

## ABLC Meeting September 14, 2017: 9:30 – 10:30 AM Atlantic

**In attendance:** Larry Baxter (Community), Greg Harris (MUN), Susan Kirkland (Co-Chair, Dal), Jeannine McNeil (PHAC), Michelle Proctor- Simms (NSACA), Gerard Yetman (Co-Chair, ACNL).

**AIRN Staff:** Caroline Ploem

**Regrets:** Marni Amirault (CAAN & AHA Centre), Stacey Burns MacKinnon (PEI DHW), Lois Jackson (Dal), Michael Liddell (Community), Jo-Ann MacDonald (UPEI), Karen Pitts (HepNS), Cybelle Rieber (AIDS PEI)

**Absent:** Diane Bailey (Mainline), Julie Dingwell (AIDS SJ), Jacque Gahagan (Dal), Julie Thomas (HON)<sup>1</sup>

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## AGENDA

### 1) Welcome (Susan) and Post-Summer Check-in (All)

- Susan welcomed everyone back, noting that we had a great but flat-out summer at AIRN. She thanked Gerard for agreeing to be Co-Chair and also for his willingness to represent AIRN on the REACH Leadership teleconferences. She then asked members to check-in with any summer holiday updates and/or what is keeping them busy this September.
- **Jeannine** – Had an awesome summer holiday – spent one week in Halifax and one in Cape Breton enjoying beaches and patios. A highlight for her was a kayaking tour on the Halifax harbour during the Tall Ships.

Workwise, there remain a few outstanding projects with the Community Action Fund (CAF). There have been some challenges in getting the contribution agreement finalized for an alliance comprised of the Health Association of African Canadians, the Association of Black Social Workers, and the African Diaspora of the Maritimes (ADAM). This has been frustrating for the organizations and will impact their workplan. They were supposed to start April 1<sup>st</sup> so hopefully the contribution agreement will be in place shortly.

AIDS PEI and the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia (ACNS) were part of an alliance of 11 organizations that dissolved. The organizations were invited to reapply, and AIDS PEI and ACNS did so with a smaller alliance including CATIE and a couple of organizations from other regions for some of their work with gay men. Another alliance has also reapplied and, given the competitive nature of the funding, there is a chance that both alliances will not be funded. They are anxiously awaiting the results.

The other big news with PHAC is the change in Health Minister. Jane Philpott is now the Minister of Indigenous Services; the new Health Minister is from New Brunswick. Great inroads were made under Dr. Philpott's leadership, particularly in terms of harm reduction, and the hope is that the issue won't get lost under the new minister. There is no indication that this will happen, as the new Minister has indicated that she will continue with the mandate started by Minister Philpott.

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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.

- **Michelle** – Has had a good summer, spending much of it with her family at their cottage outside Hubbards. She also spent some time visiting family in Cape Breton. Workwise, much of her time has been consumed by the report for the Harm Reduction Working Group and as part of the Steering Committee established by AIRN for the project, *Toward a Provincial Model for Needle Distribution and Disposal (NDD) and Safer Consumption Sites (SCS)* (see Item 6). She has also been working on a proposal for NSHA and DHW to develop clinical guidelines for STBBI testing.
- **Greg** – Has had a lot of family visiting him in Newfoundland this summer. Workwise, has spent much of the summer involved in curriculum redevelopment of the undergraduate and graduate programs and hiring in the Faculty of Education at MUN.
- **Gerard** – Will be taking vacation in October as it has been a very busy summer, mainly around the distribution of naloxone. ACNL set up naloxone pop-up tents at all the major music festivals, and over 3000 naloxone kits have been distributed so far. Gerard has also been busy as part of the Ministerial group organizing the 87 naloxone kit sites across the province.

ACNL also participated in *Stand-Out*, a youth LGBT conference and prom, and were able to sponsor 6 members of their youth council to attend the week-end. As a result, they have formed an LGBTQ advisory group to help set goals for ACNL's education and awareness programs over the next four years. Most recently, ACNL and other ASOs in the Atlantic have been working with Lois Jackson on a CIHR grant application looking at barriers and facilitators for access to addiction treatment services across the Atlantic Region.

