

**Louisiana Commission on HIV, AIDS and Hepatitis C Education,
Prevention and Treatment**

April 7, 2021

9:00 am – 11:00 am

Virtual Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/7789959325>

Or Telephone:

USA 602 333 0032

Conference code: 712643

Commission Members Present:

Anthony Basco, Tamara Boutte, Baylor Boyd, Angie Brown, Tanya Brown, Allison Dejan (proxy for Amanda Dumas), DeAnn Gruber, Mitch Handrich, Andrea LaPlante, Fran Lawless, Randy Lavespere, David Mushatt, George Nawas, Tewabetch Negatu, and Norma Porter

I. Call to Order

Called to order by Fran Lawless, Chairperson

II. Roll Call

Roll called by Natalie Cooley. Quorum reached.

III. Old Business:

A. October Minutes

Commissioners reviewed minutes from the January 12th meeting. Tamara Boutte motioned to approve the minutes; Norma Porter seconded the motion. Commissioners voted by voice to approve. Motion carries.

B. Robert's Rules of Order Acknowledgement

Fran - Thanks to Attorney Michael Jackson for Robert's Rules of Order presentation. Attorney Jackson thinks it was a good exercise and glad to entertain questions. Attorney Jackson is observing today and offering recommendations for the commission on Robert's Rules of Order and parliamentary procedure.

IV. New Business

A. HIV Criminalization Workgroup Update – Fran and Anthony provided the update in Austin's absence. Letter disseminated to all legislators. Troy Carter's office has offered to assist in writing legislation. Fran will follow up to confirm.

Amir Sadeghi offered HIV Criminalization guidance – Background on his agency – support with legal and policy analysis for non-lawyers and draft language to reform laws. Identifying champions would be a prudent use of resources for the commission

Jada added that the process for drafting starts with everything you want and then negotiate from there.

Fran invited Amir and Jada to workgroup meeting.

B. Harm Reduction and Syringe Service Program Presentation by Alison Gaye, the Statewide Syringe Services Program Coordinator. People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) and People Who Inject Drugs (PWID) face trauma from the healthcare system. In order to end the epidemic we need to be engaged with PWUD/PWID. Criminalization adds an extra layer of burden. Primary way to reduce harm is clean and sterile works/syringes; Four of the nine public health regions have syringe service programs. Move to Q&A

Tamara – How do we get people to reduce the amount of drugs they are consuming over time? Alison stated that Syringe Access Programs (SAP) leads to reduced use; staff may have lived-experiences.

Tamara – Are the number of people who go into treatment being tracked? Alison responded that some programs are tracking that data but most do not have resources to do long-term studies or keep that data. If someone leaves SAP to go to Bun. Treatment client will feel comfortable, leave cycle, and access SAP.

Fran asked if remaining questions could be sent to the chat or sent to Natalie or Julie. Slides from the presentation will be shared after the meeting.

C. Legislative Session Update, Rep. Mandie Landry and WWAV – Rep. Mandie Landry presented background on decriminalizing sex work and expressed that decriminalization can lead to decrease in trafficking. Support has come from women from all different backgrounds. Different messaging to different groups is necessary.

Women with a Vision staff (WWAV) – Christine Lobre – presented background of WWAV and Sex work decriminalization bills – decriminalization does not support sex work but works to reduce harm done by criminalization. Decriminalization would lead to 46% reduction of HIV in sex workers (statistic provided by World Health Organization). HB 67 by Rep. Landry would repeal certain prostitution related offenses, thereby decriminalizing many forms of sex work.

Presentations and list of filed bills relevant to this commission will be shared after the meeting.

Rep. Mandie Landry stated that all the bills must be read in session which starts on Monday, April 12, 2021 and ends June 10, 2021. There are several filed bills to be read including gun bills, marijuana bills, solitary bill, etc.

Anthony Basco read the remaining bills listed on the reference list attached.

DeAnn Gruber mentioned that before the official bills were filed, she reached out to the OPH our legislative liaison about meeting with Rep. Pat Moore, and she has not heard back about the request. DeAnn formally requested a meeting to discuss the House Bill 238, which would criminalize exposure to STDs. She seems to be open to reconsidering if she had more information. OPH can assist.

Anthony Basco – motion to write a letter formally opposing this bill, can our Decriminalization Workgroup draft this letter.

Fran has begun drafting this letter and will have everyone review; also requesting a meeting with Rep. Pat Moore and possibly Governor Edwards.

Michael – comment on procedure, on making the motion, on the right path for making a motion, it is not technically an order and should be voted on by the body.

Anthony B. restated his motion; Mitch H. seconded

Tamachia M. mentioned a point to add to the letter: the possible ramifications of felonies on those charged. Tamachia stated that she would like to amend the motion to include the ramifications of felonies on individuals; Anthony B. seconded the motion. Tewabetch N. and DeAnn G. abstained from voting. Motion carries.

V. Other Business Fran Lawless, Chairperson

A. Announcements: none

B. Public Comment

Hilary McQuie stated that a dear colleague letter is being circulated for SAP to lift the ban on funding for syringes; next step is to reach out to US reps.

Dorian Gray-Alexander asked commission to take into account the effect on marginalized communities and educate the governor's office and legislators on these issues.

C. Next Meeting Date

Commission members discussed meeting on July 7, 2021 from 9am-11am with no objections.

VI. Adjournment

DeAnn Gruber motioned to adjourn the meeting; Anthony Basco seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Reference of filed Bills relevant to Commission on HIV and HCV

Compiled 4/5/21

Criminalizing STD Transmission

HB 238 by Rep. Moore would create felony and misdemeanor charges for intentional exposure to a sexually transmitted disease. STD is not defined in the bill and therefore refers to all STDs.

<https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1207472>

Restrictions to transgender youth in sports and access to care

SB 156 by Senator Mizell and HB 542 by Rep. Amedee would require transgender students from kindergarten through college to compete in sports based on their sex assigned at birth.

<https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1210805>

<https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1211851>

SB 104 by Senator Mike Fesi would create a new exception to minors' rights to consent to their own health care, making trans youth secure written consent from both parents (even if only one has custody) in order to access medically necessary and clinically appropriate health care.

<https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1208865>

HB 575 by Rep. Firment would subject medical providers to criminal penalties for providing medically necessary gender affirming health care to any transgender person under 18. It would also subject teachers and other school personnel to criminal penalties if they did not out a trans student to their parents.

<https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1212045>

Changes to 'Good Samaritan' Law

HB 166 by Rep. Fontenot amends current law such that immunity from prosecution, charges, or penalties for possession of a controlled dangerous substance for persons

experiencing drug-related overdoses would not apply when first responders or law enforcement officers respond to the same residence two or more times.

<https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1205659>

Decriminalizing sex work

HB 67 by Rep. Landry would repeal certain prostitution related offenses, thereby decriminalizing many forms of sex work.

<https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1202431>