

ABLC Meeting January 10, 2019: 10:00 – 11:00 AM Atlantic

Attended: Marni Amirault (CAAN & AHA Centre), Larry Baxter (Community), Julie Dingwell (Avenue B), Jacquie Gahagan (Dal), Lois Jackson (Dal), Susan Kirkland (Co-Chair, Dal), Michael Liddell (Community), Jo-Ann MacDonald (UPEI), Jeannine McNeil (PHAC), Caroline Ploem (AIRN), Michelle Proctor-Simms (NSACA), Cybelle Rieber (PEERS Alliance), Dena Simon (ACNS), and Gerard Yetman (Co-Chair, ACNL).

Regrets: Diane Bailey (Mainline), Donna Bulman (UNB), Stacey Burns-MacKinnon (PEI DHW), Greg Harris (MUN), and Julie Thomas (HON).

MINUTES

1) Welcome and Check-in (Susan)

Susan welcomed everyone and we started with a quick check-in.

- **Dena** — Attended the one-day PrEP workshop in Nov/18. She is working with NSHA around the spike in HIV diagnoses in 2018.
- **Julie** — The 2nd Harm Reduction Symposium will be held March 29th – 30th in St. John. The 2018 event had ~225 attendees and was very successful. She is sitting on a Task Force including the mayor to move harm reduction work forward in Saint John.
- **Michelle** — Updated # of HIV cases for 2018 is 29 (almost double the 15 reported for 2017). The PrEP workshop report is being vetted prior to submission to government and then more broadly. Michelle has started work on an environmental scan for a position paper on episodic disability in terms of income and workforce participation. This work could help build momentum in other Atlantic provinces. For those interested, Michelle can share two documents prepared by the NSACA in 2015: A Backgrounder and a Brief to inform the NS Accessibility Act and the need to include episodic disability in its wording.
- **Cybelle** — PEERS Alliance is: Continuing to search for sustained funding for LGBTQ work on STBBI prevention; Working on getting updated HIV and opioid overdose numbers from the Chief MOH; Disappointed that PrEP is still not covered on PEI; Looking for funding to bring in CATIE to conduct an HIV and aging workshop; Creating an advisory group for harm reduction work.
- **Gerard** — First meeting of the provincial STBBI Strategy/Framework is scheduled for Jan 14th. The Harm Reduction Project for Central NL is well underway. Currently establishing a Ministerial Committee to direct the 2-year project and to ensure that it will tie into the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, as well as the STBBI Strategy.
- **Lois** — Planning two workshops to present the main results from the Additional Harm Reduction Services study: (1) Halifax (Feb 14th at noon); and (2) Sydney (date TBC). Everyone is welcome to attend. Also busy with the COAST Study. Team members have been working on the ethics applications for months and are waiting for approval from the last few REBs. Lois acknowledged the difficult loss of Patti Melanson who was a collaborator on the COAST Study.
- **Jacquie** — Acknowledged Patti's passing and her countless contributions to the community. She also reported that she is: (1) On the board of Stepping Stone and they have applied for a grant looking at harm reduction including STBBI testing for sex workers; (2) Doing some work with HIV Scotland to look at a collaboration, and thinking of applying for a CIHR Best Brains Exchange to bring folks from HIV Scotland to Nova Scotia to talk about their testing innovations; (3) Looking at setting a date within the next few months for an AIRN webinar/meeting to present the findings of the CIHR POCT study; and (4) Involved in a working group with the Sexual Information and Education Council of Canada (SIECAN) to help revise the sexual health guidelines.

ACTIONS:

- ✓ *Julie will forward the Save-the-Date postcards and agenda to Caroline.*
- ✓ *ABLC members to contact Michelle if interested in receiving the NSACA Backgrounder and Brief re. accessibility/episodic disability.*
- ✓ *Lois will forward info re. the Additional Harm Reduction workshop to Caroline.*

2) Review and Approval of Current Agenda and Minutes from December 13th

- The minutes were approved as circulated.
- Karen Pitts has accepted another job and is no longer with Hepatitis Nova Scotia, and thus no longer part of the ABLC. We do not yet know who will replace her, but will add the item to the next agenda.

