

## Public Awareness & Community Engagement (PACE) Committee Meeting Summary

March 19, 2025

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, March 19, 2025	<b>Type:</b>	Virtual, Zoom
<b>Start Time:</b>	10:21 a.m.	<b>End Time:</b>	11:30 a.m.
<b>Leaders</b>	Africka Hinds (Stand-In Chair, CHPC Chair), Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos (CT Department of Public Health Resource Liaison)		
<b>Participants:</b>	19	<b>Next Meeting:</b>	April 16, 2025

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Africka Hinds, a CHPC Committee Chair and the stand-in PACE Committee chair, along with Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos, the CT DPH Resource Liaison, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ms. Hinds invited participants to introduce themselves, sharing their names, preferred pronouns, and, if applicable, the organization they represent. The co-chair emphasized the importance of maintaining a respectful meeting environment, reminding attendees of the group’s meeting etiquette:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowing one person to speak at a time</li> <li>• Share the floor – treat all with respect</li> <li>• Use <b>ELMO (Everybody, Let’s Move On)</b> if you feel a topic has been thoroughly discussed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One person speaks at a time</li> <li>• Ask questions if any terms or acronyms are unclear</li> <li>• Raise a hand (physically or digitally) to signal you would like to speak</li> </ul>
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### ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

**Approval of Meeting Summaries:** Ms. Hinds asked if attendees approved the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting summary, which had been made available on the [CHPC](#) website for review. The meeting summary was approved by general consensus.

**PACE Committee Charge:** Ms. Hinds outlined the charge of the newly established Public Awareness and Community Engagement (PACE) Committee, formed by merging the Membership and Awareness Committee (MAC) and Positive Prevention Connecticut (PPCT) workgroup. The committee’s charge includes leading CHPC membership recruitment, retention, mentoring, and orientation activities; as well as coordinating marketing and public awareness efforts and developing health communication strategies to support populations living with or at risk of HIV in Connecticut. Angel H. Ruiz asked about incorporating mentorship into leadership roles within the committee. Ms. Hinds affirmed that developing mentorship tools and providing orientations are part of the committee’s charge to help individuals take on leadership roles, highlighting that CHPC support staff and leadership held three interactive member onboarding meetings earlier during the week.

Committee Charge Comparison Table	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Membership &amp; Awareness Committee (MAC)</b> leads CHPC member recruitment, selection, orientation, mentoring, and retention activities, and coordinates marketing and public awareness efforts.</li> <li>• The <b>Positive Prevention Connecticut (PPCT)</b> workgroup creates health communication and strategies for those populations at highest risk of getting HIV in Connecticut.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Public Awareness &amp; Community Engagement (PACE)</b> leads CHPC member recruitment, retention, mentoring, and orientation, while coordinating marketing, public awareness efforts, and health communication strategies. It focuses on creating strategies to support populations living with or at the highest risk of HIV in Connecticut.</li> </ul>

**PACE Committee Vacancy & Recruitment Update:** Ms. Hinds announced a co-chair vacancy for the PACE Committee and encouraged CHPC members to consider this leadership opportunity. She highlighted the support provided by the Executive Committee, CHPC Committee Co-Chairs, the DPH liaison, and Cross Consulting Support staff. Reggie Knox and Angel H. Ruiz expressed interest in serving as co-chairs. Ms. Hinds and David Reyes will follow up with Mr. Knox and Mr. Ruiz to begin the orientation process.

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### MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION

**Newsletter Update:** David Reyes provided an update on the progress of the newsletter. Four articles in progress:

- **Personal Stories from People Living with HIV:** Being led by Reggie Knox and Ken Plourd
- **Stigma Reduction and Language Bias:** Jenny Bobadilla Pincos submitted an article, which is being finalized
- **Scientific Advancements in HIV Prevention and Treatment:** Being developed by Dante Gennaro and a subject matter expert with his network at Yale
- **The Connection Between HIV and Other STIs:** Also being worked on by Dante and a subject matter expert

Ms. Hinds asked for additional ideas for the newsletter articles relevant to current events.

