

**Palm Beach County HIV CARE Council  
CARE Council Meeting**

**September 29<sup>th</sup> 2025 @ 2:00 P.M. @1440 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Riviera Beach, Florida - 33404 / Belle Glade Library - 725 NW 4th St, Belle Glade Library //LUNCH will be provided @ Both the location.**

[\*\*https://pbcgov.zoom.us/j/81816546171?pwd=G1qbiDGY8HslgPU8ubrJgUkbrr85y9.1\*\*](https://pbcgov.zoom.us/j/81816546171?pwd=G1qbiDGY8HslgPU8ubrJgUkbrr85y9.1)

**Meeting ID: 818 1654 6171**

**Passcode: 051928**

*Agenda*

**Members Present**

1. Ashnika Ali
2. Hector Bernardino
3. Lysette Perez
4. Orquidea Acevedo
5. Kristen Harrington – **Secretary**
6. Miguel Vasquez
7. Glenn Krabec
8. Brittany Henry
9. Tad Fuller – **Vice Chair**
10. Nancy McConnell
11. Kim Rommel-Enright
12. Cynthia Walker
13. Ashaki Sypher
14. Cynthia Walker
15. Dr. Berthline Isma
16. Cecil Smith
17. Rosie Hayes
18. Annette Dunn
19. Mary Jane Reynolds
20. Dominique Lane- Late
21. Kenny Talbot

**Members Absent**

Youssef Motii- **Treasurer**  
Richardo Jackson- **Chair**

**Guests**

Lilia Perez  
Kristen Ferguson  
Fabiola Gonzalez  
Denise Grigoriou  
Andi Thomas  
Wilson  
Erin McSpadden  
Barbara Evans  
Robert Scott  
Hardeep Singh  
Emma Roca  
Cynthia Acosta  
Irma Shutes  
Nashika Jackson  
Dr Sandra Anderson  
Sandra Steward  
  
Sharon Hollis  
Keri Ramnarez  
Alicia Tramel  
Samona Powell  
Denise Brown  
Patricia Morgan  
Samona Powell  
  
Ryan Adams  
Raymond Cortes

Note: If you have any question or require special accommodations, please contact Neeta Mahani at 561-355-4820 or [Nmhahani@pbcgov.org](mailto:Nmhahani@pbcgov.org) .

**Staff Attendance Table**

<b><u>Recipient Staff</u></b>	<b><u>Recipient Staff</u></b>	<b><u>CARE Council Staff</u></b>
Jeffrey Lesanti	Jasmine Parrish	Neeta Mahani
Jason Gross	Dr Daisy Wiebe	
Anna Bala	Willie Joseph	
Geneve Simeus	Neera Maharaj	
Shoshana Ringer	Dr Andres Correa	
Stephen Ellis	August Frohnhoefer	
Dr Casey Messer		
Jessica Bobber		

**I.** Call to order. Roll, Introduction of Guests – Neeta Mahani and quorum were present.

**II.** A Moment of Reflection- Tad Fuller

**A Moment of Silence**

*A moment of silence is observed in respect to the memory of those individuals  
Who have succumbed to AIDS and those who are living with HIV. Let us  
Remember why we are here today. Let us have the strength to make the decisions that  
Will improve the care of those we serve. Let us be thankful for what we have accomplished to  
date.*

**III. Motion to accept Dominique Lane Excused Absences:**

Annette Dunn – First and Miguel Vasquez- Second, Motion Carries

**Motion to accept Richardo Jackson Excused Absences:**

Kenny Talbot – First and Rosie Hayes - Second, Motion Carries

**IV. Motion to accept September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025, CARE Council Meeting Agenda.**

Annette Dunn- First and Rosie Hayes – Second, Motion Carries

**V. Motion to accept August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, CARE Council Meeting Minutes.**

Nancy McConnel- First and Annette Dunn – Second – Motion Carries

**VI. Comments by the Chair:** As Richardo Jackson was absent & Tad Fuller was leading the meeting & Tad mentioned that everyone should be respectful to each other.