ACTIONS:

- ✓ *Include Hepatitis Nova Scotia representative as an item on the next agenda.*

3) National Organization Updates

AHA Centre/CAAN update (Marni)

- The CAAN/AHA Centre CIHR STBBI grant application has also been very time consuming.
- Marni, Jeannine and Caroline attended the Two-Eyed Seeing workshop Jan 9th at MSVU facilitated by Elder Albert Marshall. It was a fantastic day, and Marni will share the video and slides as soon as they are available.

PHAC update (Jeannine)

- PHAC (Atlantic Region) has scheduled two webinars for February titled “Discussion to Action on Substance Use: Promising Practices in Atlantic Canada”. The first webinar (Feb 7th) will set the context by talking about substance use issues; the second webinar (Feb 14th) will focus on promising practices for dealing with substance use challenges. Participants will include people involved in harm reduction and those working with children and families (some overlapping issues). Jeannine will try to change the date of the Feb 14th webinar given the conflict with the Additional Harm Reduction Services Workshop.

ACTIONS:

- ✓ *Jeannine will keep us posted and will forward the webinar invitations for distribution through the AIRN listserv and to various healthcare professionals.*
- ✓ *Marni will share the links to the Two-Eyed Seeing Workshop once they are available.*

Action Hepatitis Canada (Gerard/Cybelle)

- The AHC Steering Committee met in Dec/18 to hold a strategic planning session, which included the development of goals, logic model, new governance model, updated terms of reference, and the 2019-20 budget. Based on this, they have submitted grant applications to their regular funders.
- Continuing to work with CanHep in the writing and distribution of the “Hepatitis C Elimination Blueprint” to be launched in May/19 in Montreal. In the meantime, AHC has contacted all the ministers of health informing them about the blueprint and asking them to adopt it.
- The AHC will be holding their AGM in January. Stay tuned for the details. Also, their website is being updated to include their new mission and ways in which other organizations can get involved.

REACH 2.0 (Caroline)

- The deadline for the grant application was delayed to today and we will be submitting shortly. The team nationally consists of ~125 applicants, including researchers, clinicians, policy makers, community organizations, and people with lived experience. The main focus is to build on the first two iterations of REACH with a focus on program science related to testing, reaching the undiagnosed, linkage and retention in care, and stigma reduction.
- The Atlantic Team includes 15 members, including most of our leadership team. Given the focus of the grant, it will be co-led by Jacquie, Lois and Debbie Kelly as Principal Investigators and Michelle Proctors Simms as Principal Knowledge User.

4) HIV Stigma Project (Susan/Larry/Michael)

- The report from the “Moving Together Positively” workshop has been released to all workshop participants and will go out more broadly later this month following approval.
- Michael has been connecting with individuals and groups across Atlantic Canada to get information out about the project. Feedback so far has been very positive.
- The next step is the hiring of project assistants. Michael is working with the Steering Committee to finalize the job description and timelines. We are looking to engage 6 Project Assistants (200 hours combined): one in each province, plus an individual from the Indigenous community and one from the ACB community. A meeting of the broader Stakeholder Advisory Committee (includes several members of the ABLC) will be held Jan 17th.

5) Upcoming Halifax Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) Meeting (Caroline)

- In late Nov/18, Health Canada made some changes to the application process for SCS/OPS, and removed the requirement for provincial support and funding. This could speed up the process of opening a site.
- Several members from AIRN will be on a call tomorrow organized by Cindy (Direction 180) and Diane (Mainline) with a representative from Health Canada to discuss the process involved in opening an OPS in Halifax.

6) Brainstorming Winter AIRN KTE Event (e.g. Webinar/Lunch & Learn)

- The next KTE event will involve a presentation to discuss the findings of the CIHR POCT grant led by Jacquie. There are a number of events already planned for February, so the event will likely not happen before March/19.