ACNL has received a lot of support with their naloxone pop-up tents. Interestingly, a number of young families came to the tents not so much for the naloxone but for the education. Gerard attributes the absence of negative feedback to the NL Minister of Health and the mayor of St. John's who have done a lot of public communication on the topic. It was a great opportunity to speak with folks about the program, its importance and the role of harm reduction in public health. There was an alliance formed between the Department of Health, ACNL and the city of St. John's for these pop-up tents during the summer. The health authorities in the Central and Western Regions also had tents at music festivals. The Minister of Health is a real leader in NL – he has set the tone by highlighting the importance of the issue and the devastation of the opioid crisis. His approach is well-rounded, ranging from the over-prescribing issue, through to new training programs for physicians, and the distribution of naloxone kits.

- **Larry** – Was only able to join us after 10 am and did not have the opportunity to provide an update.
- **Susan** – Informed the group that her year has taken a major turn. She started her one-year sabbatical July 1<sup>st</sup> but was called back at the end of August/early September to take over as the Interim Department Head and Chief of the Department. This means she has a lot more on her plate, and is part of the reason she has asked Gerard to take over some of the teleconferences.

## 2) Review and Approval of Current Agenda and Minutes from March 9<sup>th</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup>

- The agenda was reviewed and approved as circulated; the minutes from March 9<sup>th</sup> were approved.
- Jeannine noted that the minutes from May 11<sup>th</sup> should be amended to reflect that Alex was not shadowing her, but was a PHAC employee and contributed a lot. He had the opportunity to present at the Atlantic Summer Institute on work that he did with Amy Bombay regarding residential schools and their effects on youth. He also had the opportunity to go out with Mainline on an outreach run, and was very moved by that. Alex has since started Medical school at McMaster University and is doing well. He made a great impression while he was here and had the opportunity to meet the Minister of Health and Chief Public Health Officer while they were here.

✓ **Action: Caroline will revise the May 11<sup>th</sup> minutes as described above.**

### 3) PHAC Update (Jeannine)

- The national office has prepared an STBBI Framework document based on consultations with provinces and CBOs held in Ottawa in Feb/17. They are looking for feedback on the document and Jeannine was wondering who has been able to do so. She does not believe that the PHAC regional folks have adequately been kept in the loop.

Michelle noted that she has provided feedback; Gerard has provided input as part of Action Hepatitis Canada (AHC) and another national organization. Gerard stated that AIDS PEI and ACNS also provided feedback as part of AHC (60 organizations were involved). The AHC response is available on the AHC website.

- Michelle wondered at what level within the federal government this framework is being driven and/or supported. Jeannine noted that Lisa Smiley is no longer in her position at Health Canada and that Genevieve Tremblay has taken over.

As for next steps, Jeannine believes that the revised document will be going to a few internal committees before taking it to the federal Minister for support in principle (likely the winter of 2018).

The STBBI Framework is still in draft form but changes are being made based on feedback received. For example, there has been feedback that the language around elimination (of HIV or STBBIs) is not realistic. There has also been some feedback that people didn't want things included in the report if there were no targets or identified measures.

- Gerard feels that the document is very weak, particularly in terms of actions and responsibility. There are a lot of broad statements, but very few concrete actions and statements about who will take responsibility for anything. Those involved in providing feedback noted the very short timeframe for doing so.
  - Jeannine commented that the feedback she was receiving was very helpful in that she had very little insight into what the regions were doing. She will keep the group updated as to what she learns. They have not been as engaged as in other documents released by the federal government – it was very much national-led.
- ✓ **Action:** If anyone has any other comments on the STBBI Framework, please send them to Jeannine and she will forward them to the National Office.

### 4) AHA Centre/CAAN updates (Marni)

- Marni was not able to attend the meeting, but sent the following update via email which was only viewed after our meeting and presented here for the first time:
  - CAAN AGM, Skills and Wise Practices will be held in Calgary Sept 26 – 28;
  - The AHA Centre has spent a great deal of time this summer on branding the Centre, working on a new website, and organizing themselves for 'AHA 2.0';
  - They have hired a half time communications assistant to help Sherri and Marni with the AHA Centre – it's not official yet, but they will soon introduce the new staff member; and
  - Are applying for several grants in the program, catalyst and CBR operating grant if all goes well.

