Jacquie)
- Trans Priorities Project (Caroline via Zack)
- “Grinding Against HIV Prevention Discourse: A critical exploration of risk among user of mobile gay cruising apps” (Caroline via Matt Numer)
- “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)
- Others?

ACTIONS:

- ✓ Caroline will send information about the May event (Mainline’s 25th Anniversary) to the ABLC as soon as it is available.

9) Upcoming Conference Presentations

- Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR – Montreal – April 6-9/17):
 - *Reducing Harms for People Who Use Drugs in Atlantic Canada: The Need for Enhanced Harm Reduction and Innovative HIV/STBBI Testing Services* (Kirkland S. et al.)
- CANAC 2017 25th Annual Conference (Regina – May 4-6/17)
 - POSTER: Piloting Point-of-Care (POCT): Examining the Impact of Inconsistent Availability of HIV POCT on Provider’s Training and Client Access (Gahagan J., et al.)
- Canadian Public Health Association (Halifax-June/17):
 - POSTER OR ORAL: *Evaluation of Mainline Needle Exchange: Implications for Atlantic Canada’s Harm Reduction Landscape in the Context of a Changing and Growing Opioid Epidemic* (Kirkland, S et al.)
 - SYMPOSIUM: *Public Health and Harm Reduction: Current Challenges and Future Needs* (Jackson, L. et al.)

ACTIONS:

- ✓ Caroline will aim to produce a bookmark (or revamp the pamphlet) to bring to CAHR

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

- [Evaluate This! 2017 Flipped Workshop \(Sessions 1 & 2\)](#) – Feb 8/17 and March 7/17 [Online]
- [Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network Atlantic Webinar: “Culturally Safe Programs and Services”](#) – Feb 13/17 [Online]
- PHAC Stakeholder Meeting to Identify Concrete Actions to Address STBBI in Canada – Feb 23-24/17 [Ottawa]
- [6th Canadian Symposium on HCV](#) and [CAHN Education Day and AGM](#)– March 3-5/17 [Banff]
- [Atlantic Canada HIV POCT Testing Webinar](#) – March 8/17 [Online]

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- [Shout Out LGBTQ Art Exhibition](#) — Mar 2-Apr 2/17 [Halifax]
 - [Creating Culturally Safe Health Care Environments for First Nations People](#) – March 20/17
 - [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]

11) Anything else?