**VII. County Staff Comments: Recipient and Care Council staff: None**

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### **VIII. Standing Reports: (5 – 10 min each)**

- A. CPP Update:** Rob Scott – CPP is meeting on October 10<sup>th</sup> @ 2 p.m.
- B. Part B Report: Patient Care & 4BNWK Report:** Eric McSpadden –

- **Financial Update Presented by Eric McSpadden**

- Aaron provided an overview of the current financial status across healthcare service categories under the Part B program.
- Report indicated a **notable decrease in grant funding**, impacting several service areas.
- Discussion included the **potential effects of reduced funding** on service utilization and client access to care.
- Emphasis was placed on the need to **monitor spending trends and adjust allocations** to maintain continuity of essential services.

- **Transportation Support (Lyft Program)**

- Aaron discussed the **allocation of funds for Lyft rides**, designed to help clients attend medical and support service appointments.
- The team reviewed **utilization data and budget balance** for transportation assistance.
- It was noted that while Lyft rides continue to play a key role in reducing missed appointments, **funding constraints** may affect the program's long-term sustainability.
- Members discussed exploring **alternative funding sources or partnerships** to maintain transportation support.

- C. HOPWA (West Palm Beach): Miguel Vazquez**

- **TBRA Program Update**
  - Miguel clarified the **status of the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program**, confirming that it remains active.
  - He reported on the **current funding level and expenditures** within TBRA, ensuring compliance with HOPWA guidelines.
- **Housing Assistance Waitlist**
  - Miguel informed members that the **waitlist for housing assistance is currently open**, allowing eligible clients to apply.
  - He noted that **demand continues to exceed available resources**, underscoring the need for ongoing coordination with local housing authorities.
  - Discussion included the importance of **timely communication with applicants** and maintaining transparency regarding the waitlist process.
- **Overall Program Status**
  - Miguel emphasized efforts to **maximize utilization of available HOPWA funds** to meet client housing needs.
  - Continued collaboration with community partners was encouraged to **address housing stability challenges** faced by clients.

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**D. Palm Beach County Recipient Report: Dr. Casey Messer**

**Updates on Grant Applications and Potential Government Shutdown Impact**

- Dr. Casey Messer provided updates regarding **grant application timelines** and **federal program operations**.
- The **annual grant applications** for both the **Ryan White Part A** and **Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI)** programs are **due soon**.
- The **annual report for the Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE)** program is also scheduled for submission in the coming weeks.
- **Amendments to contracts with sub-recipients** are currently in progress to reflect **new federal requirements**, ensuring compliance and transparency in funding allocations.
- Dr. Messer addressed concerns regarding a **potential federal government shutdown**, explaining that:
  - **Essential services**, including **Ryan White** and **EHE programs**, will continue operating without interruption.
  - However, **administrative functions**—such as contract processing, reporting approvals, or funding disbursements—**may experience delays**.
- **Staffing Updates:**
  - A **new program assistant** has been hired and is currently onboarding.
  - Recruitment continues for the **EHE program evaluator**, with applications under review.

**2. Open Enrollment and Health Insurance Updates (43:20)**

- Dr. Messer provided information on the **2025 Open Enrollment period** for health insurance coverage.
- The **enrollment window** will remain **open until January 15th**, offering clients sufficient time to review their options and secure coverage.
- Participants were reminded that if **expanded premium tax credits** are not renewed by December, **insurance premiums could increase** for many individuals.
- Attendees were encouraged to **actively participate in open enrollment** to maintain access to **comprehensive healthcare** and avoid coverage gaps.
- Conference room participants were also reminded to **review their own health insurance plans** and make any necessary updates during this period.

### **3. Health Insurance Coverage and Enrollment Guidance**

- Dr. Messer emphasized the importance of **selecting appropriate health insurance plans** that:
  - Cover **essential HIV medications**, and
  - Are **cost-effective** based on individual circumstances.
- **Certified Application Counselors (CACs)** will be available to provide **one-on-one enrollment assistance** to clients.
- Individuals were advised to **consult with their case managers** for guidance and support during the selection process.
- Discussion focused on **ensuring continuity of care** by helping clients choose plans compatible with Ryan White coverage and ADAP assistance.

### **4. Understanding Health Insurance and Ryan White Program Eligibility**

- Dr. Messer reiterated that **open enrollment is a key opportunity** for clients to change or update their insurance plans.
- Clarified that under the **Ryan White Care Act**, individuals are **eligible for care regardless of immigration status**, as this is a **federal mandate** that supersedes local regulations.
- Differentiated between:
  - **Comprehensive health insurance**, which covers full medical and pharmacy benefits, and
  - **Safety net programs** (such as local healthcare district programs), which **do not provide full insurance coverage**.
- Emphasized that clients should not rely solely on safety net programs and should be encouraged to **enroll in full health coverage** when eligible.

