



## AFC Annual Community Briefing March 14, 2013 Notes and Highlights

The AIDS Funding Collaborative held its annual Community Briefing at The Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland on March 14, 2013. Melissa Federman, the AIDS Funding Collaborative's director, welcomed the panel and attendees and provided information about the AIDS Funding Collaborative (AFC). She described the discretionary grant program and the support that is provided through the grants (up to \$5,000). The Community Briefing is an opportunity for the community to hear from individuals who attended relevant conferences or trainings with discretionary grant funds in 2012. A summary of those highlights are below. Each speaker is listed with their affiliation and the conference or training they attended.

**Bob Bucklew, CWRU/University Hospitals AIDS Clinical Trials Unit (PrEP Update):** Presented a brief update on HIV-related clinical trials in Cleveland as well as education about Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). Truvada, a common HIV antiretroviral treatment, was approved in July 2012 by the FDA to be used as prevention of infection before exposure, or Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP intended for HIV negative adults at extremely high sexual risk for contracting HIV. Since the fall, CWRU/UH-ACTU has been studying PrEP in men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgendered women who have sex with men. Currently, PrEP is more than 90% effective, possibly surpassing condom use. Ultimately, PrEP is a tool for HIV prevention among high risk individuals whose behaviors are unlikely to change including MSM, transgendered women having sex with men, and serodiscordant couples (including heterosexual couples). Not for everyone, PrEP is an exciting new tool for prevention. Bob underscored the importance for all providers (care and prevention) to be ready with a 30 second elevator speech about PrEP.

**Bryan Jones, Community Member & DeMario Hairston, Community Member (Campaign to End AIDS Men's Advocacy Summit):** The first of its kind, the summit brought a wide range of men infected and affected by HIV together to coordinate national grassroots advocacy. A 12-point advocacy platform was shared and used as framework for action, which included housing as prevention and HIV criminalization law reform. For many attendees, advocacy was still new and the conference provided a great foundation for understanding what advocacy is, what issues need attention, and how to engage others in the work, by pairing experienced advocates with new advocates. Additionally, Bryan facilitated two workshops and was asked to join the

2013 Steering Committee. Both men were able to lobby at the Capitol and attend the rally outside of the third Presidential Debate.

**Isabel Hilliard, University Hospitals SIU (Association for Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC) 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference):** Isabel attended the 25<sup>th</sup> annual ANAC conference. The conference theme was reflective of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and focused on HIV care from 1987 to the present. A mix of new and experienced HIV nurses came together to learn and share. Conference tracks included Hepatitis C coinfection, adolescent retention and compliance in care, aging and HIV, as well as a screening of the film “And the Band Played On,” documenting the first years of the AIDS epidemic in the United States.

**Amanda Dennison, The Free Medical Clinic of Cleveland (National Harm Reduction Conference):** The Harm Reduction Coalition’s biannual national harm reduction conference is the only multidisciplinary gathering dedicated to improving the health and well-being of people who use drugs or have a history of drug use. With the focus on harm reduction as HIV prevention, attendees were able to share best practices and successful programs, in addition to engaging in a large network of providers. Highlights from the conference include workshops about Hepatitis C confection and prevention, overdose prevention, and syringe exchange updates.

Amanda also provided an update about the changes within The Free Clinic’s HIV program. The Syringe Exchange Program will be expanding to include Project DAWN, a partnership with Metro Health to provide Naloxone (Narcan) to prevent overdose among opiate users within 5-10 minutes of exposure. The local program is based on a model used in New York, which has an over 95% success rate with over 10,000 lives saved.

**Miquel Brazil, The AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland (2012 U.S. Conference on AIDS):** This annual conference hosted by the National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC) was described by Miquel as a rejuvenation event meant to reconnect and share notes with other HIV professionals across the country. The conference was very informative and began with a signing of the “Declaration to End AIDS.” Program topics included the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, moving forward in the age of Health Reform and the Affordable Care Act, High Impact Prevention, and the Treatment Cascade. Much of the conference was laying the groundwork for understanding the changes happening at a national level regarding how High Impact Prevention is operationalized and the impact on HIV by the ACA. Miquel shared that this was a welcome shift in strategy and a return to innovation. Additionally, Miquel provided an overview of the Treatment Cascade to help community members understand the concept.

Visit the AFC website ([www.AIDSFundingCollaborative.org](http://www.AIDSFundingCollaborative.org)) for more information on High Impact Prevention and the Treatment Cascade.

**Jerome Littlejohn and Salem Simon, Project SAFE (2012 International AIDS Conference):** The International AIDS Conference was held in the United State for the first time in over two decades due to the federal ban on persons with HIV traveling to the U.S. being lifted. The annual conference convenes individuals who are infected and affected by HIV from across the globe. With hundreds of workshops, panels, and trainings offered, Jerome and Salem followed separate tracks. Jerome focused his sessions on African American men who have sex with men (MSM) and HIV criminalization. Salem followed sessions primarily related to youth HIV prevention. Two highlights were attending a Levi Strauss/Heineken panel on workplace advocacy and learning more about the Grassroots Project, a project where youth learn about HIV prevention through sports.

With over 183 countries represented, the Global Village was one of the most impactful parts of the entire conference for both Jerome and Salem. During the Global Village, there were display tables, information, activities, performances, and giveaways.

**Sr. Susan Zion, Ursuline Piazza (2012 International AIDS Conference):** This was the first international conference Sister Susan had attended. The two biggest lessons she learned were 1) ending stigma is imperative and 2) there is a need for increased education, especially in communities of faith. One impactful session on appealing to the church to end stigma linked and solidified both concepts saying, "Education is free! Governments come and go but the church remains!" However, it was noted that while education is important, having the awareness to unpack the truth versus the misconceptions/misinformation is even more important.

### **Questions and Discussion:**

**Would it be possible to share more information about Project DAWN to share or give referrals?**

*Yes. There will be flyers. Feel free to also refer to the media from the Plain Dealer and NPR. Additionally, The Free Clinic is the only distribution site in the region. There will be changes with the van including change in east side location, variety of needle gauge, wound care kits, and safer injection kits.*

**Will there be a counseling piece to Project DAWN?**

*There is pretraining for those interested in having Narcan however there is no follow up from The Free Clinic. Follow up happens in the emergency room after the drug is administered. The Free Clinic is seeking to expand sites and increase advocacy for offering Narcan more widely.*

**As the AFC assess gaps, what is Cleveland missing?**

- *Treatment advocacy, access, and innovation*
- *Funds to implement programming after attending a conference*
- *Celebrities to engage the community*
- *Linkage of more PLWHA with prevention and resources*
- *Support to get physicians trained to prescribe Seboxone (like methadone)*