

**Louisiana Commission on HIV, AIDS and Hepatitis C Education,
Prevention and Treatment
October 13, 2020
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, DeAnn Gruber, Mitch Handrich, Tavell Kindall, Alleen King-Carter, Andrea Laplante, Fran Lawless, Randy Levespere, Austin Matthews, Tamachia McCaa, David Mushatt, George Nawas, Frank Opelka, Jaqueline Porter, Norma Porter, and Meta Smith-Davis

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Dr. Gruber took a roll call of Commission members and their designees.

III. Old Business: August Minutes

Commission members reviewed the minutes from August. Anthony Basco noted that Department of Corrections staff were to provide an update regarding HCV. DeAnn Gruber responded that the agenda item for today's meeting had been proposed earlier this year and there was interest in proceeding this plan and a DOC HCV update can be provided at a future Commission meeting in December or January. Anthony motioned to accept the minutes. Tamara seconded. The motion was passed.

IV. New Business: HIV Criminalization in Louisiana

Amir Sadeghi, Center for HIV Law and Policy and S. Mandisa Moore-O'Neal, Louisiana Coalition on Criminalization and Health (LCCH) provided presentations on HIV Criminalization.

Discussion:

Dorian-Gray Alexander - La statute 14.43.5 only requires exposure not transmission to be charged.

Anthony Basco stated that it seems the overarching aim is to criminalize activities deemed undesirable and he did not know that HCV transmission is also criminalized in some states.

DeAnn Gruber asked what actions LCCH might take in the future.

S. Mandisa Moore-O'Neal replied that LCCH's focus is to educate the public, prosecutors, law enforcement, judges and other players about this subject and grow a larger coalition that includes people outside of the HIV/infectious disease field.

Mitch Handrich asked what role the HIV/HCV Commission could take. Amir from CHLP responded that it would be helpful for everyone on the Commission to educate their networks about this issue. He added that HIV criminalization could be made a policy priority at individual organizations, and the Commission could use its influence to make recommendations to the Office of the Governor and the legislature at large, particularly pointing out that the statute change in 2018 did not go far enough. Mandisa further emphasized that small moves and one on one conversations are very important.

Kerry Auzenne spoke about the stigma associated with being registered as a sex offender, which is required for anyone convicted under LA's intentional exposure law.

DeAnn Gruber asked how to get other groups involved and build support. Austin Matthews replied that LA-NASW is starting to provide intersectional workshops on issues impacting people living with HIV. APA, state nursing association, Sheriff's Association, and parole boards were also mentioned as groups to reach out for education and coalition building.

Jen Laws asked how we can leverage opportunities for education in rural areas such as Iberia Parish where a legal battle for discriminatory hiring practices of PLWH was successfully challenged.

Mandisa Moore-O'Neal stressed the importance for OPH to engage and answer questions when asked as much as possible. DeAnn Gruber stated that since leadership in both LDH and OPH have recently changed, educating them on this issue would be helpful.

Dr. David Mushatt proposed a HIV Criminalization Summit where the aforementioned organizations could be invited to learn about HIV criminalization.

DeAnn noted the rich conversation and suggested a Commission workgroup on HIV criminalization to continue work on this issue.

Austin Matthews made a motion that the Commission commits to work on HIV criminalization in partnership with LCCH. Anthony Basco seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

V. New Business: Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Dr. Gruber conducted the election of officers. Members were sent a link to vote via Survey Monkey. The results were as follows: Anthony Basco was elected as Vice-Chair and Fran Lawless was elected as Chair.

Vice-Chair

Anthony Basco: 55%

Mitch Handrich: 45%

Chair

Fran Lawless: 55%

Austin Matthews: 45%

VI. Other Business: Announcements – None

VII. Public Comment:

Dorian-gray Alexander- As a person living with HIV, the hope is that this commission can take this back and really look at how HIV criminalization interferes with the goals of ending the HIV epidemic.

VIII. Next Meeting Date: Will be scheduled for December or January as this is a bi-monthly meeting.

IX. Adjournment: Anthony Basco made a motion to adjourn, Tavell Kendall seconded.