

In Attendance:

Mercedes Azcarate
Jim Banta
Shirley Barger
Dan Berrner
Ray Goldstein
Janice Strassheim

Absent Members:

Misha Cohen
Peter Dale
Jay Fournier
Pauli Gray
Robin Roth

Guests:

Katie Burk
Orlando Chavez
Caycee Cullen
Paula Lum
Ellen Stein

Welcome, Introductions, Announcements

Guests Ellen Stein, Dr. Paula Lum, and Caycee Cullen attended to talk about the HERO study, Patient-Centered Models of HCV Care for People Who Inject Drugs. They also collaborate on the Vaccination Is Prevention (VIP) study at UCSF, a trial testing an experimental HCV vaccine.

Janice recently spoke to Manuel Martinez of Openhouse, an organization providing housing, services and community for LGBT seniors. They would be interested in talking with someone from the Task Force about hepatitis C, as their clientele are mostly Baby Boomers.

Orlando talked about the Safe Injection Site (SIF) tent structure recently demonstrated in Oakland. The pop-up prototype was installed by HEPPAC at a syringe exchange site.

Minutes for August were approved with a minor change.

Reports

Mercedes, Robin and Shirley attended CalHEP Day in Sacramento on August 9. The day started with a hearing in the State Capitol Building, "Living with Hepatitis B & Hepatitis C in California," chaired by Assemblymember Mike Gipson. How to eliminate barriers to services was a major topic. Testing is not always easily available, and linkage to care can be problematic. Complex realities of peoples' lives and barriers such as transportation, time, cost, lack of trust, and stigma can mean that people are lost from one test to the next, from care to treatment. Raising awareness and offering/supporting services in the community through health fairs, churches, free clinics, shelters, syringe access and drug treatment programs can help reduce disparities in health care.

CalHEP continued with a luncheon, awards ceremony and meeting after the hearing. Shirley was given the Sherri Ziegler Community Service Award (Pauli won Honorable Mention), Rachel McLean won the Government Champion award, and Dr. Catherine Mozieau won the Clinical Champion Award. In honor of CalHEP's 10th anniversary, the founding members were also honored.

Afterward, attendees worked on priorities for CalHEP in the next year. For hep C, these included regulating treatment pricing, rapid testing at pharmacies, removing all treatment restrictions from Medi-Cal, educating providers and pharmacists on hepatitis C (especially treatment adherence), changing the bureaucracy of getting insurers to approve/authorize meds, testing and treating all prisoners, getting syringe access in

rural areas, and concentrating more on the homeless and mental health populations. For hep B, the priorities included screening all ethnicities, improving linkage to care by educating the API population on ACA (no deportation for immigrants seeking care), and promoting syringe exchange.

Katie reported on activities of End Hep C SF. Working groups are working on deliverables for the strategic plan. End Hep C SF is applying for a Gilead grant. The TF has provided a list of items and budget for events and End Hep C SF may be able to help, but these items are not appropriate for this grant.

Robin, Dan, and Shirley recently had lunch with Bryan Maldonado, Sr. HCV Community Specialist for Gilead. Bryan works mostly with providers, but is interested in the TF's awareness efforts.

Upcoming Events

The ALF Liver Walk is on Sunday, 9/18 at the Bandshell in GG Park. The TF will have a table. Dan, Jim, Peter, Ray, Janice, Shirley, and Brian Gonzalez have volunteered.

Folsom Street Fair is on Sunday, 8/25, and the TF will have a booth near Glide, who will be testing. Mercedes, Janice, Jay, Shirley, Brian Gonzalez, and Dan (morning only) will be there. Misha may have acupuncture available, but that has not been confirmed.

Presentation

Ellen Stein, Dr. Paula Lum, and Caycee Cullen (all with UCSF) discussed the HERO study. HERO will study two models for treating HCV in people who inject drugs (PWID): directly observed treatment (DOT) and patient navigation (PN). 1,000 patients will be recruited in eight cities in the US; 125 of those patients will be in San Francisco. The study will compare the proportion of patients in each arm who (a) initiate treatment; (b) optimally adhere (80+%), (c) complete treatment; (d) achieve SVR; (e) develop resistance; and (f) become re-infected. Half the participants will come from an opiate treatment program and half from a community health clinic setting. Half will be randomized into the DOT arm and half into PN. Jordan Akerly of Shanti and Pauli Gray of SFAF will act as patient navigators. Pauli and Dan are also part of the grant as local stakeholders.

Subjects participate for 132 weeks: 12 weeks treatment with Eplusea, 12 weeks post-treatment, then 96 weeks of quarterly visits. Those with liver cancer or pregnancy are excluded.

Literature shows that both DOT and PN are good for treating HIV and tuberculosis. This study will help determine whether DOT or PN is more effective in each setting, the incidence and factors associated with drug resistance and re-infection in PWIDs on treatment, and factors associated with outcomes such as lack of treatment uptake, poor adherence, SVR failure, and re-infection/resistance.

Adjourned at 7:30.