### 5) REACH Update (Caroline)

- Susan thanked Gerard for agreeing to take over as the AIRN representative on the REACH Leadership Committee.
- The REACH Leadership met last Friday and Caroline attended from the Atlantic region. She shared a few highlights:

- REACH staff and infrastructure will be moving to St. Michael's hospital, as Sean Rourke is stepping down from his role at OHTN. Sean reassured us that it will be "business as usual" with REACH and the CIHR Collaborative but that some staff and administrative functions will be moving to St. Michael's. There was no mention of who is taking over at OHTN.
- The meetings will be 1 hour instead of 1½ hours to be more efficient (as AIRN is trying to do).
- REACH has moved to a co-leadership model which, in addition to Sean, includes Cathy Worthington (UVic – as the Co-Director of Training, Learning and Capacity Building) and Ken Monteith (COCQ-SIDA – the Co-Director of Diversity and Inclusiveness).

In light of this shift, much of the REACH meeting was spent discussing three main documents: (1) Leadership Agreement; (2) TORs (reflecting the Co-Director Model); and (3) Volunteer Agreement (to be more inclusive of GIPA/MEPA and adequately compensating members of the REACH Leadership who are not otherwise compensated for their time).

- ✓ **Action:** The three documents above were sent to Susan and Gerard for feedback to REACH by the end of the week.

#### 6) **Toward a Provincial Model for Needle Distribution and Disposal (NDD) and Safe Consumption Sites (SCS) – Update and Next Steps (Susan & Michelle)**

- AIRN was commissioned by the HRWG to prepare a report on preferred provincial models for NDD and SCS. Given the tight timeframes, AIRN worked on this most of the summer. This involved a document review and consultations (54 people). It has been an interesting and time-consuming process because the landscape around SCS was changing almost daily, and required constant monitoring and edits.
- Since May, we worked with a Steering Committee (SC), holding multiple meetings, and have presented an initial first draft to the HRWG for their feedback. We just sent out the final draft to the SC and HRWG for their final comments by September 21st. It is a lengthy report (~60 pages) and we are now working on an Executive Summary.
- Michelle added that the HRWG is arranging a meeting the week of September 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss the report and next steps. The report will be used to inform the 2018-19 business case. We don't know yet when the business planning process will begin, as the House does not open until Sept 21<sup>st</sup> and the budget for 2017-18 has not even been passed yet because of the election.

#### 7) **HIV Stigma Project Funding (see attached funding guidelines) – Brainstorm (Caroline, Susan)**

- Since our time was running out, Susan highlighted that this agenda item would be a priority for the next meeting. Over the years, REACH has submitted multiple stigma-related proposals that were rejected. This past year, however, REACH had two big proposals accepted – (1) CIHR for 450K (over 3 years); and (2) PHAC for > 1 million (over 5 years).
- Some of the funding is to actually implement the Stigma Project – i.e. a peer-driven initiative that will go ahead, and there is also additional funding that we can tap into for work specific to the regions. Looking at the guidelines, we can pull together a relatively short proposal (2-3 pages) to do something related to stigma around a number of priority groups. Susan thinks we should move on this because it is a great opportunity to do get something started this fall on a priority long identified for AIRN.

- ✓ **Actions:** Everyone to review the document Caroline sent out and contact her for additional info. In October, we will have a brainstorming session to see how we might make use of these funds.

## 8) Funding Applications Submitted and Under Development (Updates)

Susan pointed the group to the information included on the agenda related to this item (as well as those under 9-10).

### a) Decisions (since June/17)

- CIHR Centre for REACH in HIV/AIDS (REACH 2.0 Objectives): *“Additional Harm Reduction Services in two Sites in Nova Scotia: An Exploration of Advantages, Community Interest, and Methods of Delivery”* (L. Jackson & D. Bailey) – **Funded**
- Public Health Agency of Canada: HIV and Hepatitis C CAF
  - *Ending HIV Stigma in Canada: Adapting & Applying Contact-Based Interventions* (REACH) – **Funded**
  - *Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD)* – For strategic partnership with the Canadian Positive People Network (CPPN) – **Funded**
  - *Building capacity of community-based organizations across Canada to provide supervised injection services for people who use drugs* (Dr. Peter Centre) – **Funded**
  - NSHRF Establishment Grant *“New Technologies and HIV/AIDS: A critical inquiry into pharmaceutical sex and the culture of gay hookup apps”* (Matt Numer) – **NOT Funded**
  - *CANFAR Innovation Research Grant competition “HIV Point of Care Testing in Community Pharmacies”* (Debbie Kelly) – **NOT Funded**

