

HIV Care Network

NEWS

Feb/March 2001

Serving Broome, Chenango & Tioga Counties

Broome County Health Department, Lead Agency
225 Front Street
Binghamton, NY 13905
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Network Coordinator: Nancy McGraw
Network Chair: currently vacant
Network Co-Chair: Natalie Thompson

Quarterly Network Meeting: April 5th : 4-5 PM

Broome County Health Department
225 Front Street, Binghamton

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The March 29 Quarterly Network meeting **has been changed to APRIL 5th**, and will be held from 4:00–5:00 PM following a Steering Committee meeting beginning at 3 PM. *Representatives from the AIDS Institute, Statewide AIDS Service Delivery Consortium (SASDC) will be in attendance to obtain input from the Network membership regarding the selection of a lead agency for the HIV Care Network in 2002 - 2003.*

We will also be voting on the Network’s full Workplan for 2001-02. Copies will be mailed to members prior to the meeting for review, and additional copies can be obtained by calling the Network office at 778-2858. *All Network members are encouraged to attend this important meeting, which is open to the community and the general public.*

Network In Process of Updating Regional Service Priorities

Over the past three months, the Network has been conducting interviews, compiling survey results, and holding focus groups throughout the region as part of the process used to determine current and future service needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS. Input from all sectors of the community will be sought regarding the service needs of PLWHIV/PLWA. ***The Network would like your input, particularly your ideas on reaching hard to serve populations, and those individuals living with HIV/AIDS who do not usually access services.*** Please call the Network Coordinator, Nancy McGraw with your suggestions at 778-3066.

(see page 7 if you have not received or returned a survey)

“Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

~ Abraham Lincoln

The Network thanks
Eric Banks, Chair



The NY-Penn Region HIV Care Network thanks Eric for his commitment, energy, vision & leadership as a Network member for many years, and more recently as our Network Chair! Eric has enriched our lives and we know that he will continue to positively impact the lives of others in the future. We wish Eric well in his new position as a policy associate for the New York AIDS Coalition as he advocates for the needs of those with HIV/AIDS across New York State.

**Study Shows Injection Drug Users at Needle Exchange Program
Share Few Syringes—and Those Who Do, Share With Friends**

Public health researchers at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California (USC) and the New York Academy of Medicine report that most injection drug users who take part in community needle exchange programs do not share their needles. The researchers note in the March issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* that because the results of the two-year study indicated that some drug users continue to share needles, despite the risks of contracting HIV and hepatitis B and C, "programs need to renew efforts to discourage further sharing of syringes obtained from the program." The authors studied nearly 1,200 injection drug users who participated in a Baltimore needle exchange between 1995 and 1997, and they found that about 17 percent of the addicts reported recently sharing a syringe, usually with a friend. Study co-author Thomas W. Valente, an associate professor at the Keck School at USC, said, "People working in HIV prevention need to get the message out that sharing with friends might seem natural and safe, but that isn't necessarily so. It is safer to use your own needle, and even safer to stop injecting altogether."

Source: Boston Globe Online (www.boston.com/globe) (02/28/01)

Worcester, Mass., AIDS Advocates Take Needle-Exchange Programs 'Underground'

[Mar 02, 2001 AIDS advocates in Massachusetts have taken needle-exchange programs "underground" in communities like Worcester, where "injection drug users are prevalent, but political conditions have prevented formal programs from helping addicts," the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* reports. Advocates in several Massachusetts communities are conducting illegal one-for-one needle exchanges with drug users in an attempt to lower the rate of HIV and other bloodborne disease infection in the population. Exchange organizers met in Worcester on Wednesday at a conference sponsored by the Boston-based AIDS Action Committee. Participants heard stories from advocates from around New England who partake in the underground exchanges, which they say are needed because users, particularly in small rural communities, don't want to "put themselves in a position that could lead to their addiction being exposed." Advocates in Worcester, who currently serve about 100 addicts, said that an additional 200 to 300 people a week could be reached through a clinic-based program. They said that without such a program, the city will continue to register "high rates" of HIV among intravenous drug users. The HIV rate among drug users in Worcester is twice the rate in Boston and Cambridge, where needle exchanges are legal.