### **5. Job Openings and Service Eligibility Updates (Follow-up Discussion)**

- Dr. Messer confirmed that the **Program Assistant position** has been **successfully filled**.
- The **Program Evaluator position** for the EHE program remains **open** and under active recruitment.
- Discussion also included clarification of **eligibility criteria** for health coverage:
  - Individuals earning **below 50% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)** can receive assistance through the **AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP)**.
  - Those with **zero income** are still **eligible to enroll in health insurance** and may receive premium support under the Ryan White program.
- Emphasis was placed on ensuring **no interruption in medication or care access** due to insurance or income barriers.

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## E. Part A Expenditure Report: Jeffery Lesanti

- **Overall Financial Overview**
  - Jeffery presented an update on the program's current financial status and reimbursement activities.
  - Reported a **rise in total expenses by approximately \$497,000** since the previous meeting.
  - The increase reflects **expanded program activity and enhanced financial processing efforts** rather than overspending concerns.
- **Reimbursement Status**
  - Currently, there is a **backlog of \$1.4 million** in reimbursement requests pending processing.
  - Jeffery explained that the backlog is a **temporary result of a more detailed and thorough reimbursement review process**, ensuring accuracy and compliance with grant requirements.
  - The **Finance and Program teams** are working collaboratively to expedite the processing of outstanding claims.
- **Contributing Factors to Increased Expenses**
  - The onboarding of **additional staff** has improved the **capacity and accountability** within the financial and reimbursement departments.
  - Enhanced review protocols have led to **more complete and timely submission of reimbursement requests** from sub-recipients.
  - These improvements are expected to **streamline future reporting cycles** and reduce administrative delays.
- **Grant Spending and Fiscal Outlook**
  - Jeffery emphasized that there is **no concern about underspending the grant** for the current fiscal year.
  - The program remains **on track to fully utilize available funds** in alignment with grant objectives and timelines.
  - A **significant increase in reimbursement requests** is anticipated in the **coming month**, which will help balance expenditures and further demonstrate active program spending.
- **Next Steps and Monitoring**
  - Continued **monitoring of expenditure trends** will be maintained to ensure fiscal responsibility and compliance with federal guidelines.
  - Ongoing **communication with sub-recipients** will remain a priority to support timely submission and correction of reimbursement documentation.
  - Jeffery noted plans to **provide an updated financial snapshot** at the next meeting, reflecting processed reimbursements and overall expenditure progress.

F. **Executive:** Richardo Jackson - None

G. **Community Engagement:** Kristen Harrington

## 1. Outreach and Engagement Updates – Kristen’s Report

### • Advertisement Video Progress

- Kristen provided an update on the **development of the new advertising video** designed to promote community engagement and awareness of the Council’s work.
- The video aims to **highlight the Council’s mission, activities, and opportunities for community involvement**, with the goal of encouraging new participation and strengthening visibility.
- Filming and content review are reportedly **in the final stages**, with an anticipated release timeline to be shared soon.

### • Re-Engagement Questionnaire

- Kristen introduced a **new questionnaire** created to **reconnect with former Council members** who have become inactive.
- The questionnaire is intended to **gather feedback** on reasons for disengagement and explore **opportunities for re-involvement**.
- Responses will help shape **future outreach strategies** and inform recruitment or retention improvements within the Council

## 2. Council Membership Status – Nita’s Confirmation

- Neeta confirmed that **all Council seats are currently filled**, reflecting strong participation and full representation across membership categories.
- She acknowledged ongoing efforts to **maintain balanced membership** and **ensure compliance** with federal representation requirements under the Ryan White Program.
- The update underscored the importance of **retaining active engagement** among members to sustain effective Council operations.

## 3. Attendance and Bylaws Discussion – Tad’s Inquiry

- Tad raised a question regarding **attendance rules** and sought clarification on how **missed meetings** are tracked and addressed.
- The discussion focused on the **bylaws governing attendance**, specifically the provisions outlining **acceptable absences** and **consequences for repeated non-attendance**.
- Members reviewed how consistent attendance contributes to **quorum requirements, voting eligibility, and committee participation**.
- It was noted that **clear communication and reminder protocols** could help improve attendance consistency.

