

VOICES

THE VOICE OF DELAWARE'S HIV COMMUNITY

DELAWARE HIV CONSORTIUM

Summer 2020

From the Executive Director

Something happened on July 13, 2020. This date marked the first time in 118 days that Delaware HIV Consortium staff provided services to our clients face-to-face, *and in our offices*. While the Consortium had continued to serve our clients – albeit virtually – during this global health crisis caused by the COVID epidemic, being able to provide services directly to our clients is important to me; and is a rich symbol of everything that I believe the agency has been and should continue to work towards on a day-to-day basis.

Since its incorporation in 1991, the Delaware HIV Consortium has strived to live its mission to “provide leadership to eliminate HIV in Delaware.” This was true in 1998 when, understanding that housing instability limited a person’s ability to manage their HIV and, therefore, possibly could further the transmission of the disease in Delaware, the agency formed the state’s first rental voucher program for persons living with the disease. And it was true in 2012 when we began our HIV case management program because it was recognized that a shortage in case management organizations was hindering the state’s progress on HIV treatment outcomes. I believe that this commitment to leadership in field of HIV in Delaware remains true today.

Since we closed our doors to clients in March the agency has taken two steps that we believe will move our agency and the state’s HIV prevention and care system forward. First, in recognition that we can never end HIV in Delaware unless we stop new infections from occurring, we made the strategic decision to centralize all of our HIV prevention services under the direction of a HIV Service Navigation Supervisor - a new position to our agency. Suzan Abdallah, who has been with the Delaware HIV Consortium since 2017, assumed this new position in June.

Secondly, we recommitted as an agency to elevating the voices of persons living with HIV and those at-risk for the

disease in our work by hiring a new staffer, Jordan Hines, with vast experience in community organizing and coalition building in different fields, to fill the role of HIV Community Planning Manager in charge of operating the Delaware HIV Planning Council. HIV Community Planning, which is important to directing how the state’s allocation of public funds are used for HIV prevention and care services, has long been founded on the idea that those who are impacted by HIV have the best understanding of how these funds should be spent. We couldn’t be more excited about how Jordan will bring new and previously unheard perspectives into our decision-making process.

Finally, I’d be remised if I didn’t mention that I believe that the July 13th office opening for our clients is symbolic of our agency’s core belief – equality. I – and the staff at the Delaware HIV Consortium – are keenly aware that not all of our clients, regardless of the extra effort that agency staff put in while remote, have access to our services by telephone. We also know that the client-centered services that we provide are best when done face-to-face, when staff can fully “see” our clients – their body language, and what they are not saying. We reopen our doors because we feel as though all of our clients deserve to have equal access to the highest quality services that we can provide. -- Tyler Berl

We are now open, by appointment only.

**Our hours: M, T, W, Th 8:15 am – 4:30 pm
Friday 8:30 – 1 pm**

**To schedule an appointment or
talk to your case manager, call:**

**New Castle County: 302-654-5471
Kent & Sussex Counties: 302-508-5756**

DHC Launches In-Home HIV Testing, Resumes Walgreens Testing

The Consortium is pleased to announce the reopening or expansion of the following HIV prevention services:

- **In-Home HIV Testing:** In collaboration with the Delaware Division of Public Health and our sister AIDS service organizations, the Consortium will be mailing at home HIV testing kits to enrollees and guiding them through the process on the phone (if desired). To enroll in the In-home HIV Testing program, click here: <https://www.delawarehiv.org/in-home-hiv-testing/>
- **PrEP Navigation and Diagnostic Copay Assistance:** In collaboration with the Delaware Division of Public Health, the Consortium is pleased to offer Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Navigation. Delawareans who might wish to take PrEP to avoid HIV infection can enroll in this new program designed to help 1) identify a provider/prescriber, 2) grant assistance to help with copays associated with pre-prescribing diagnostics (lab work), and 3) assist the client in enrolling in patient medication assistance or grant copay assistance so that financial barriers are removed. To enroll in the PrEP Navigation program, go to delawarehiv.org/prep-navigation-program or call 302-654-5471. HIV testers who identify clients who might benefit from PrEP are asked to refer the service, and enroll them as long as they consent.
- **Walgreen In-store HIV and Hep C Testing:** Our free HIV and Hepatitis C Testing & Counseling program, suspended by the COVID crisis, will resume in August with our regular scheduled 12-4:30 pm testing at the Walgreens at 9th & Market in Wilmington. Clients can also have an HIV test at our offices at 100 W. 10th Street, Suite 415, Wilmington, but BY APPOINTMENT ONLY during this phase of reopening.

Housing Program Update

- The Consortium's Housing Assistance Program currently provides rental assistance to a total of 147 households throughout Delaware.
- Starting July 1, 2020, six housing households began receiving rental assistance resulting from additional Ryan White funds through the CARES Act. Additionally, 14 clients; (8 from New Castle County & 6 from Kent / Sussex Counties) were removed from the waiting list, and have been notified through their case managers in order help them through the process of becoming rental assistance beneficiaries.

- During lockdown, apartment inspections were first suspended, and then transitioned to all virtual. At phase 2 of the office reopening, our housing inspector officially resumed their normal operations. Physical inspections were conducted for all households due for annual inspections in June 25th, 2020. All postponed physical inspections during the shut downs will resume during phase 3 of reopening.
- The total waiting for all counties combined is at 83. Wilmington contains 33, New Castle (not incl. Wilmington) – 38, Kent – six and Sussex – six. All annual re-certifications in June were conducted virtually. The plan moving forward is to resume face to face re-certifications by appointments only.

