



## AIRN Blended Leadership Committee

Thursday September 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 – 11:00 am Atlantic

**In attendance:** Marni Amirault (CAAN and AHA Centre), Diane Bailey (Mainline), Larry Baxter (Community), Jacquie Gahagan (Dal), Lois Jackson (Dal), Susan Kirkland (Co-Chair, Dal), Jeannine McNeil (PHAC), Michelle Proctor-Simms (NSACA), Cybelle Rieber (AIDS PEI), Julez Thomas (HON)

**AIRN Staff:** Caroline Ploem (Minutes)

**Regrets:** Michelle Bowden (PHAC), Stacey Burns MacKinnon (PEI DHW), Carla Densmore (HepNS), Julie Dingwell (Co-Chair, AIDS SJ), Greg Harris (MUN), Michael Liddell (Community), Jo-Ann MacDonald (UPEI), Gerry Mugford (MUN), Gerard Yetman (ACNL)<sup>1</sup>

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### MINUTES

#### 1) Welcome and check-in

Susan welcomed everyone to our Zoom trial meeting and asked all to provide a summer update.

- Michelle – Over the summer, the Commission has been busy planning stakeholder meetings related to HIV/STBBI testing (Sept 30), and income security and employment (Oct 25). These issues are 2 of 5 priority areas of the Commission’s stakeholder engagement strategy to address the first 2 recommendations in the Review of the NS HIV/AIDS Strategy.
- Julez – Provided HON’s regular workshops. Planning for AAAW – will be hosting on-reserve this year at Saint Mary (Maliseet). Also getting ready for a craft auction to support their APHA fund. Will provide info for the AIRN website once a date is set.
- Marnie – AGM held at end of June. CAAN had a good presence at the AIDS Conference in Durbin and met with the Health Minister and Stephen Lewis. Also gearing up for AAAW – will be several events going on across the country.
- Cybelle – AIDS PEI has a new board. They launched an LGBT Youth group on August 30<sup>th</sup> (10 participants) and are continuing to develop their HCV photovoice project. They have also formed a gay men’s advisory committee which will feed into a testing campaign and are preparing for three upcoming events to celebrate AIDS PEI’s 25<sup>th</sup> year.
- Jacquie – Served as Acting Director at the School of Health and Human Performance in July and August and started as Interim Director September 1<sup>st</sup>. The Faculty of Health Professions has a new Dean (Alice Aiken) who contends that funding for health research at Dalhousie will be greatly increased. The hope is that Dalhousie will refocus some attention to health and wellness not only as a strategic research priority for the university but also in terms of how researchers are clustered. Jacquie would like AIRN to consider how it can “research cluster” itself with other organizations on campus (such as HPI) as a means of getting more researchers connected to AIRN and in mobilizing research.
- Larry – Has been involved in an HIV and aging project with Patty Solomon at McMaster and has been volunteering with a food bank in Halifax.

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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.

- Diane – The summer has been terrible in terms of funding for Mainline and D180 and in getting clients on methadone treatment. D180 has 490 people in their program and cannot take any new clients either onsite or through their mobile clinic. There are currently 65 people on their waiting list, and Addiction Services also has a 20 person waiting list. While there has been no official word about funding, there is some reassurance from Dr. Strang that it will come.

Groups involved in CAPUD will be holding a National Awareness Day on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Mainline and S.A.N.E. will be hosting a public event to raise awareness about their programs, services, struggles and to get some media attention. All ABLC members are invited to attend. Diane and Cindy would like Susan, Lois and Jacquie to be there to talk to the media about the evaluation (no formal presentation at this point). Lois and Susan indicated that they will attend after 1 pm.

While the details need to be worked out, ideas include putting information and a video on Facebook, plastering the outside of their building with info about their projects over the past 25 years, and inviting the media.

Michelle added that she has been asked to be part of the harm reduction team, along with Sheila Sears, and a few others from DHW and NSHA to conduct a gap analysis around harm reduction in the province with needle exchange being the first priority in the short term. Their first meeting will be in a few weeks.

- Jeannine – Still waiting for LOI results from national office. Hope to find out by the end of September as indicated in PHAC’s message. Jeannine is going on assignment to First Nations Inuit Health for four months. Will be working with Robyn Boychuk. Michelle Bowden will be on the ABLC calls until Feb/17.
- Lois – The team that submitted the CIHR Knowledge to Action proposal met in early August to discuss whether they wanted to revise and resubmit. They decided not to at the moment for two main reasons: (1) CIHR is in such a state of transition; (2) The ED of Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre is currently extremely busy with other issues.

Diane and Lois met with Rob Strang and Elaine Holmes to talk about a feasibility study around a supervised injection site (SIS). Lois will put together a proposal to REACH for a feasibility study but not specific to SIS. It will be around integrated harm reduction across the continuum. Lois is hoping that Caroline can assist with the proposal.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- ✓ Diane will provide us with more information about the public awareness event.
- ✓ AIRN members to attend Mainline’s Public Awareness event.

