

COBRA TAG MEETING SUMMARY

August 20, 2009

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Initial Announcements:

- Program Directors were reminded to make sure programs are receiving the monthly Medicaid Update newsletter. The article on “Mandatory Compliance Programs” by OMIG is important. Most COBRA programs are subject to this regulation. If you have any questions, go to the OMIG website, or call your program manager.
- Regarding questions about the NYC Department of Health HIV Case Manager Survey, it was reiterated that this survey is not an AIDS Institute survey; AI had nothing to do with its distribution. Hence, AI could not comment on questions regarding the survey. Before you send any staff names to NYCDOH, it is suggested you talk to your HR person/office.
- An update on the new Chronic Illness Demonstration Projects (CIDP) that have been initiated in the Metropolitan area was given. These programs target Medicaid “high utilizers” and do not specifically target HIV+ patients. COBRA Program Directors were informed that if one of their clients winds up on the “high utilizer” list, this means that these clients are, in fact, not stable and have significantly high use of emergency rooms and other crisis interventions. Hence, programs need to examine what types of COBRA services are being delivered. Directors were reminded that the program is designed to “enhance not supplant” and that, with particular regard to COBRA, enrollment in a CIDP will not exclude a client from enrollment in COBRA, there should be cooperation between the two programs. There may be some referrals to COBRA stemming from the CIDPs.

Presentation: A Legislative and Political Update with Matt Lesieur

Mr. Lesieur did a power-point presentation which covered the following topics:

- The current national policy landscape
- Major HIV priorities such as healthcare reform, the extension of Ryan White legislation, current status of the move to end the HIV travel and immigration ban and federal appropriations for 2010.
- The current state policy landscape and major NYS HIV priorities

Panel Presentation: Working with Young MSMs: Needs, Challenges and Strategies

The panel consisted of:

- Joshua Q., an HIV+ Consumer and Outreach Worker
- Howard Houghton, a Ryan White Case Manager with Village Care
- Christopher Johnson, MSW, the Clinical Coordinator of intensive Prevention at Gay Men of African Descent
- Ricardo Dunner, MD, Medical Director with Neighborhood and Family Health Centers
- Lawrence Hitzeman, MD, Medical Director with Village Care

The discussion was decidedly lively and covered topics associated with HIV prevention and early intervention with young MSMs, particularly young MSMs of color. The key points of the discussion were:

- Getting and keeping these young men in care
- Deconstructing myths and stereotypes
- Cultural pressures among Black and Latino men (masculinity, gender roles, etc.)
- Difficulties with adherence, particularly among young people
- A variety of approaches to outreach, prevention and engagement
- The importance of early intervention
- A broad range of sexual attitudes and identities
- There were a couple of questions regarding the “women in the lives of some MSM’s who do not know about this activity”. This could be a future TAG discussion.