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#### 4. Next Steps and Follow-Up

- The group agreed that the **attendance policy** and related bylaw provisions should be **revisited at the next Community Engagement Meeting**.
- The goal will be to:
  - Review current attendance data,
  - Discuss potential amendments or clarifications to existing bylaws, and
  - Explore supportive measures (such as virtual participation options or reminders) to encourage member engagement.
- Kristen will continue to update the group on the **video release and questionnaire responses** at the next meeting.

**H.** **P & A:** Dr Youssef Motii – None

**I.** **QMEC:** Hector Bernardino –

Hector gave an update that committee is meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 2 P.m.

**J.** **Planning:** Lysette Perez

Lysette gave an update that the planning committee will continue to meet twice a month to work on the five-year integrated plan and will not meet till May 26<sup>th</sup> 2026

**K.** **Housing:** Miguel Vazquez & Andres Correa- None

**L.** **Ad-Hoc Bylaws:** Tad Fuller – Will talk to Neeta for next meeting.

#### IX. Old Business:

**A. QMEC Committee Update – July 24, 2025 meeting**

**Please see the attached *Administrative Mechanism Review* as tabled at the August 25, 2025, Care Council meeting.**

Motion to approve Administrative Mechanism as is with all the suggested changes and send to member on October 1<sup>st</sup> with all the changes accepted till November 30<sup>th</sup> 2025

#### X. New Business:

**A. Priority and Allocation Motions (September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

Please see the details & motions below.

1. Motion to direct the recipients staff office to apply GY – 26 Allocation of funds for Ryan White and MAI grants full ceiling award to the full amount.-  
**Motion passed as is.**
2. Motion to maintain the current GY25 rankings into GY26 to ensure continuity and stability in the priority-setting process –  
**Motion passed as is.**
3. Motion to maintain the current MAI priorities unchanged for the upcoming grant year-  
**Motion passed as is.**

4. Motion to give the directive who will be the target populations for MAI-  
**Motion failed** as members wanted to make a new motion with the clear  
understanding of the target population.
5. New Motion to give the directive who will be the target populations for MAI –  
Population criteria :
  - **Race and ethnicity:** Individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups disproportionately impacted by HIV.
  - **Age:** Individuals **aged 50 and older**, recognizing the unique needs of older adults living with HIV.
  - **Justice-involved populations:** Individuals who are currently or previously involved in the justice system.
  - **Geography:** Residents of **Western communities** within the service area.
  - **Zip code focus:** Residents of the **top five zip codes with the highest rates of new HIV diagnoses**, based on epidemiological data.

Kim Rommell Enright – First and Kenny Talbot – Second – **Motion carries**

6. Motion was moved to allocate the additional \$164,317 to health insurance premiums  
**Motion passed as is.**
7. A separate motion was introduced to direct recipient staff to pursue funding opportunities beyond the Ryan White Program  
Kenny Talbot – First and Annette Dunn – Second – **Motion carries**

**Abstain For motion 1.**

- a) Lysette Perez
- b) Orquidea Acevedo
- c) Ashnika Ali
- d) Brittany Henry
- e) Kim Rommel Enright
- F Kristen Harrington

**Abstain For motion 4.**

- a. Orquidea Acevedo
- b. Ashnika Ali
- c. Brittany Henry

**Abstain For motion 5.**

- a) Lysette Perez
- b) Orquidea Acevedo
- c) Ashnika Ali
- d) Brittany Henry
- e) Kim Rommel Enright
- f) Kristen Harrington

**Abstain For motion 7.**

- a) Lysette Perez
- b) Orquidea Acevedo
- c) Ashnika Ali
- d) Brittany Henry

**B. Community Engagement Committee (CEC) Meeting Recommendations- Date:**  
August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Membership Approvals**

- **Dr. Sandra Anderson** – Approved for membership on the September 18, 2025, CEC.
- **New Member Orientation** – Planned for October 9, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Clarification on Motions and Approval Process**

- Members discussed the **need for clearer presentation of motions** in meeting materials and minutes.
- Several members expressed **confusion** when **Dr. Sandra Anderson's membership approval** appeared as part of the general meeting motions rather than under a **separate Community Engagement Committee section**.
- It was noted that the **format and labeling of motions** should be **consistent and clearly categorized**—like how **Priority and Allocation motions** are listed separately in the agenda and minutes.
- Members emphasized that having all **committee motions (such as membership approvals, community engagement items, or policy recommendations)** under a **distinct section** will:
  - Improve **transparency and organization**,
  - Help members easily **distinguish between informational items and action items**, and
  - Reduce confusion during **Council-level meetings** when deciding whether to **vote or simply acknowledge** a committee recommendation.