ACTIONS:

- ✓ *Jacquie will let Caroline know of some potential dates for the KTE Event so that we can move forward with the planning.*

7) Grant Updates

Decision Pending

- Project PEER Catalyst Grant: Uncovering the Impact of GIPA/MEPA and the Wise Practices of Informal and Formal Supports [Greg] – Decision: Feb 28/19
- CIHR HIV/AIDS Biomedical and Clinical Team Grant – Testing, Reaching the Undiagnosed and Linkages to Care: “REACHing” for impact? [Sean Rourke] – Decision: Mar 28/19]

Under Development

- REACH 3.0 (Revised due date: Jan 10/19).

8) Ongoing Research Projects

- Halifax Area Network of Drug Using People (HANDUP) Peers Assisting, Lending Support (PALS) (C. MacIsaac)
- The COAST Study (L. Jackson & C. MacIsaac)
- “New Technologies & Chem Culture: Examining Deployment and Effects among MSM” (M. Numer)
- The **PANACHE** study (**P**references **A**nd **N**eeds for **A**ging **C**are among **H**IV **E**lders in Canada)” (S. Walmsley & K. Murzin)
- “Harm reduction and addictions interventions among people hospitalized with injection drug use-associated infective endocarditis” (T. Brothers)
- Canadian Blood Services “ACB and MSM – it’s not an oxymoron” (O. Dryden)
- “Additional Harm Reduction Services in two Sites in Nova Scotia: An Exploration of Advantages, Community Interest, and Methods of Delivery” (L. Jackson & D. Bailey)
- “The Canadian HIV Stigma Index CBR Project” (F. Ibáñez-Carrasco)
- Ending HIV Stigma in Canada: Adapting & Applying Contact-Based Interventions (S. Rourke)
- “Halifax Area Network of Drug Users Stands Up” (HANDUP Stands Up) (C. MacIsaac)
- Catalyst Grant: “Moving Beyond Piloting POCT” (J. Gahagan)

9) Recently Held and Upcoming Events (since Dec/18–)

- [Two-Eyed Seeing \(Etuaptmuk\) Workshop and Public Lecture](#) – Jan 9
 - [World AIDS Day](#) — Dec 1 [Multiple locations]
 - [Health Canada Consultation on strengthening Canada’s approach to substance use issues: Updating the Canadian Drug and Substances Strategy \(CDSS\)](#) — Sept 5 – Dec 4 [Online]
 - [CATIE Webinar: Peer health navigation: mental health implications of working as a peer](#) — Dec 12
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- [EduCATIE + Atlantic Regional Courses: Preventing the Sexual Transmission of HIV](#) — Jan 7–Feb 5/19 and Hepatitis C Basic Jan 14–Feb 11/19 [Online]
 - REACH/UWW Peer Researcher Learning Institute — Feb 5 to 8 [Halifax]
 - [Harm Reduction International Conference 2019 \(HR19\)](#) — Apr 28 to May 1 [Portugal]
 - [CPHA Public Health 2019](#) — Apr 30 to May 2/19 [Ottawa]
 - [CAHR 2018](#) — May 9 – 12 [Saskatoon]
 - [8th Canadian Symposium on Hepatitis C Virus 2019](#) — May 24 [Montreal]
 - [Canadian Liver Meeting](#) — May 24-26 [Montreal]
 - [41st Annual Guelph Sexuality Conference](#) — June 21-22 [Guelph]
 - [8th International Conference on Hepatitis Care in Substance Users](#) — Sept 11 - 13 [Montreal]

10) Anything else?

- The proposal submitted by CATIE in partnership with all of the ASOs in Atlantic Canada in response to the targeted funding call for an anti-HIV stigma campaign was not successful. We do not yet know which of the five proposals that moved forward for review received funding. Stay tuned.

11) Next Meetings (every second Thursday of the month from 10:00 – 11:00 am)

- Feb 14 and Mar 14/19