- Angel H. Ruiz suggested including a section on how to get involved in local politics and advocacy work to provide people with more information on engagement. Ms. Hinds supported this, noting the importance of building advocacy skills for legislative sessions and the 2026 midterm elections, suggesting the group potentially host practice sessions for testimonies.
- Reggie Knox suggested having a resource section in the newsletter where readers can click on links to access relevant resources.

**Ongoing Community Engagement:** Ms. Hinds discussed the updated focus of the recruitment toolkit. The priority has shifted from solely focusing on membership applications to **raising awareness of CHPC and encouraging attendance at meetings before committing to or applying for membership** to foster better community engagement. While attendance at the main CHPC meetings is strong (100+ attendees in March), there is a need to specifically focus on recruiting members **under the age of 29 and from Tolland County**.

Several suggestions were made to address these gaps:

- Carl Ferris suggested reaching out to APNH (A Place to Nourish your Health), specifically Nick Bosnak and Tim, regarding engaging young same-sex attracted men.
- Mike Judd recommended contacting the **PrEP coordinators at Middletown's Community Health Center**, highlighting their young age and the organization's statewide reach.
- Danielle Warren-Dias recalled the successful **youth group** that was previously a part of CHPC and suggested creating a similar **subset or subcommittee within PACE** to engage younger individuals better. David Reyes confirmed the flexibility within the committee to explore establishing such a group.

The discussion turned to the recruitment toolkit (Appendix A). The toolkit aims to support DPH-funded sites in promoting CHPC through physical materials and social media, recommending "CHPC Wednesdays," where participants would post about the CHPC on the third Wednesday of the month. Concerns were raised by Ms. Warren-Dias about decreasing the use of paper materials, suggesting we share a promotional video or single recruitment sheet with a barcode instead. The idea of a CHPC awareness and recruitment postcard (half-page, front and back – similar to a party promotion card) was discussed as part of the toolkit. Ms. Warren-Dias asked if the awareness and recruitment postcards could be sent to PACE members so they could start distributing them. Mr. Reyes said he would send the postcard materials to PACE members.

**Committee Promotional Video Initiative Discussion:** Ms. Hinds shared that the ongoing initiative to create promotional videos for each CHPC committee had received approval from CHPC leadership. She reminded the group of and led a discussion around the following proposed concept, structure, key questions, and plan for filming for these videos:

- Concept: Short, engaging videos to introduce each committee and encourage participation
- Length:
  - 30 seconds – 1 minute for social media
  - 4-5 minutes for websites and stakeholder meetings

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- Key Questions: The committee was invited to react to and select their preferred key question through a poll (poll results are at the end of this meeting summary). The questions selected by the committee were the following:
  - How does this committee help people?
  - Why does the committee need community voices?
  - How do new voices make the committee stronger?
  - What has this committee done that made a difference?
  - And a section on how to attend meetings
- Filming: Due to the shift from in-person to virtual for the April meeting, these videos will be filmed via Zoom. The videos will involve short clips from different committee members collaged together, like the feature video on the CHPC homepage.

### CAMPAIGN WORK – SHIFTING FOCUS & EXPLORING SOLUTIONS

Ms. Hinds reminded the group that campaign work on the pro-condom campaign and the Prevention Pack is temporarily paused because of federal funding restrictions related to DEI concerns. The committee will adjust its focus to new campaign areas like the following:

- Addressing misconceptions about PrEP
- Increasing community awareness and promoting routine syndemic testing for HIV, STIs, and Hepatitis C
- Encouraging engagement in HIV care, particularly for individuals outside of Ryan White services

Ms. B Shumper noted the importance and effectiveness of in-person PrEP education. Suggestions for the new campaign focus included ensuring messaging is distributed in the most common languages (Spanish, Haitian Creole, etc...) and potentially organizing a community day focused on PrEP and testing (similar to a health fair). Ms. Hinds mentioned the possibility of increased DPH participation in community health events, including the upcoming Alpha Phi Alpha health fair. Santos Cancel asked about outreach for Hispanic undocumented individuals, and Ms. Hinds confirmed that efforts are made to ensure undocumented individuals receive services.

