

VOICES

THE VOICE OF DELAWARE'S HIV COMMUNITY

DELAWARE HIV CONSORTIUM

May 2021

The Lessons of COVID-19

From the Executive Director

This past March, I celebrated my first anniversary as executive director at the Delaware HIV Consortium. During the occasion I took a brief moment to pause and reflect on my memories of the first few days with the Consortium. On March 11th, two days before I began my tenure, Delaware recorded its first COVID case. Just six days later, my fourth with the agency, the state issued emergency orders effectively locking down Delaware, and with it, the Delaware HIV Consortium. What I remember from that period was the uncertainty of it all – that deep stress of the unknown, of something new. It's possible that as you think back to a year ago, you may have had similar emotions.



What happened next was both a moment of challenge and opportunity for us all, and, all of it happened at what now feels like a dizzying pace. Like many of you, we began working remotely from home, serving our clients in ways we could never have imagined previously: providing our services by phone, mail, and by delivering supplies directly to our clients so that they didn't have to leave the safety of their homes. For many of our staff, "regular business operations" became being that ear to listen no matter what time of day. Our average contact time with our clients easily doubled, often just being a friendly advocate to connect clients with needed support, or someone to provide a reassuring message that we will get through this.

And we did. The feelings of anxiety, fear, and isolation that result from "just not knowing" slowly turned into hope and resilience. Thanks to a lot of sacrifice from everyone - the distancing, masking, and vaccination –

we are beginning to return to normal. We are now challenged not to lose the lessons that COVID-19 offered: work together as a team to resolve challenges, have compassion for our co-workers and our clients. Be kind. Recognize that not everyone has equal access to everything. And stigma still exists. Do what needs to be done. That is our mission.

So, now as we see the light at the end of the tunnel, I want to thank all members of the HIV community: our staff, our partners in AIDS services, the healthcare providers, pharmacists, and our state leadership for all of the support. And, of course, you, our community, for your support through this difficult time.

My personal wishes that you enjoy the summer, that you can take some well-deserved time off, and that you have all been vaccinated! Let's take these next steps forward, together.

Best wishes,



Tyler Berl

DHC Offices Reopen Normal Hours 6/1

The Consortium's offices in Wilmington and Milford will be resuming our normal **IN OFFICE** business hours effective **June 1**. Because of access restrictions of our building, we continue to ask everyone to call ahead and make an appointment if possible so that you can be escorted to our offices. Please follow current government guidance regarding face masks as it applies to you, and to your comfort level. Our hours are Monday-Thursday 8:15 am – 4:30 pm, and Fridays 8:30 am – 1 pm. We look forward to seeing you!



Virtual Auction Results

Thanks to all the generous donors who donated auction items – as well as the generous bidders who bought them – the WOW! Virtual Auction raised \$11,500 in support of our services to Delawareans with HIV! The Virtual Auction, held April 23-30, featured more than 125 items – gifts from our business community and friends. Thanks again for your support! We are planning another online auction in the Fall – just in time for Holiday shopping!

Heartfelt thanks to our Virtual Auction Show contributors, including host Sean Reilly, singer in the Sinatra style, US Senator Thomas Carper, State Senator Sarah McBride, Wilmington Councilwoman Rysheema Dixon, Kerry Kristine McElrone and Joe Trainor, The Rainbow Chorale of Delaware, Miss Crimson Moon, LaTonga Manchez, and The Choir School of Delaware. We were “over the moon” with the show this year! To donate to the WOW Auction, click [HERE](#). To watch the SHOW, click [HERE](#).

Fundraising News

LaTonga Manchez, Wilmington-area drag performer extraordinaire, not only provided us with a great video for the Virtual Auction Show, but also held a birthday fundraiser on Facebook for the Consortium – raising \$300 in one day! Thank you, LaTonga!



[Newark Natural Foods Coop](#) on Main Street held a “round up your change” event in April to benefit the Consortium. Not only did they raise awareness, but they raised more than \$260! Thank you!

Facebook Fundraisers! Facebook fundraisers are a great way to get your friends and colleagues to help support your favorite charities – like the Delaware HIV Consortium. You can do it for your birthday, a family member, an anniversary, or other special day. The great thing is that Facebook provides 100% of the donations without charging credit card fees. To start your own FB fundraiser, click [HERE](#).

Housing News

Brown Appointed Housing Supervisor

Melanie Brown, former Consortium Housing Case manager, was promoted to supervisor of the Housing department in April. Melanie joined the Consortium in June 2019. Melanie earned a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Science from Wilmington University and certificate in Accounting from Goldey-Beacom College. Melanie has a wealth of experience in providing direct client services and has worked with several social service organizations and housing agencies in Delaware. Congratulations, Melanie!



Housing Assistance Program Awaiting Contract Renewal

The Consortium has applied for renewal of its contracts with the Delaware State Housing Authority (Kent and Sussex counties) and the City of Wilmington (New Castle County), to continue managing the Housing Assistance program. Funded through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), the Delaware HIV Consortium has been managing this tenant-based rental assistance program, for more than 20 years. We have requested more funds this year so that we can place more of the 110 households on our waiting list into subsidized housing. Here’s hoping we can do more in contract year 2022!

