

## **HIV Health Services Planning Council PWA CAUCUS MEETING**

**Meeting Date:** March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002  
**Meeting Place:** 25 Van Ness Ave., Room 330B  
**Meeting Time:** 5:30pm - 7:30pm  
**Members Present:** Kevin Johnson; Felicia Elizondo; Mjay Sanders, Co-chair; Edward Patternson; Ken Pearce; and Charles Siron.  
**Others Present:** Richard Bargetto (HIV Consumer Rights Advocate); Jane Gelfand (Positive Resource Center); JT Swanson (Positive Resource Center); Zavier Lachica (Positive Resource Center); Carmen Cumba (Positive Resource Center); Rich Houll (Quan Yin); Zach Cook (Quan Yin); Vir Lagarus (Quan Yin); and Robert Owens (Council Admin. Asst. - Minutes).

**space**

**Next Meeting:** Wed., April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002, 25 Van Ness, 330B, 5:30pm -7:30pm

### **Introductions**

All individuals introduced themselves.

### **Review / Approval of Agenda**

The Agenda was reviewed and approved.

### **Announcements / Public Comment**

Jane Gelfand, Program Director from Positive Resource Center (PRC), gave an update on the work done at PRC. PRC saves CARE dollars in all services by getting clients onto SSI. There are a lot of people living with HIV/AIDS who should be on benefits who are not due to medical diagnosis barriers. The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 (not enforced until 2001) stated that people living with HIV/AIDS who have felonies, warrants, or have been incarcerated are being terminated and denied of SSI permanently; since October of 2001, 300 clients have been affected. In addition, 8 states have put a freeze on new ADAP enrollment with a possibility of 2 more states joining the freeze. PRC does time-consuming advocacy for 1,500 clients within a contract year. Each client receives about 1.5 to 20 hours of services concerning benefits counseling. Ken Pearce inquired if client files are closed after the client receives benefits. Jane stated that the files of clients are kept open- once a client always a client. PRC is developing a database to track clients more closely. Kevin Johnson encouraged representatives from PRC to attend the Cities Finance Meeting. Jane also stated that PRC deals with post-entitlement issues and issues concerning overpayment.

Carmen Cumba reported that she handles all of the PRC cases of people who are homeless. Most of these clients are "out of CARE" and PRC helps them into the system, by utilizing other agencies and services. Edward Patterson inquired about subsidy programs. If a client loses their SSI, will they become homeless? Jane responded that The Star, Rivera, and Bridge SRO's allow clients housing if they have no income, but other hotels do not. Jane announced that a client of PRC received a favorable decision regarding GA after applying 7 times. Jane also stated that PRC would advocate with doctors on behalf of clients on VA. JT Swanson had a success story where she got an overpayment of 18,000 waived for a client at PRC.

Zack Cook reported that he was pleased with the Council's decision to not eliminate Complementary Therapy. Zach is living with HIV and HEP C and has just completed the HEP C treatment. Quan Yin client's rely on CARE dollars for their Complementary Therapy. Most of them have exhausted the medication regimen, and these services are the only treatment that alleviates their medical condition.

Vir Lagarus, an unaffiliated consumer, who has Parkinson, HIV, and HEP C stated that she uses the services of PRC and Quan Yin and finds the Complementary Therapy to be a great help in dealing with her side effects. She feels that she might be able to start working again because of this service and will be utilizing PRC about returning to work.

Richard Bargetto encouraged Quan Yin to contact HRSA to share the success stories with the use of Complementary Therapy.

### **HIV Consumer Rights Advocacy Project Report**

Richard Bargetto reviewed the current cases concerning Housing at Dolores Street Community Service, Case Management at TLC/TARC, Housing at Lodestar/Haight Asbury Free Clinic, and Mental Health at Mano-a-Mano/IFR. Richard then reviewed the contract year number of clients seen, client demographic information, number of grievances filed, agency breakdown, and service category. *See Attachment A.*

### **Training Opportunities**

Mjay Sanders passed out informational sheets about different training opportunities. See Attachment B. The HAN conference is an excellent conference to attend to understand agencies that deal with people living with HIV/AIDS. Kevin Johnson stated that the AIDS Watch Update is a wonderful opportunity; the conference teaches how to talk to congress, senate, and state representatives about HIV/AIDS issues. Kevin has attended two of the conferences, advocating for the "Back to Work Programs".

## **Mission, Goals, & Responsibilities of the PWA Caucus**

Mjay Sanders reviewed the language in the By-Laws concerning the role of the PWA Caucus; and summarized his perspective of the Mission Statement, Goals, and Responsibilities of the PWA Caucus. See Attachment C. In his handout he defines what the strengths of the PWA Caucus are and how they relate to the Council.

## **Needs Assessment Task Force Update**

Mjay Sanders gave an update on the progress of the Needs Assessment process. Thus far, 330 people, who are HIV+ and live in the County of San Francisco has been interviewed- 96 Caucasians, 123 African-Americans, 75 Latino-Americans, 13 Asian-Pacific-Islander-Americans, 11 Mixed-Race-Americans. And 47 individuals from those groups, are homeless individuals of whom 38 of them currently are "not in CARE".

The group discussed some first hand experiences related to the interview process and survey completion. It was the perception of some people that the experiences were questionable; it was perceived that clients may be completing the surveys as quickly as possible in order to get their incentive vouchers; it was questionable as to whether some people were actually HIV+ or they just heard about the survey and the voucher; and the large size of the group did not allow for enough time for individual attention when needed.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.