#### **2) Approval of current agenda and minutes from June 9<sup>th</sup>**

- There were no additions to the agenda and the minutes were approved as circulated. The action items from June 9<sup>th</sup> were reviewed.
- There also not been any further conversation about an in-person meeting between AIRN – REACH.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- ✓ Susan will follow-up with Sean Rourke ASAP about future funding. Caroline’s position is funded only until Dec/16 and we do not want to wait until the end of October to know what will happen.
- ✓ Susan will follow-up with Sean/Sonia about the status of an in-person meeting.
- ✓ Cybelle will try to contact Matt Numer again to find out if the data collected for the “Grinding against HIV Prevention Discourse” extended beyond Nova Scotia.
- ✓ Caroline will follow-up on inviting Sheila Sears or Carol MacKinnon to join AIRN (ABLC) and will do the same in other provinces.
- ✓ Caroline will explore the potential for an inter-regional collaboration with REACH staff.

### 3) Workplan submission to REACH

- Based on feedback from the ABLC, Caroline's workplan was revised and sent to REACH for feedback in early August. Sonia indicated that she and Sean would review when he returned from vacation, but we have not heard back.

#### ACTIONS:

- ✓ Caroline and Susan will follow-up with Sonia about the feedback on the workplan.

### 4) New website overview and feedback

- Caroline provided an overview and guided tour of the new website. She is hoping it will become a useful KTE tool. The objective in the redesign was to make it more appealing and interactive, to ease navigation, provide regular updates, integrate with social media, and increase links to local research and useful resources.
- Feedback from the ABLC was very positive. People find it very useful, user-friendly, and aesthetically pleasing.
- Susan suggested putting the "Add an Event" at the top of the Event Calendar page and bringing the Rapid Response Index to the top of the Featured Resources page along with a short description.
- The ABLC agreed that the website was ready to be officially launched. Suggestions for launching included: ABLC members sharing [www.airn.ca](http://www.airn.ca) with their contacts through newsletters, listserves, and social media. We should also promote it through REACH.

#### ACTIONS:

- ✓ Members to send any suggested changes, additions and resources to Caroline on an ongoing basis.
- ✓ Members to share the new URL with colleagues.
- ✓ Caroline will prepare some key Twitter messages that will feature a main component of the website (e.g. Projects of Atlantic Canada) that could be circulated widely among social media channels.
- ✓ Caroline will promote the website through REACH.

### 5) Discussion of proposed project: Increasing Naloxone Access to Rural Areas through Community Pharmacists

- Susan provided an overview of the preliminary idea that would address our priorities in terms of harm reduction from an implementation science framework. Looking at the joint role of community pharmacists and natural helpers in getting naloxone to rural areas. A draft one-pager was shared with the ABLC. The one-pager based on a discussion with a team consisting of Tasha Ramsay, Ingrid Sketris, Cindy MacIsaac, and Laura Chapman.

#### ACTIONS:

- ✓ Send the one-pager to the team for further development. Once we have agreement, we will determine where to seek funding.

### 6) Submitted funding applications (Updates-Caroline)

- PHAC Community Action Fund (LOIs submitted Apr/16 – Results end of Sept/16). Jeannine thanked everyone for their patience in awaiting the results and hopes that the results will be available by the end of the month.

- CIHR Project Scheme Grant (Jacquie) – “Testing Innovation: Bridging the Gaps to Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infections (STBBI) Testing...” **(Not Funded)**. The Project Scheme Grant success rate regionally and nationally was dismal.
- NSHRF – Development and Innovation Competition 2016-17 (Caroline via Matt Numer) – “PREP-aring for the New Age of HIV: Examining the capacity of Nova Scotia to prevent HIV among MSM through pre-exposure prophylaxis treatment” **(Not Funded)**.  
Matt reported that the application was triaged, and that he received very little feedback. He is thinking of rolling it into the next phase of GrindR and submitting a CIHR CBR HIV Grant due October 4<sup>th</sup>. AIRN is waiting to hear how we can support the submission.
- MAC AIDS (Cindy MacIsaac) – “Halifax Area Network of Drug Users” (HANDUP) (Decision: Oct/16). AIRN supported D180 in drafting the proposal. A summary of the project was sent to the ABLC in June/16.
- Catalyst Grant: “Moving Beyond Piloting POCT: A Social Ecological Exploration of Barriers and Facilitators to Scaling up HIV POCT in Canada” (Decision: Oct 20/16) (Jacquie)
- NSHRF – “GANS - “Shedding Light on Problem Gambling among Opioid Dependent Populations” (Decision: Nov/16) (Cindy)  
AIRN will be collaborating if this project is funded. Looks at exploring the prevalence of gambling risks among 400 people accessing methadone treatment through Addiction Services’ Opiate Treatment Program across the province.

