

## LA County Hepatitis C Task Force Meeting – February 16, 2005

*Attendees: Juan F. Muniz, Patti Huff, Gary Barbagalla, Jill Rottenberg, Joey Aguilar, Darrell Lind, Tracey Cumberland, Brenda Goodman, Cinderella Barrios-Cernik, Tihana Skaricic, Sofia Torres, Brian Risley, Diana Fernandez, Rose Ayala, Roberto Garcia, Carole Merwin, Russell Ybarra, Gilbert Bazan, Eve Rubell, Jane Maynard, Marilyn Montenegro, Cynthia Fairfax*

### 1) Introductions/Minutes

- a) Brian Risley introduced himself as CoChair replacing Alberto Mendoza. He invited Eve to sit with him and spoke of her long history with the Task Force as CoChair. All of the attendees introduced themselves and gave the name of their agency. Dr. Ardis Moe and Deon Claiborne were introduced. They are from UCLA CARE Center and will talk about the long-term treatment study later in the meeting.
- b) January 19, 2005 minutes were corrected and approved.
- c) A master list was passed to update names of attendees and agencies.

### 2) Old Business

- a) Advocacy Day took place on February 2, 2005 and was organized by Drug Policy Alliance, Oasis and California Society of Addiction Medicine. A conference was held in which 100 people attended. The speakers were excellent. We had a break out and smaller groups of 4 or 5 were formed and at least 3 tasks were given to each individual to perform. We did a legislative crawl through the State House going to 3 or 4 offices. There were some who were very enthusiastic and did more. Unfortunately a lot of the Senators were at a Legislative Conference being held that day in Newport Beach. There had been a scheduling problem, but we were able to meet with the Senators aids and a few other legislators. The Advocacy Day was a big success. We saw approximately 28+ legislators that day. One of the topics was to advocate for the Berg Needle Exchange Bill that passed last year in both Houses but was vetoed by Governor Schwarznegger. The Berg Needle Exchange Bill has been reintroduced to both Houses. A search is now underway to locate a coauthor for this Bill. Another topic emphasized was 'Why needle exchange is important to Hep C prevention' and counties that don't have the resources and need the model and infrastructure from places that have needle exchange programs.
- b) Prop 36 emphasizes treatment versus incarceration for drug offenders. Basically, this program is under funded.
- c) Last years accomplishments
  - i) The accomplishments were reviewed by Eve. She distributed a handout with the accomplishments listed. One of the big accomplishments was work on a State level resolution for Hepatitis C. Last summer the Hepatitis C Task Force assisted Assembly Member Paul Koretz in developing a Resolution regarding the importance of Hepatitis C. The State Legislature of California passed a Resolution in the summer of 2004. The Resolution did not have a financial or funding clause.
- d) Important issues for the future
  - i) It is time to start work on L.A. County to acknowledge that Hepatitis C is a problem. It is imperative that a State level Needle Exchange Bill be passed. Berg is looking for a coauthor and looking for an advocate to put the bill out there.
  - ii) Another issue at the local level is the staph infection MRSA. MRSA is a problem that the Board of Supervisor should address but have not yet done so. The matter is continually put off calendar and carried over from meeting to meeting.
  - iii) Brian Risley knows an MD who provides services in the LA County jail treating MSRA. He will be asked to speak about MSRA and talk a little about HIV and Hepatitis C infections.
- e) We will be searching for a speaker to come and address the issue of Organ Donation in the month of April. We will also start a drive to get people to signup.
- f) The hiring and funding of a Hepatitis C Coordinator
  - i) Brian Risley drafted a letter to help the Dept. of Health Services put together a proposal to the CDC to pay for a fulltime Hepatitis C Coordinator for the County of Los Angeles.

- g) Goals and Objectives have been outlined for the various subcommittees
  - i) Cinderella, Eve and Brian discussed the goals of their subcommittees.
  - ii) Handouts were distributed that listed the new goals for 2005 for all of the subcommittees except Prevention and Education. We have updated goals from last year and added two new ones. The two new ones are Care and Support item #4: Develop a plan for Hepatitis C Info line by 12/31/2005 and Public Awareness item #4: Translate and distribute the HCV Task Force Hepatitis C brochure into as many of the following languages as possible: Russian, Armenian, Korean, Thai, Tagalog, Farsi and Chinese.
- 3) New Business
  - a) Funding sources for the Hepatitis C Task Force.
    - i) Now is a good time to ask for funds because it is the beginning of the year. The Task Force will be looking to ask Pharmaceutical Companies for funding.
      - (1) Brian Risley will speak to Roche to obtain funding for the Legislative breakfast and summit. A follow-up will be done.
  - b) The consumer guide that Darryl wrote for Hepatitis C is a great resource and should be incorporated into the Hepatitis C Resource Guide.
- 4) Announcements
  - a) A position at Homeless Healthcare is opening up for an Administrative Assistant to work with the Hepatitis C Task Force. The work hours are flexible, but it is a ten-hour workweek.
  - b) PX Drugstore is having a dinner program. The subject is about HIV and nutrition. The dinner will be held on February 22, 2005 from 6:30p.m. to 8:00p.m.
  - c) On March 4, 2005 from 10a.m. to 12noon The HIV – EPI Program will have a community Advisory Board meeting.
  - d) HIV and Drug and Alcohol Task Force will be having a conference on March 2, 2005, and the topic is Understanding and Helping Your Substance Using Client and Reducing Sexual Risk of Your Patient. It is an 8-hour training with a lunch, and it is free. The registration form will be forwarded to Task Force members.
  - e) UCLA is cosponsoring with UCLA Care Center, Being Alive Los Angeles, AIDS Research Alliance and L.A. Biomedical Research Institute to publish an HIV Resource Guide. They are also planning an evening update from the retrovirus conference.
  - f) Dr. Ardis Moe and Deon Claiborne from the UCLA CARE Center were introduced along with their topic “Using suppressive Anti Hepatitis C medications long term to treat those with HIV/HCV Infection”. Two research studies are being conducted on individuals who are infected with both HIV/HCV. They can be contacted at 310-206-6414.
  - g) Steering committee meeting will be held next month at 1:00p.m. prior to the Hepatitis C Task Force Meeting.
- 5) Adjourn

The next Task Force meeting will be on March 16, 2005 from 1:30p.m. – 3:30p.m.  
At: 2330 Beverly Blvd., L.A., CA 90057 213-744-0724