

VOICES

THE VOICE OF DELAWARE'S HIV COMMUNITY

DELAWARE HIV CONSORTIUM

Fall 2020

From the Executive Director:

Our "New Normal"

I hope this newsletter finds you and yours healthy and safe. It seems like almost a lifetime ago when I last wrote to you in April, just weeks after COVID-19 forced us to close our offices and serve you remotely by phone. I'm sure you feel the same. So while we continue to serve our clients through limited contact and remotely by phone, we thought you would also like to know about some exciting new programs offered by the Consortium.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Delaware Community Foundation, the Consortium has been able to expand our In-Home HIV Testing program (read more below) and also to offer more no-contact services to our housing assistance and case management clients (more below). We have also received generous financial support from the New Castle County CARES Act Health Equity Grant, allowing even more expansion of our HIV Testing program. This grant also provided funds to work with a team of University of Delaware researchers to study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Delawareans living with HIV.

Finally, as we go into the colder, dark nights of Fall, we encourage you to stay safe by staying aware of the COVID-19 news from our community, the state and its surrounding region. We are all weary of this, but we must redouble our efforts to beat this virus. Mask up, wash up, and physically distance so that one day soon we can hug our friends and loved ones without worry.

These are challenging times, but also times of great opportunity. We are at our best when we are generous and supportive of each other. Together.

Best,

Tyler Berl

2020 PrEP Virtual Conference Held

On October 15, more than 170 participants logged onto the first virtual Delaware Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Conference, a collaboration of the Consortium, the Delaware Division of Public Health, the Public Health Association of Delaware, the Delaware Academy of Medicine, and the Medical Society of Delaware. Speakers included local, regional, and national experts on PrEP, including Dawn Smith, MD, MS, MPH, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, Surveillance and Epidemiology.



The conference was designed to educate and empower clinicians in prescribing PrEP, the once a day medication that helps prevent HIV infection, with the end goal of ending the HIV epidemic. Portions of the conference featured PrEP Navigation, which helps potential patients negotiate the complicated steps required to access this important medication.

If you or someone you know are interested in more information about PrEP, click [HERE for PrEP Navigation](#).

17th Annual "Easy as Pie" Campaign

The Consortium, along with our partners at the Ministry of Caring/House of Joseph II, are pleased to bring you our annual "Easy as Pie" Thanksgiving fundraiser. As usual, we will be offering desserts from Achenbach Pastries in Lancaster County, Desserts by Jekeitta, Linvilla Orchards,



and Pellman Bakery in Lancaster. Pie Distribution Day is the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, November 24.

This year we lost a few locations due to COVID, but we've managed to add a few more convenient locations statewide. Day of distribution and times vary by location.

In addition, we've added a few new breakfast items to our menu that you can enjoy before or after the holiday: Sticky Rings, Sticky Rings with Raisins, Sticky Rings with Pecans, and Moravian Cake (like a coffee cake but *buttery*)!

To place an order for our delicious desserts, click [HERE for Easy as Pie](#).



2020 AIDS Walk Results

We are happy and grateful to report that the 2020 AIDS Walk Virtual Week-long Challenge surpassed its goal of \$80,000, raising \$80,112.06 in support of HIV services throughout Delaware! With the COVID-19 pandemic this year, fundraising has been a challenge to say the least. Working with our walk partners at AIDS Delaware, we decided to make the Walk virtual and crossed our fingers – and you delivered! Thank you so much for your generous support!

COVID Prevention Packages Coming Soon!

Thanks to generous grants from the Delaware Community Foundation, the City of Wilmington, and the State of Delaware CARES Support for Nonprofits, the Consortium will soon be sending COVID Prevention Packages to all case management and housing assistance clients. These packages will contain disposable masks, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and sanitizing cleaner. We are hoping to complete these shipments before Thanksgiving. We are grateful to all funders who supported this effort to help our clients stay safe from COVID-19 infection.

You can help support this effort by clicking [HERE](#), and directing your donation to our [Personal Care Items Closet](#).

In-Home HIV Testing Campaign

Because of the lockdown and continued restrictions on community-based HIV testing, the number of tests being conducted has declined sharply. In an effort to encourage more testing, the Delaware Division of Public Health distributed In-home HIV test kits to all AIDS service organizations in June. With an eye to continue this program into 2021, the Consortium applied for – and was awarded – grant funds to do just that. These grants allowed the purchase of test kits and postage to expand this program to serve more than 400 Delawareans by the end of the year, as well as to promote this free service.



Once someone signs up, they will receive a call from the Consortium confirming their address and offering counseling on HIV prevention. Once the kit has been received, our staff will contact them and walk them through the testing process on the phone if they want. If the test is positive, the patient is linked to confirmatory testing and follow-up medical care.

You can sign up for a free test kit by clicking [HERE for In-Home Testing](#).

CARES Act Additional Housing Assistance for Kent & Sussex

Additional Housing Assistance is available to clients in Kent and Sussex counties, thanks to funds provided by the Delaware State Housing Authority's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. This financial assistance, known as Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU) assistance provides time-limited housing assistance designed to prevent homelessness and increase housing stability. Grantees may provide assistance for a period of up to 21 weeks in any 52-week period. This funding is available to clients who may be in danger of losing their housing because of the COVID pandemic due to inability to pay rent or utility bills, and – unlike most other housing assistance programs – even mortgage payments. To access this funding, you must contact your Ryan White case manager or social worker to apply.

Happier Holidays

Our neediest clients throughout Delaware will be receiving a grocery store gift card to help them through the Winter Holidays, thanks to our friends at Crimson Moon Tavern's fundraising for the



Robert Ellis Holiday Fund along with support from the Kenny Family Foundation (ShopRite of Delaware), these gift cards will be distributed between Thanksgiving and the New Year to help clients and their families enjoy their holidays and to help those who might experience food insecurity during that time. The Robert Ellis Holiday Fund was established in 2018 following Robert's passing. His family and friends continue to support the dream of helping the HIV community in Delaware enjoy their holidays.

If you would like to support the [Robert Ellis Holiday fund](#), [click HERE](#).



Walgreens Red Ribbon Campaign Scores Big!

The 2020 Red Ribbon Campaign at Walgreens locations in Delaware just ended with customers donating close to \$21,000 to the Consortium's services to people living with HIV. These are tough times and we truly appreciate Walgreens for running this campaign, their associates for all they do as essential workers, and Walgreens customers for their generous support!

2020 VIRTUAL WORLD AIDS DAY

The Delaware HIV Consortium and all our partners in HIV care and prevention throughout the state will be collaborating to host the 2020 World AIDS Day VIRTUAL AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT DISPLAY PROGRAM, a presentation of the NAMES AIDS Memorial Quilt Project. This celebration, scheduled for Tuesday, December 1 will feature a virtual searchable quilt display featuring Quilt panels with a Delaware connection, as well as a live streaming show, "World AIDS Day 2020 — A National Conversation."

The live-streaming show will feature **Dr. Anthony S. Fauci**, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and **Dr. David D. Ho**, director of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center at Columbia University, both at the forefront of fighting both the AIDS epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic.

More information will follow about viewing the Virtual Quilt Display and "World AIDS Day 2020 — A National Conversation." Information about the time and links to

these important events will be shared on social media. We hope you can join us as we remember where we've been, those we've lost, and where we're going. You can [friend us on Facebook by clicking HERE](#).



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