

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL
LGBTQIA+ Workgroup
MINUTES

November 15, 2024

- **Members Present:**

Krystal Oriadha, Council Member District 7, Co-Chair
Courtney Mariette, Deputy Director, Office of Community Relations, Co-Chair
Dr. Diane Young, Associate Director, Family Health Services Division,
Department of Health
Elana Belon-Butler, Director, Department of Family Services
Jose Villegas, Deputy Director/Chief of the Investigation Division
Office of Human Rights

- **Members Absent:**

Khouri Lassiter, Advocate for Youth
Lauren Wethers-Coggins, Department of Social Services
Jermaine Wyatt, Director of Community Health, Us Helping Us
Jason Jude, Chief of Teams, Us Helping Us

- **Staff Present**

Sandra Eubanks, HHSPS Committee Director
Leroy Maddox, Legislative Attorney
Rhonda Riddick, HHSPS Committee Aide
Nikia McBride, GOFP Committee Aide
James Walker-Bey, Associate Clerk of the Council
Tiffany Hannon, Chief of Staff to Council Member

- **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

Co-Chair Oriadha introduced herself as the representative for District 7 on the Prince George's County Council and expressed her honor in serving as Co-Chair of the LGBTQIA+ Workgroup. She thanked the members for their willingness to participate in this Workgroup. Co-Chair Oriadha shared that the Workgroup meetings are open to the public, recorded, and accessible on the county website, along with all related presentations, agendas, and minutes.

Co-Chair Oriadha reiterated the workgroup's purpose and goals, explaining its focus on examining the county's existing resources, understanding critical issues affecting the LGBTQIA+ community, and developing recommendations. These recommendations could lead to policy changes within agencies, new legislation, or increased investment in resources to address the concerns and challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community. While the Workgroup has prioritized certain focus areas, additional recommendations from members are also welcome.

- **Review of Minutes**

The minutes were approved as presented.

- **Presentation:**

Diane Young, DrPH, MS, RN
Associate Director, Family Health Services Division
Prince George's County Health Department

Dr. Diane Young, representing the Prince George's County Health Department, provided an overview of the department's CANCEL HIV Media Campaign, which began in 2022 with federal funding. The campaign aims to increase awareness, engage diverse communities, and promote HIV prevention and treatment using actual community members and focused messaging.

Key Highlights:

1. Past Campaign Efforts (since 2022):

- On-air interviews with local radio stations (e.g., WPRS, Magic 102.3)
- Segments on Great Day Washington,
- A four-part HIV prevention novella aired on WUSA 9.
- Social Media presentations featuring county residents.
- Collaboration with D.C. and Montgomery County on a podcast, now in its second season.

2. Current and Upcoming Initiatives:

- Expanding outreach to immigrant populations, African American women, and Latino and African American men, based on data trends.
- Physician-to-physician spotlights led by Medical Director Dr. Davis to routinize HIV testing for those over 13 years old.
- Incorporating sex-positive imagery and Spanish-language messaging.
- Providing HIV prevention resources like condoms and promoting PrEP services at reproductive and maternal health centers.

3. Target Audiences:

- Ages 18-34.
- Black heterosexual men.
- The LGBTQIA+ community.
- Immigrants and women.

4. Media Strategies:

- Live TV and streaming ads focusing on prevention and treatment.
- Featuring diverse lifestyles to reflect the unique characteristics of the county's epidemic.

Dr. Young played one of the campaign's TV ads, emphasizing inclusive messaging and visibility for HIV prevention and treatment services.

Dr. Young spoke about the Cancel HIV Media Campaign's advertising strategies and outreach efforts:

1. Ad Targeting:

- Ads are geofenced, focusing on Prince George's County zip codes and extending to D.C. borders for residents frequently visiting those areas.
- Advertisements appear on multiple platforms, including Instagram, Grindr, and other apps favored by younger audiences beyond Facebook.

2. Boosted Visibility:

- Ads are boosted to prioritize individuals living in or identified as Prince George's County residents.

3. Content Focus:

- Emphasis on encouraging HIV testing and promoting PrEP services for prevention
- Messaging tailored to resonate with younger audiences and address common myths about HIV prevention.

4. Novella Series:

- A four-part video series featuring Bowie State University actor "Sidney," exploring HIV prevention, risk, and dispelling myths. The series highlights real-life scenarios to educate and engage younger populations.

Dr. Young presented samples from the Novella series to illustrate the campaign's educational approach.

Dr. Young noted that the Prince George's County Health Department has not aired radio ads since 2020. She shared a sample of a past radio ad to provide an example of their previous outreach efforts.

Dr. Young highlighted the use of shelter ads across Prince George's County, strategically placed in areas with higher concentrations of new HIV infections.

1. Shelter Ads:

- Available in both English and Spanish.
- Campaigns like Q + U emphasize that effective HIV treatment prevents transmission by achieving viral suppression.

2. Positive Voices Podcast:

- Developed in partnership with Montgomery County and the D.C. Health Department.
- Focuses on sharing experiences and feedback from the community to enhance outreach and education efforts.

Samples of these initiatives were shared during the presentation.

Dr. Young concluded her presentation by inviting attendees to explore additional resources provided by the Health Department via the PowerPoint presentation:

1. Podcast Access:

- Season 1 and the complete Season 2 of the Positive Voices Podcast.

2. Novella Series:

- Featuring “Sydney” and focuses on HIV prevention and education.
- **Q&A**

Co-Chair Oriadha asked about the metric used to show the campaign's success.