AIDS Activists Win Skirmish in South Africa

Wall Street Journal (www.wsj.com) (03/07/01) P. A17; Block, Robert

AIDS activists in South Africa won a battle against international drug companies by redirecting attention back to the people living with AIDS during a landmark legal suit. The second day of the lawsuit belonged to the people as High Court Judge Bernard Ngoepe permitted the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), a local AIDS lobbying group, to join the South African defense case against 39 major drug manufacturers. TAC lawyers plan to argue the need to put patients' rights above patent rights by describing how devastating the disease is and how patients become too sick and poor to pay for the costly medicines. Major drug firms and the South African Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association are attempting to strike down the 1997 Medicines and Related Substances Control Act, a law they say infringes on intellectual property rights, breaks international trade agreements, and goes against the constitutional protection of property rights by permitting the import and manufacture of lower cost medicines. The pharmaceutical companies have been given until April 10 to file a response to TAC's arguments, and one week of hearings will resume on April 18.

Merck Starts Human Trials of AIDS Vaccine

Wall Street Journal (www.wsj.com) (02/22/01) Schoofs, Mark

Although this certainly will not be the first AIDS vaccine to enter human trials, Merck's testing of a new vaccine appears promising. Dr. David Baltimore, the chair of the National Institute of Health's AIDS Vaccine Advisory Committee, suggested that members of the panel--which heard details of the vaccine's progress during a closed-door session last month--"were excited" about the prospects. Merck will combine the vaccine with one it had tested earlier in a new trial for healthy, uninfected patients to check the products' safety, a step in a long process that has impressed researchers because of the thoroughness with which Merck has performed its research to date. Details of animal trials have yet to be revealed, and while panelists who approved the human trials may not reveal any specific information about Merck's testing, they claim the data are impressive and the greater scientific community at large will learn of the vaccine at a forum in Colorado in April. While Merck chief of vaccine research Emilio Emini notes pointedly that the vaccine "might fail," the drug worked well in monkey trials, according to those close to the investigation, and will enter tests in HIV-positive patients in four months, if the present step is successful.

Volunteers Needed to Serve On the Nominating Committee of the HIV Care Network

Volunteers are being sought to serve on the Network's Nominating Committee. Diverse representation is needed on the committee, as we seek to include representatives from Chenango and Tioga County as well as providers representative of the continuum of health care and human services for those living with HIV/AIDS. The committee currently has an adequate number of consumers.

The Nominating Committee will be meeting in April/May (date to be determined) to nominate individuals for Network Chair, Case Management Committee Co-Chair, and additional persons to serve on the Steering Committee. It is anticipated that the Network will be having elections at the June 2001 Quarterly Network meeting.

If you are interested or would like more detailed information, please call the Network Coordinator at 778-3066 *prior to March 30.*



Leadership Training Institute Graduates

In January, at least five local persons living with HIV/AIDS graduated from the Leadership Training Institute at a ceremony held in . Speakers at the program included Dr. Guthrie Birkhead, Director of the NYSDOH AIDS Institute and Daniel Montoya, Executive Director of the Presidential Advisory Council on AIDS.

Some of the training topics offered by the Institute include group effectiveness, grant proposal review, trainer skills, community organizing, presentation skills, community advisory board roles & responsibilities, and introduction to the Ryan White CARE Act & CDC HIV Prevention Community Planning. The Leadership Training Institute provides opportunities for persons living with HIV/AIDS to become involved in advocacy efforts and to develop leadership skills that will enable them to be effective representatives in their local Ryan White CARE Networks, communities, and community based organizations that deliver peer education services. Congratulations to our local LTI graduates, and thanks for your involvement.

For information on how to become involved, call toll free at 1-866-PWA-LEAD / 1-866-792-5323, ask for LTI. Persons living with HIV or AIDS can also become involved by joining the local Consumer Advisory Board or other committees of the HIV Care Network. Call the Network office at (607) 778-3066.

The Mission of the HIV Care Network is to improve the quality of life of individuals and families impacted by HIV and AIDS. This mission is achieved by fostering a coordinated, comprehensive, accessible, and integrated system for health and social support services for persons and their families who are infected with or affected by HIV and AIDS. Network committees have an integral role in promoting this system of care and making recommendations to continuously improve accessibility and quality of care in the region.



Committee News...