AIDS Walk Delaware September 18!

The 2021 Annual AIDS Walk Delaware has been scheduled for Saturday, **September 18, 2021**, at Brandywine Park in Wilmington and Grove Park in Rehoboth Beach. The 2021 Walk will be the 35th time this event has been held here in Delaware. The 2020 AIDS Walk was held virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are thrilled to join our partners AIDS Delaware in renewing this important fundraiser **IN PERSON**. The continued lifting of state restrictions on the gathering of crowds, especially in outdoor spaces, will allow an in-person walk. The Walk website, www.delawareaidswalk.org, will be launched in early July.

HIV Case Management News

Dunnington Appointed CM Supervisor

David Dunnington was appointed supervisor of the Consortium's Case Management department, effective May 17. David has been a case manager at our Milford office since May 2020 and has ten years of case management experience and most recently work with Delaware Tech. David has a Bachelor's in Criminal Justice and a Master's Degree in Management, both from Wilmington University. David served on the executive board of the Mid-Eastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MEAEOPP), president of the Delaware State Trio Organization (DSTO), and is a member of Phi Beta Sigma (Delta Gamma Sigma Chapter). Congratulations, David!



Broadway Cares and the Michael Brossette Memorial Fund



Although Broadway continues to be closed, it is promising that many venues have begun to sell tickets for September and are planning a Fall reopening. This is the backdrop for the current operations of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, a foundation supported by donations at Broadway performances (the Little Red Bucket). When theaters closed a year ago, Broadway Cares could no longer collect the donations that help support HIV programs and services throughout the country. We were shocked to still receive a grant of \$4,000 from Broadway Cares last year!

This past year, Broadway Care shifted its fundraising efforts online, and conducted several live concerts to aid them in fundraising. We were honored to receive an application to apply for grant funding again this year. In the past, Broadway Cares grants have almost completely funded the Consortium's Michael Brossette Memorial Fund, a special emergency grant program that provides funds for things not covered by Ryan White emergency funding for those living in Kent and Sussex County. We ask you to support [Broadway Cares](#) and the [Michael Brossette Memorial Fund](#).

340B Pharmacy Program Expands to All Walgreens in DE

The Consortium's 340B Pharmacy Discount Program has expanded to All Walgreens stores in the state of Delaware. Starting with the 10 pharmacies that served the most people with HIV, the program is now available at all 62 Walgreens stores statewide. The 340B Pharmacy program, enacted by Congress in 1992, allows certain healthcare providers to administer their own pharmacy programs and receive payments directly from insurers.

This program generates revenues from the wholesale discount, allowing the Consortium and other service providers to fund services to their clients. As an added benefit to members, the Consortium's program pays any copays and even covers over-the-counter medications and supplies as long as they are prescribed by a physician. If you are a Consortium case management client, you can join our 340B through your case manager.

Prevention News

In-Home Testing

Thanks to a grant from the New Castle County CARES Health Equity grant and a grant from the Delaware Community Foundation, the Consortium still has **In-home HIV Test kits** available. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, HIV testing in Delaware has declined 50 percent and we really need to increase our testing! Once you sign up for a test kit, we will contact you to confirm your address and to provide you with some HIV risk reduction counseling, then we mail you the test kit. Once you receive it, we'll call you back and will walk you through the testing process. If your test is positive, we'll link you to confirmatory testing and will make sure you're connected to care. To sign up for an In-home test kit, click [HERE](#).

PrEP Navigation

Starting PrEP, the once-daily pill to prevent HIV infection, is a complicated process. There's doctor's appointment, diagnostic testing, getting the medication, and more follow-up diagnostic testing. Depending on your insurance (or lack of), each one of these steps could leave you with out-of-pocket expenses or copays. That's where the Consortium's PrEP Navigation program comes in! Thanks to grants from the Laffey McHugh Foundation and WAWA Foundation, the Consortium can help you pay some of these out-of-pocket expenses. We can also help you get on Gilead's medication assistance program to help cover the cost of PrEP. To sign up for our PrEP Navigation program, click [HERE](#).

Save the Date



30th Anniversary Gala October 21, 2021

The date has been set for the Consortium's 30th Anniversary Gala, to be held Thursday, October 21, at the Hotel DuPont. The Consortium was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in Delaware in December 1991. Tickets will go on sale in July.



Delaware HIV Consortium
100 W. 10th Street, Suite 415,
Wilmington DE 19801

302-654-5471 • FAX 302-654-5472

www.delawarehiv.org

Tyler Berl, Executive Director

Suzanne Abdallah	Melanie Brown
Jackie Coverdale	David Dunnington
Shari Harper	Ulysses Harrell
Monique Harris	Jordan Hines
Willie Howard	Junie Jean-Baptiste
Jalissia Johnson-Tiggs	Andrea Killian
George Lincoln	Scott MacKenzie
Kelly Maguire	Sarah Parsley
Robert Raup	Shanice Rodgers
Brad Shannon	