### b) Pending Decisions

- MAC AIDS Fund: *“HANDUP Stands Up”* (C. Maclsaac )
- CIHR Team Grant: HIV Implementation Science Component 2: *“APPROACH 2.0: A Scaled-Up “APPROACH” to HIV and HCV Testing through Pharmacies”* (D. Kelley)
- Canadian Blood Services *“ACB and MSM – it’s not an oxymoron”* (O. Dryden)

### c) Under Development

- Operating Grant: HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research (2017-2018):  
*“Preventing the Spread of HIV: The critical role of addiction treatment services”* (L. Jackson)  
*“New Technologies and Chemical Culture: Examining Deployment and Effects among MSM”* (M. Numer)

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

- [Catalyst Grant : HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research \(2017\)](#) – Deadline: October 3/17
- [Operating Grant : HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research \(2017-2018\)](#) – Deadline: October 3/17

## 10) Ongoing Research Projects

- *“Additional Harm Reduction Services in two Sites in Nova Scotia”* (Lois & Diane)
- *“The Canadian HIV Stigma Index CBR Project”* (Francisco)
- *“Halifax Area Network of Drug Users”* (HANDUP) (Cindy)
- Catalyst Grant: *“Moving Beyond Piloting POCT: A Social Ecological Exploration of Barriers and Facilitators to Scaling up HIV POCT in Canada”* (Jacquie)
- *“A New APPROACH to HIV Testing: Adaptation of POCT for Pharmacies to Reduce risk and Optimize access to Care in HIV”* (Debbie Kelly)

## 11) Recent/Upcoming Conference Presentations

- Canadian Public Health Association (Halifax-June/17):
  - 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.) \* One of top 10 conference highlights identified by CPHA; coverage in the Chronicle Herald <http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/1475620-infographic-report-says-clean-needle-programs-are-in-high-demand-underfunded>
  - SYMPOSIUM: *Public Health and Harm Reduction: Current Challenges and Future Needs* (Jackson, L. et al.)

## 12) Held Since May 11<sup>th</sup>

- [25th International Harm Reduction Conference](#) — May 14-17/17 [Montreal]
- [Canadian Public Health Association 2017](#) — June 6-8/17 [Halifax]
- [LGBTQ+ Service Providers' Summit](#) — June 6-8/17 [Ottawa]
- Canadian AIDS Society's [People Living with HIV \(PLWHIV\) Forum](#) — June 6-8/17 [Regina]
- D180 & Mainline: [The Tidal Wave of Our Opioid Crisis](#) — June 8/17 [Halifax]
- [Rethinking Justice: 7th Symposium on HIV, Law and Human Rights](#) — June 15/17 [Toronto]
- [Community Health Nurses of Canada \(CHNC\) Annual Conference](#) — June 20-22/17 [Niagara Falls]
- Hepatitis Outreach Society of NS Open House — July 28/17 [Dartmouth]
- International Overdose Awareness Day — August 31/17 [Halifax & Sydney]

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

- [Realize Forum: Setting our Minds to it! HIV & Mental Health in Canada](#) — Sept 14/17 [Toronto]
- [The Stairs: Award Winning Harm Reduction Documentary Premiere](#) — Sept 16/17 [Halifax]\*\*\*
- [CMHA Mental Health for All Conference](#) — Sept 18-20/17 [Toronto]
- [ScotiaBank AIDS Walk](#) — Sept 24/17 [Halifax, Truro & St. John] and Sept 18-Oct 4/17 [Moncton]
- [CAAN & AHA Centre: Wise Practices VI, Skills Building & AGM Gathering](#) — Sept 25-28/17 [Calgary]
- [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]
- [CanHepC: 7th Canadian Symposium on HCV](#) — Feb 9 - 11/18 [Toronto]
- [Rainbow Health Ontario Conference](#) — March 21-24/18 [Sudbury]
- [CAHR 2018](#) — April 26-29/18 [Vancouver]
- [Canadian Public Health Association 2018](#) — May 28-31/18 [Montreal]
- [Global Hepatitis Summit 2018](#) — June 14-17/18 [Toronto]
- [IAS, AIDS 2018, 22nd International AIDS Conference](#) — July 23-27/18 [Amsterdam]

## 14) Next meetings (every second Thursday of the month from either 10:00 – 11:00 or 9:30 – 11:00)

Members decided that we would continue to meet every second Thursday of the month and that meeting would run from 10 – 11 AM.

- Next meetings (unless indicated otherwise): Thursday October 12, November 9, and December 14, 2017