Community Awareness Committee...Chair: Becky Smith , Co-Chair: Alfreda Archie

- ◆ The Community Awareness Committee met January 10, 2001. In addition, the Network's Website is operational now (see pg. 2). Syringe Expansion and Ryan White Reauthorization are policy issues about which the committee has been providing updates to members. Members of the committee were planning to travel to Albany for AIDS Awareness Day on March 6th to meet with area legislators but the trip was cancelled due to a blizzard. We are considering local visits if the trip is not able to be rescheduled. The committee will meet again on April 19, from 10-12:00.

Case Management Committee.....Interim Chair: Nancy McGowan, RN

- ◆ The Case Management Committee met on January 24, 2001. The committee explored the need to strengthen the coordination of mental health and substance abuse services with providers of HIV/AIDS services, and will continue to discuss this issue in upcoming meetings. A subcommittee is forming to begin planning for a mini-conference/seminar on the coordination of mental health, substance abuse and HIV services in the region. If you would like to participate in the planning process, please call the Coordinator at 778-3066. There are still some **ACCESS Directories** available at no charge. The next meeting will be held on March 22 from 10-12:00.

Consumer Advisory Board.....Chair: Jack Patterson

- ◆ The Consumer Advisory Board met February 21, 2001 at the Broome County Health Department. A focus group was held to obtain input on service needs for PLWHIV. In addition, Judy Dzuba from the Southern Tier AIDS Program gave a presentation on vitamins and nutrition. If you are or know a person living with HIV/AIDS interested in joining this advisory board, please contact the Coordinator at 778-3066, or the Chair, Mr. Jack Patterson. The Committee will be meeting quarterly and will serve as an advisory group to the Network regarding the needs of persons living with HIV and AIDS. The Board will be meeting again May 16, 2001.

Ad-Hoc Committee.....Chair: Alfreda Archie

- ◆ The Adhoc Committee met January 29th for lunch. The goal of the Committee is to increase Network involvement of community leaders serving persons of color, and to mobilize them in raising awareness of HIV/AIDS and health disparities among persons of color. Committee members are planning to attend various planned community events to increase awareness about community resources and services available to HIV positive persons and offer risk reduction information and resources to individuals. Contact the Network at 778-3066 for more information. The next planned meeting has been rescheduled for **March 27th at 11:00 AM.**

Steering CommitteeChair: Eric Banks.....Co-Chair: Natalie Thompson

- ◆ The Steering Committee met February 1st. An appreciation award was presented to Eric Banks to thank him for his leadership of the Network as Chair, and for his many years as a volunteer with the Network. Eric has moved to Albany to begin a new job as policy associate with the New York AIDS Coalition, and we wish him well. Over the past two months, the Network has been mailing surveys and holding focus groups throughout the region to gather information on current and future service needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS. The next meeting is April 5th, from 3-4 PM.

Quarterly Network Meeting << The next Quarterly meeting is changed from March 29 to APRIL 5th, 4-5 PM >>

- ◆ At the December 19 Quarterly meeting, Network members held a brainstorming session on the service needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS in our region. Provider and consumer surveys were mailed out in January, and two focus groups have been conducted, one at the Broome County Department of Social Services and one with the Consumer Advisory Board. Additional focus groups are being planned for March. **The 2001-02 Workplan will be mailed for membership review in preparation for voting to take place at the April 5th meeting.**

Campaign for Reforming the Rockefeller Drug Laws

There is a statewide advocacy effort under way to call on New York State legislators to reform the Rockefeller Drug and Second Felony Offender laws, enacted in 1973. These laws have forced the incarceration of tens of thousands of non-violent, addicted individuals who use or sell small quantities of drugs, and condemn hundreds of offenders who are not major drug kingpins to prison sentences as long as or even longer than those imposed for murder and rape. These laws deprive children of their parents, waste enormous human and financial resources, and fail to address effectively the addiction that underlies most drug offenses.

Drug laws in New York State have had a particularly devastating impact on communities of color. Although their rates of drug use are similar to those of whites, African Americans and Latinos comprise over 94% of the drug offenders in New York State prisons.

Numerous studies have proven that mandatory drug treatment is an effective alternative to incarceration that is cost effective, reduces recidivism and enhances public safety by promoting rehabilitation and reintegration of addicted offenders into society. Judges should have the discretion to utilize this option and to fashion just sentences based on consideration of the particular facts of the case and the character or motivation of the individual offender.