### OTHER BUSINESS, NEXT STEPS, AND MEETING FEEDBACK

#### Other Business:

- Ms. Hinds announced the upcoming Crimson Table Talks on March 27<sup>th</sup> and invited folks to participate.

#### Next Steps:

- Immediate:
  - Generate meeting summary
  - Co-chair recruitment – reach out to interested CHPC members Angel Ruiz and Reggie Knox
  - Send CHPC recruitment/awareness postcard materials to PACE members
- Within a Month
  - Finalize contributions for the newsletter (articles, interactive activities, events, formatting)
  - Coordinate virtual filming for committee promotional videos with Matt Lindahl
  - Further develop plans for the new campaign focusing on PrEP, testing, and/or HIV care engagement
- Long term
  - Explore the creation of a youth subcommittee within PACE to enhance the engagement of younger individuals
  - Continue to identifying and implementing strategies for recruitment members under 29 and from Tolland County

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**Meeting Feedback:** A meeting feedback evaluation poll was conducted to gather input on the meeting:

Summary Table from Interactive Meeting Feedback Poll (n=11)			
Questions	Yes	No	Unsure
1. CHPC Member	55%	36%	9%
2. The agenda was clear and used to guide the meeting	100%	0%	*
3. I understood the meeting information and materials	100%	0%	*
4. The meeting today felt inclusive and respectful of all voices	100%	0%	*
5. Overall, the CHPC event was well organized	100%	0%	*

### ATTENDANCE

Detailed attendance records are kept on file with the CHPC support staff. Attendees included Africka Hinds, Charles Hardy, Kaisha Lynch, Carl Ferris, Ruby Rose, Jenny Bobadilla-Pincos, Tamera Aryeetey, Travis Gibbs, Monique Davis, Angel H. Ruiz, Mike Judd, Santos Cancel, Danielle Warren-Dias, Reggie Knox, B Shumpert, Damilola, and Victor Acevado

### ADJOURN

The committee meeting ended at 11:30 a.m.

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### APPENDIX A

#### CONNECTICUT HIV PLANNING CONSORTIUM (CHPC) RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT USE GUIDE

##### Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support **DPH-funded sites** in promoting the **Connecticut HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** by incorporating recruitment materials into **physical office spaces and social media outreach**. The goal is to increase community participation and awareness of CHPC's work, ensuring diverse voices help shape HIV/AIDS prevention and care strategies in Connecticut.

##### About the CHPC

The CHPC conducts **planning work** to help the **Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH)** and its partners make meaningful decisions about the **delivery of HIV/AIDS prevention and care services**. The CHPC also fosters **networking, leadership development, professional growth, and HIV/AIDS awareness**.

As part of its work, the CHPC gathers information on **HIV, STIs, Hepatitis, Substance Use Disorders (SUD), homelessness, and mental health** to develop essential planning documents, such as:



- **Epidemiological Profiles**
- **Statewide HIV/AIDS/Syndemic Needs & Resource Assessment**
- **Statewide HIV/AIDS/Syndemic Prevention & Care Plan**
- **Statewide Coordinated Statement of Need (SCSN)**

##### How to Use the Toolkit

###### 1. Physical Promotion at DPH-Funded Sites

- Print and display the **postcards (at the end of this document)** in **waiting rooms, lobbies, and offices** where clients and staff will see them.
- Ensure front desk staff and outreach teams are aware of CHPC's mission and can **encourage participation**.
- Consider including **CHPC recruitment tool in intake materials** or community resource packets.