New Milford Office Open!

The Consortium is pleased to announce the relocation of its office in Milford, Delaware, to **16 S. DuPont Boulevard, in Milford**. We loved our old office, but our expanded staff serving Kent and Sussex County just wouldn't fit. We are thrilled to open the new location to better serve you.



To keep you safe from COVID-19, all Consortium offices are seeing case management clients BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. To schedule an appointment, call:

Wilmington Office: 302-654-5471

Milford Office: 302-508-5756

Case Management Update

The Case Management Department is currently providing services to 369 clients statewide. Case Management has gained new clients in all Counties through outreach and referrals. The Case Management team continues to assist clients in overcoming barriers to care by addressing financial needs, housing issues, and medical adherence. Case Managers are also working diligently to ensure that our clients are screened for eligibility for Ryan White Services and are enrolled in the program in a timely fashion. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this work has been done remotely since March 17, 2020. As of July 13, office visits are being by appointment only and will be scheduled to limit the number of guests in our office suite at any given time. Clients will be met in the lobby of the Community Services Building and will complete a health screening and have their temperature taken prior to entering our office suite. Case managers and clients will be required to wear PPE during all office meetings (PPE will be provided to those clients who do not have regular access). Case managers will be required to sanitize their

offices before and after any client meetings. Case managers will continue to complete any work that is able to be done telephonically or electronically by those means. All of these protocols are to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 and to ensure the safety and well-being of our clients and our staff.

In Kent and Sussex Counties, we have continued the process of transferring client from KSCS after that program's closure on February 21, 2020. Sarah Parsley, formerly with KSCS has been essential in transferring clients to DHC. Sarah is now focused on those clients located in Sussex.

Welcome New Staff!

Hines Joins DHC in HIV Community Planning Role

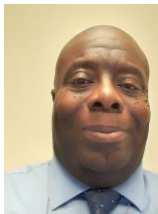


The Consortium is happy to announce that Jordan Hines has joined our staff as HIV Community Planning manager. Before joining the Consortium, Jordan has worked as the Executive Director of Delaware Housing Opportunity Fund, Inc., Community Outreach Coordinator

for Beautiful Gate Outreach Center and board member of Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League. Jordan also previously worked as a legal aide in for the New Castle County Register of Wills office and served as the Legislative Policy Analyst for Wilmington's 107th Councilmanic District. Welcome, Jordan!

Dunnington Joins DHC as Case Manager in Milford

David Dunnington brings a Criminal Justice and Behavioral Science background to DHC. He holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration and a Bachelor's in Criminal Justice from Wilmington University. David has eight years' experience in the Upward Bound Program managing a caseload of underrepresented and underserved youth. David's Criminal Justice experience includes: The Delaware Department of Correction, Delaware Technical and Community College's Division of Public Safety, and the Division of Family Services.



David served as President of Mid-Eastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MEAEOPP) The Mid-Eastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MEAEOPP) is a regional association of educational opportunity personnel from Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. David was also on the board of Victims Voices Heard. David's core belief is that all people should be treated with inherent dignity and respect- something that he demonstrates in his work with our clients every day.

A Triple Treat from Iron Hill!

A tasty way to treat yourself and support the Delaware HIV Consortium! When you buy a Triple Chocolate Hill Brownie at Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant at Riverfront Wilmington, a portion of your purchase is donated to the Consortium! Talk about a WIN-WIN! #IHBRiverfront



2020 WEEKLONG CHALLENGE
SEPTEMBER 12-19



AIDS Walk Delaware

2020 AIDS Walk Delaware Week-long Challenge, September 12 – 19

The AIDS Walk Delaware website, <https://aidsdelaware.salsalabs.org/2020AIDSWalkDelaware>, is now open for walk registration, sponsorship, and donations.

What's different this year?

Following the current guidelines from government and health officials for Social Distancing, we are holding AIDS Walk Delaware virtually and expanding it to a Week-long Challenge. We want people to feel comfortable participating when they want, how they want, with whom they want. There will be no formal in-person gathering.

You can follow one of the two official routes: In Wilmington along Brandywine Park or in Rehoboth Beach, from Grove Park to the ocean and back. Or walk wherever you feel most comfortable - in another park, in your neighborhood or on your treadmill at home. In addition, when you register, you can donate \$10 to have a special AIDS Walk Delaware face mask mailed to you.



WOW Virtual Auction Held

2020 WOW Gala Canceled by COVID-19 Crisis



The staff and Board of Directors would like to thank the auction donors, and those who purchased donated goods from our auction from June 12 through 26. Although we normally raise close to \$40,000 from this event, we are grateful for the support of our sponsors, donors, and supporters which helped us raise nearly \$20,000 in support of our vital services to people living with HIV in Delaware.

“These are challenging times for nonprofits,” said Scott MacKenzie, director of Development for the Consortium. “People are very worried about their finances and are afraid of what might lie just ahead for them. Like all charities, we have to put more effort into raising money to support our services and have to be innovative in these times when special events and large crowds are just not possible. I know with the support of our community we will continue to meet our client’s needs.”



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2020 WOW! Virtual Auction Sponsors