## 7) Current and upcoming research funding/proposal development opportunities (all opportunities are posted on our new website)

- [CIHR Operating Grant : HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research \(2016-2017\)](#) – Deadline Oct 4/16
- [CIHR Foundation Grants](#) – Registration & Stage 1 Application Deadlines: Sept 13/16 & Oct 13/16
- [CIHR Project Grants](#) – Registration & Stage 1 Application Deadlines: Sept 20 & Oct 20/16
- Upcoming: NSHRF [\(REAL Knowledge Sharing Support Award - \\$10,000\)](#) – TBA. Deadline Oct/16
- PIVHOT Grant (ViiV) – focused on “improving health outcomes or the quality of life for patients living with HIV/AIDS in Canada” – early Oct for 2016 funding.
- [NIH \(International\) - Multidisciplinary Studies of HIV/AIDS and Aging](#) – Next deadlines: Oct/16; Feb/17 & June/17.
- CANFAR – Dec/16 \$25,000 per year or \$160,000 over two years
- REACH – Ongoing

## 8) Ongoing Research Projects – Updates

- “Grinding Against HIV Prevention Discourse: A critical exploration of risk among user of mobile gay cruising apps” (Caroline via Matt Numer)
  - Data collection has been completed with a total of 20 interviews conducted (4 stakeholders and 16 GrndR users). The team is working on the data coding and analysis.
  - Matt has submitted a book chapter related to this work and is waiting to hear.
- “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)
  - They have a newly hired RA, have received ethics approval, and are currently establishing a provincial Advisory Committee to advise the research team on things like implementation, recruitment, and linkages to care.
  - Planning to train pharmacists by the end of the year and launching in Jan/17.

- Mainline Evaluation KTE Component (Susan/Caroline) – While the initial KTE event is not proceeding as planned with a formal presentation, there is a great opportunity to share information on Sept 30<sup>th</sup>. Susan offered to split the printing costs of the report with Mainline.
- HIV, Aging and Frailty (Susan) – Susan continues to work on papers with the Italian team and is trying to find the time to write a grant application.
- Naloxone Demonstration Project (Caroline) - The final Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Sept 29<sup>th</sup>. There is no word yet as to what will happen after that, although DHW is talking about it.

**ACTIONS:**

- ✓ AIRN will get a quote from Dalhousie for printing 50-100 copies of the evaluation report. Caroline will let Diane know the options and arrange for printing.

**9) AHA Centre/CAAN updates (Marni)**

- Marnie reported that they are awaiting word on two grants submitted.
- Are also looking at submitting an operating grant on October 4<sup>th</sup> with the APHA caucus. Another grant related to decolonizing methodologies and land-based research may also be submitted.
- CAAN has produced a video based on stigma in Saskatchewan. There will also soon be a video shot in Cape Breton.

**ACTIONS:**

- ✓ Marnie will send the link to the CAAN video to Caroline for inclusion on the website.

**10) Upcoming Conferences/Events (all events are now posted on our new website)**

- [CIHR Foundation Grant Q & A Webinars](#) (several between Sept 22 & Oct 12<sup>th</sup>, 2:30 – 4:00 pm ADT)
- [CWGHR 2016 AGM and Annual Forum](#) (Coming of Age: Exploring our Collective Response to HIV and Aging) — Sept 23 -24, 2016 [Toronto]
- [Engage NS: Five Myths of Collaboration – Free Half-Day Seminar](#) — Sept 27, 2016 [Halifax]
- [CMHA Mental Health for All Conference: Together by Design](#) — Sept 28 -30, 2016 [Toronto]
- In-person REACH Leadership Meeting — Oct 3-4, 2016 [Toronto]
- [CATIE Annual Meeting](#) — Oct 14, 2016 [Toronto]
- [OHTN Research Conference: HIV Endgame 1: Closing Gaps in the Care Cascade](#) — Oct 24-26, 2016
- [Supporting Peer Research Associates Effectively: A Workshop](#) – Nov 20, 2016 [Toronto].
- [OHTN Research Conference: HIV Endgame 2: Stopping the Syndemics that Drive HIV](#)— Nov 21-22, 2016 [Toronto]
- [CAHR 2017](#) – Apr 6-9, 2017 [Montreal]
- [6th Canadian Symposium on HCV](#) – March 3, 2017 [Banff]
- [25th International Harm Reduction Conference](#) — May 14-17, 2017 [Montreal]

**11) Anything else?**

- Feedback on the Zoom experience was positive. Those with a camera liked seeing the other members and found it more engaging than a teleconference. It was suggested that Michelle might be easier to hear if she wore a headset. We will use it again next time.

**Next meeting: Next meeting:** October 13<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 – 11:00 am.