###### 2. Social Media Integration

- Post the **social media graphics (at the end of this document)** to your organization's **Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn**.
- Use **#CHPCWednesday** to synchronize with other DPH-funded sites and create a **coordinated recruitment push**. Posting on the third Wednesday of the month for a coordinated approach.
- Suggested caption templates:
  - **"Your voice matters!** Join the **CT HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** and help shape HIV prevention and care in our state. Meetings happen every **third Wednesday of the month**—your perspective is essential! Learn more at [CTHIVPlanning.org](https://CTHIVPlanning.org) #CHPCWednesday #HIVPrevention #PublicHealth"
  -  **It's CHPC Wednesday!**   
The **CT HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** brings together voices from across Connecticut to shape the future of HIV prevention and care. If you're passionate about equity, public health, and making a difference in your community, CHPC needs you! 💡  
Join us every **third Wednesday of the month** and be part of the conversation. Your voice matters!



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- 📌 **Learn more & get involved today!**  
#CHPCWednesday #HIVPrevention #PublicHealth #CommunityVoices #EndHIV #CTHealth #HIVEquity
- 🌍 **Stronger Together!**  
HIV prevention and care impact all of us. That's why the **CT HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** is calling on **you**—community members, advocates, and providers—to help shape Connecticut's response.  
📅 **We meet every third Wednesday of the month.** Join us to share your experiences, learn from others, and make an impact.  
👥 **Your voice can create change. Will you be part of it?**  
#CHPCWednesday #TogetherWeCan #EndHIV #CTCommunity #HIVAwareness #PublicHealthMatters
- 💬 **Let's Talk About It!**  
Want to be part of a community shaping real change in **HIV prevention and care**? The **CT HIV Planning Consortium (CHPC)** is where your voice matters.  
🔔 **We need diverse perspectives, bold ideas, and passionate advocates.** Join us on **CHPC Wednesday (every third Wednesday of the month)** to help shape Connecticut's HIV strategy.  
💡 Ready to step up? **Get involved today!**  
#CHPCWednesday #HIVAction #JoinTheConversation #PublicHealth #HIVPrevention #CTHealth

### 3. Dissemination & Availability

- The materials will be available for **download on the PPCT and CHPC websites.**
- Consider integrating CHPC promotion into **newsletters, email updates, and community announcements.**

### Contact Information

For questions, additional materials, or more information, visit [CTHIVPlanning.org](http://CTHIVPlanning.org) or contact **CT DPH/CHPC representatives.**

**Thank you for helping to strengthen CHPC's reach and impact!**

### Social Media Post

**YOUR VOICE MATTERS:**  
JOIN THE CONNECTICUT HIV PLANNING CONSORTIUM (CHPC)

The CHPC meets on the third Wednesday of most months, gathering individuals from across our state to provide an opportunity for people to:

- 👤 Influence HIV Care and Prevention in Connecticut
- 👤 Be part of a diverse, supportive community
- 👤 Make a difference for those affected by HIV

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CHPC VISIT [CTHIVPLANNING.ORG](http://CTHIVPLANNING.ORG), SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW, OR VISIT THE LINK IN THE CAPTION

CONNECTICUT Public Health




### Print Post Card Front



### Print Post Card Back

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### APPENDIX B – Video Initiative Key Question Prioritizing

Key Question & Alternatives	Perference (%)	Preferred Questions / Sections
Which question best explains what the committee does? (n=10)		
What does the committee do?	20%	How does this committee help people?
How does this committee help people?	60%	
What is this committee about?	20%	
Which question best explains why participation matters? (n=9)		
Why is it good for people to be part of this committee?	10%	Why does this committee need community voices?
Why is it important for people to join the conversation?	40%	
Why does this committee need community voices?	50%	
Which question best explains how new people can help? (n=9)		
How can new people get involved?	11%	How do new voices make this committee stronger?
How do new voices make this committee stronger?	67%	
What do new participants bring to this group?	22%	
Which question best explains how new people can help? (n=8)		
What has this committee done that made a difference?	50%	What has this committee done that made a difference?
How has this committee helped the community?	38%	
What is something this committee has achieved?	13%	
Should we include a section on how to attend a meeting? (n=7)		
Yes	100%	A section on how to attend a meeting
No	0%	

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