In order to reduce unnecessary and expensive incarceration, enhance public safety and expand treatment of addiction, the Campaign for Effective Criminal Justice is calling for enactment of the following reforms:

- ✓ Trial judges should have discretion to sentence non-violent addicted offenders to mandatory, court-supervised community-based treatment.
- ✓ Except for major drug dealers (kingpins), sentences for felony drug sale and possession should be substantially reduced so as to be proportionate with sentences for

- ✓ Sentencing reform should be retroactive so that inmates currently sentenced under these laws can petition the courts for review of their sentences.
- ✓ Alcoholism and substance abuse treatment and alternatives to incarceration (ATI) programs should be expanded substantially to accommodate increased diversion from incarceration of appropriate offenders.

“Drop the Rock Day” is being planned as a statewide day of education and action to repeal the Rockefeller Drug Laws. On Tuesday, March 27, people from all over New York State will participate in what is expected to be the largest criminal justice protest rally ever held in Albany. To learn more about efforts to reform the Rockefeller Drug Laws, or this rally day, call 212-254-5700 , ext. 306. Information can also be obtained on the following web site address: www.droptherock.org

A Look At The Local AIDS Epidemic Over the Past 5 years:

From June 1995 to June 2000*, the number of cumulative AIDS cases have increased as follows:

- ✓ 67 % in Broome County (+ 84 cases)
- ✓ 200 % in Chenango County (+ 24 cases)
- ✓ 37.5 % in Tioga County (< 10 cases)
- ✓ 74 % in the region (+ 114 AIDS Cases)

- ✓ In Broome County, gonorrhea has increased in the past six months at higher rates. This puts people at increased risk of contracting and transmitting HIV infection.

- ✓ The number of new HIV positive cases at area sites offering testing is increasing, although we do not yet have any specific or regional data.

- ✓ Caseloads of providers offering health care and human services to HIV positive individuals and persons with AIDS continue to rise to the highest levels ever, here and across New York State.

- ✓ A detailed profile of AIDS by risk, race/ethnicity, gender, and age, as well as available services can be obtained through the Network office. Detailed information is outlined in our June 2000 publication: *HIV/AIDS Regional Profile*.

* Data is from June 1995 and June 2000 NYSDOH AIDS Surveillance Quarterly Reports, and is based on cumulative AIDS cases.

Broome County Health Department HIV/AIDS Training Programs (FREE)

HIV Testing Procedures	March 21-22	Binghamton	9:00 AM - 4:30 PM (2 day)
Overview of TB and the TB/HIV Connection	April 3	Binghamton	1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
HIV Confidentiality Law	April 12	Oneonta	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
HIV and STD's	April 26	Binghamton	9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Reducing the Risk & Harm of HIV	May 9-11	Binghamton	9:00 AM – 4:30 AM (3 Day)
Domestic Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual Communities			
	April 24	Binghamton	9:00 AM – 4:30 PM
	May 22	Ithaca	9:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Reducing Perinatal HIV Transmission	May 31	Binghamton	1:00 PM – 4:30 PM
The ABC's of Hepatitis and HIV	June 5	Elmira	1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
HIV/AIDS UPDATE	June 7	Johnson City	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Cultural Diversity	June 13	Binghamton	9:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Call Brenda Crone or Karen Armstrong at (607) 778-2855 to register,
or for more information on additional upcoming trainings contact Sondra Pruden at 788-2874.

**Anonymous* & Confidential
HIV Testing Sites:**

- * Broome County Health Dept (607) 778-2839
- * Chenango County Health Dept..... 1-800-562-9423
- * Delaware County Health Dept..... 1-800-562-9423
- * Tioga County Health Dept..... (607) 687-8600
- * Southern Tier AIDS Program..... 1-800-333-0892
- Others in New York State, call 1-800-541-AIDS

* Anonymous testing is free.

Both anonymous and confidential testing are now available in Tioga County. Call 1-800-562-9423 for appointments.