Dr. Young explained that for social media metrics, they monitor the number of clicks, which indicates how many times content is displayed and interacted with. They can also track user navigation within the platform. Additionally, they assess the impact of campaigns by observing increases in clinic calls following specific advertisements. For instance, after an ad aired during the Super Bowl, there was a noticeable spike in calls, which could be directly attributed to that event.

Co-Chair Oriadha asked if we have seen more people taking preventative medication or treatment since the campaign's launch in the county.

Dr. Young reports slow but steady progress since the campaign's launch, with a noticeable increase in individuals utilizing preventive medication and treatment. She acknowledged the challenge of encouraging young people to take preventive measures like daily pills or injections when they feel healthy. Now, more people are opting for injectable treatments

due to the convenience of bi-monthly dosing. Currently, around 60 patients are engaged in some state of PrEP, whether through initial assessments or active treatment – a substantial improvement compared to last year when maintaining engagement with just ten individuals was considered a success.

Co-Chair Oriadha inquired whether there is diversity among participants in the preventive medication/treatment program, including women who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Dr. Young indicated that the campaign initially emphasized LGBTQIA+ communities but has expanded to include African American women and the heterosexual community, as data shows they make up 41% of HIV infections in the county.

This strategy ensures a balanced focus, continuing support for LGBTQIA+ while addressing other affected groups.

Co-Chair Oriadha acknowledged the historical framing of HIV/AIDS as primarily a “gay disease,” which has contributed to misconceptions and stigma.

Dr. Young stated that the campaign aims to shift this narrative, emphasizing that HIV impacts all demographics and communities. Dr. Young further explained that focus groups have influenced the campaign’s evolution to address diverse communities and ensure inclusivity in messaging.

Co-Chair Oriadha acknowledged the presence of the LGBTQIA+ community in Prince George’s County but pointed out that most social events are typically held in the D.C. area. She inquired whether there is a strategy for hosting events within the county or increasing outreach efforts specifically targeted at the county.

Dr. Young explained that the Health Department collaborates with trusted community-based organizations like Us Helping Us to support events rather than hosting them directly, citing staffing limitations. Dr. Young further explained that the community trusts community partners, and the goal is not to overshadow their efforts but to provide support and strengthen their work.

Co-Chair Oriadha expressed interest in sponsoring local events to create safe spaces and improve resource access. She inquired whether the Health Department had event ideas that could benefit from additional support and offered her assistance in providing the necessary resources.

Ms. Courtney Mariette, Deputy Director, Office of Community Relations, requested additional information on PrEP availability.

Dr. Young explained that PrEP is offered at the Cheverly and Laurel sites. Laurel focuses on pediatric populations, while Cheverly provides broader sexual health services. PrEP is incorporated into routine STI testing, with financial assistance programs (i.e., Gilead)

available for uninsured patients. Dr. Young further explained that there is no capacity issue, but more outreach is needed to encourage young people to access PrEP.

Discussions highlighted the need for more localized outreach, partnership, and resource allocation to better address health disparities in Prince George's County.

Co-Chair Oriadha asked about the age requirements and eligibility criteria for accessing PrEP services.

Dr. Young explained that PrEP is typically offered to individuals aged 13 and older, depending on weight. High rates of STIs among adolescents highlight the need for expanded outreach and services for this age group.

Co-Chair Oriadha inquired whether the Health Department's campaigns are being implemented within the School System.

Dr. Young explained that the Health Department is not currently conducting campaigns within the School System. However, they share information with the schools to ensure students know they can access services at their Laurel site if needed. She noted that collaboration with the School System occurred in the past when school-based wellness centers were in place. However, providers currently need to facilitate such efforts. Dr. Young added that she believes there is no longer significant hesitation around these discussions, as data now supports the need for continued dialogue.

Co-Chair Oriadha suggested exploring partnerships to reintroduce sexual health programs in schools and increasing funding for community events to enhance outreach.

Director Elana Belon-Buter, Department of Family Services, offered to collaborate with her Department on initiatives targeting youth populations (ages 13-30), particularly leveraging the SINs program and existing community provider networks.

Potential collaboration areas with the three (3) agencies could be co-hosting outreach events to enhance accessibility of sexual health services, expanding awareness campaigns tailored to young people with a focus on PrEP, STI prevention, and treatment, and coordinating resources to address gaps in outreach efforts across Prince George's County.

The discussion focused on collaborating on community events already planned or sponsored by agencies such as the Family Services Department and the Office of Community Relations. Additionally, there was an emphasis on organizing targeted events in underserved areas of the county to engage both LGBTQIA+ and heterosexual populations.

- **Review of Consolidated Subgroups**

Co-Chair Oriadha informed the Workgroup members about the revised structure of the subgroups. She explained that rather than holding separate subgroup and workgroup meetings, the following four workgroup meetings will focus on the previously established specific subgroup topic areas. She further explained that each meeting features a presentation (if applicable) followed by a group discussion on recommendations.

- **Identify Next Steps**

A template will be resent to the members and should be completed before the meeting. While last-minute recommendations can be made during the meeting, having the template filled out in advance will help facilitate more efficient discussions.

Requests for potential speakers (nonprofits, agencies, etc.) will be gathered.

- **Next Meeting Date**

Due to the holiday and staff vacations, the Workgroup will not meet in December, and the next meeting is on January 17, 2025.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:45 PM.