**2. Member Instructions and Recommendations**

- Members **instructed** Neeta that going forward, all **committee-originated motions** (including those from CEC, Priority & Allocations, or other subcommittees) should be:
  - **Listed separately** under their respective committee headings, and
  - Clearly labeled as either **“For Council Vote”** or **“For Information Only.”**
- This adjustment aims to make it **easier for Council members** to identify when they are expected to take action versus when they are being briefed on committee decisions.

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- The change will also support **recordkeeping accuracy** and ensure **clear communication between committees and the full Council**.

### **3. Request for Educational Moment**

- Members suggested that an **educational moment** be provided at an upcoming meeting to review the **motion process, approval pathways, and Council voting protocols**.
- A request was made for **Jessica** to prepare and present this **educational segment**, offering step-by-step clarification on:
  - How motions move from **committee to full Council**,
  - The difference between **recommendations and voting actions**, and
  - The **roles and responsibilities** of Council members during each stage.

### **4. Membership Approvals and Orientation**

- **Dr. Sandra Anderson** was **approved for membership** effective **September 18, 2025**, under the **Community Engagement Committee (CEC)**.
- The **New Member Orientation** is scheduled for **October 9, 2025**, from **1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**
  - The orientation will provide an overview of Council structure, member expectations, and committee functions.
  - It will also include guidance on how motions and recommendations flow through committees to the full Council.

#### **C. Request that the Bylaws Committee schedule a meeting to revisit the following policies for review and discussion:**

- **Policy #30 – Out-of-State Travel Policy**
- **Policy #17**

Tad will coordinate with Neeta to schedule the date.

#### **XI. Public Comments: 3 Minutes – None**

#### **XII. Educational Moment: None**

#### **XIII. Announcements: USCHA 2025 Wrap up email send out with Care Council reminder email.**

#### **XIV. Adjournment: 4:12 p.m.**

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**Motions from September 11<sup>th</sup> 2025 Priority and Allocation committee meeting- Please see the attached P&A document and meeting min**

1. Motion to direct the recipients staff office to apply GY – 26 Allocation of funds for Ryan White and MAI grants full ceiling award to the full amount. **Motion Passed**
2. Motion to maintain the current GY25 rankings into GY26 to ensure continuity and stability in the priority-setting process. **Motion Passed**
3. Motion to maintain the current MAI priorities unchanged for the upcoming grant year. **Motion Passed**
4. Motion to give the directive who will be the target populations for MAI. **Motion Failed** but new language of motion was accepted with clear language:

**Motion to give the directive who will be the target populations for MAI**

**Race and ethnicity:** Individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups disproportionately impacted by HIV.

**Age:** Individuals **aged 50 and older**, recognizing the unique needs of older adults living with HIV.

**Justice-involved populations:** Individuals who are currently or previously involved in the justice system.

**Geography:** Residents of **Western communities** within the service area.

**Zip code focus:** Residents of the **top five zip codes with the highest rates of new HIV diagnoses**, based on epidemiological data.

**Glenn Krabec – First and Annette Dunn – Second – Motion carries**

5. Motion was moved to allocate the additional \$164,317 to health insurance premiums. **Motion passed**
6. Motion to reduce medical case management in MAI by \$ 47,849.00- **Motion passed**
7. Motion to direct recipient staff to pursue funding opportunities beyond the Ryan White Program. Kenny Talbot – First and Annette Dunn – Second – **Motion passed**

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**\*Conflict of Interest**

A CARE Council member who has an identified conflict of interest must abstain from voting on issues related to that conflict. A member who does not abstain from voting on issues where a conflict is identified by the County's Commission on Ethics may be removed from the CARE Council.

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