Partner Notification Assistance Program.....1-800-541-2437

Domestic Violence Resources

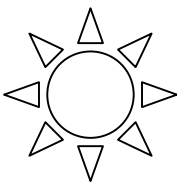
NYS Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-942-6906 English
1-800-942-6908 Spanish

SOS Shelter
(Serving Broome and Surrounding Counties)
754-4340 24 hr hotline

A New Hope Center
(Tioga County)
1-800-696-7600 OR 687-6866

Safe Against Violence
(Delaware County)
(607) 746-6278

Catholic Charities
(Chenango County)
Crime Victims/Domestic Violence
(607) 336-1101



AIDS Awareness Day for the Network Region was snowed out on March 6, and the trip to Albany was cancelled. *If you would still like to participate in visits with your legislators, please call the Network office at 778-3066.*

Please Return Your Survey
to Assist the Network in Updating
Regional Service Priorities

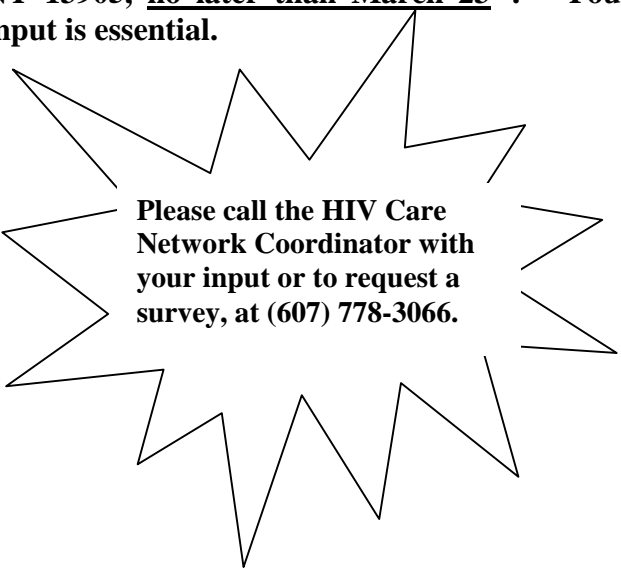
Over the past three months, the Network has been conducting interviews and holding focus groups throughout the region as part of the process used to determine current and future service needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS. Ranking of priorities will occur in the near future by the full Network.

Input from all sectors of the community will be sought regarding the service needs of PLWHIV/PLWA. The Network would like your input, particularly your ideas on reaching hard to serve populations, and those individuals living with HIV/AIDS who do not usually access services.

Surveys were mailed to health and human service providers in January and February throughout the region to gather input on service needs and gaps.

If you did not receive a survey and would like to fill one out, please call 778-3066. Persons with HIV/AIDS are being anonymously surveyed to assure confidentiality of responses.

If you received a survey and have not returned it, please complete it and return to the HIV Care Network, c/o Broome County Health Department, 225 Front Street, Binghamton, NY 13905, no later than March 23rd. Your input is essential.



**Please call the HIV Care
Network Coordinator with
your input or to request a
survey, at (607) 778-3066.**

HIV Care Network 2001 Meeting Schedule

Steering Committee

**3:00 PM –5:00 PM at the
Broome County Health Dept.,
225 Front Street, Binghamton**

December 12, 2000

February 1, 2001

April 5, 2001 3-4 PM, followed by Quarterly Mtg. At 4PM

June 7, 2001

Case Management Committee

10:00 AM -12:00 Noon

Locations TBA

November 30, 2000 – BC Health Dept

January 25, 2001

March 22, 2001

May 24, 2001

July 26, 2001

Community Awareness Committee

Note: Meetings are Now on THURSDAYS

10:00 – 12:00 Noon, Locations TBA

March 6 – AIDS Awareness Day – ALBANY

April 19

June 21

August 16

October 18

Consumer Advisory Board

Meets Quarterly

February 21, 2001 12:00-2:00 PM

May 16, 2001

August 15, 2001

November 14, 2001

Quarterly Network Meetings:

APRIL 5, 2001; 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM Binghamton
Broome County Health Dept. (NOTE CHANGE)

June 21, 2001

September 20, 2001

December 20, 2001

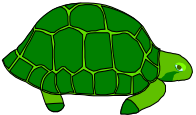
Adhoc Committee:

March 27, 2001; 11:00 AM

Future meetings to be determined as needed



Broome County Health Department
225 Front Street
Binghamton, NY 13905



“The greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions and not on our circumstances.” ~ Martha Washington