



Epi/Needs Assessment Meeting Minutes

July 2, 2020, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Call-in number: 1-888-494-4032; Passcode: 5018896374#

Roll call

Present: M. Maginn, J. Charles, J. Filicette, N. Holmes, T. Howard, J. Kowalsky, A. Meirick, M. Andrews-Conrad, C. Hicks, C. Jackson, F. Ma, P. Murphy, J. Nuss, C. Ward

Absent: J. Maras, Rev. Lewis, R. Wheeler

Agenda Items:

1) Review minutes from June meeting and revised Gender Language Workgroup recommendations document with June 4, 2020 input from this committee

J. Nuss began by reviewing the Gender Language Workgroup's initial recommendations for the Risk Group Definitions and the responses from the Epi Committee, which included the following:

- **Recommendation 1:** Replace the current Points of Consideration with the GTZ-IL Priority Populations;
 - **Epi Committee Response:** The Committee added language that explains support of GTZ, but did not accept adding the GTZ populations as the prioritized populations for the State are different and based on the Prevention Workplan and the Integrated Plan.
- **Recommendation 2:** Replace "male" and "female" with "man" and "woman", respectively, throughout the document;
 - **Epi Committee Response:** Accepted
- **Recommendation 3:** Remove "(cis- and transgender)" throughout the definitions.
 - **Epi Committee Response:** The committee did not accept this change as members believed that this verbiage is important for provider understanding of the definitions.

After reviewing the Epi Committee's responses, the Gender Language Workgroup then proposed additional recommendations. J. Nuss reiterated that these recommendations are for the Points of Consideration only. The Gender Language Workgroup is not recommending further changes to the Risk Group Definitions or additional Priority Populations for this year.

- **Recommendation 1:** Incorporate GTZ Priority Populations into the current Points of Consideration (green language in draft).
 - **Epi Committee Response:** Accepted

- **Recommendation 2:** Add a Point of Consideration regarding the prioritization of gender non-conforming individuals (purple language in draft).
 - **Epi Committee Discussion:** M. Maginn stated that providers already have challenges understanding and targeting testing according to the current Risk Group Definitions. He felt that even as a Point of Consideration, the proposed language could make the use of the definitions more complicated. A. Meirick agreed that the language could be confusing to providers and may make it more difficult for them to determine how clients should be prioritized and reported accurately within Provide™. A. Meirick expressed a need for more provider trainings around affirming care for transgender and gender non-conforming people before adding this language to Risk Group Definitions document. Several committee members agreed. M. Andrews-Conrad noted that the Gender Language Workgroup has an objective to collect/create resources and trainings around these topics for statewide use.

In addition, the committee discussed the need for more evidence (i.e. data) that supported high HIV seropositivity rates among gender non-conforming people in order to accept the language as written. C. Hicks noted that gender identity is now being collected as an open-ended question on the testing form, so this can be evaluated with testing data in a few years' time.

Finally, the committee discussed the proposed language in terms of defining risk by use of body parts instead of gender identity. The committee agreed that this type of recategorization of the Risk Group Definition needs more input from community members, especially from transgender men and women as exacerbating gender dysmorphia among clients is a concern. It would also require extensive amounts of training of providers and changes to the testing form in Provide™.

- **Epi Committee Response:** The Epi Committee will keep a Point of Consideration about gender non-conforming people in the document but will revise the language to describe the following:
 - Although not prioritized for risk-targeted testing, gender non-conforming people are served through perinatal and routine testing. Risk targeted providers can provide non-prioritized testing to gender non-conforming people as well.
 - Fluid gender identity data is currently being collected on IDPH testing forms. In future years, this data can be used to determine prioritization of gender non-conforming individuals.

ACTION ITEM: The Epi Committee will provide a formal written response to the Gender Language Workgroup explaining their decisions with appropriate rationale.

ACTION ITEM: C. Hicks will draft the revised language about gender non-conforming people in the Risk Group Definition document as described above.

2) Discuss previously proposed priority populations' definition changes (PWID and HRH) and finalize recommendations from committee for 2021-2023

The committee discussed the following recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** For PWID, change the prioritization of testing from HIV to HCV (with the exception of HIV testing prioritization if an individual has recently tested positive for HIV).

- **Discussion:** C. Hicks explained the rationale behind this recommendation as previously discussed by the committee. It was noted that the current definition would not change, but an additional bullet would be included to explain this.
- **Committee decision:** Accepted
- **Recommendation 2:** Add “African American Women disclosing recently incarcerated partner(s)” to the HRH definition.
 - **Discussion:** M. Maginn and C. Hicks noted that this was previously a question in the risk assessment that did not result in increased seropositivity. C. Hicks noted that he was concerned that adding this to the HRH definition would greatly broaden the scopes and would result in lower seropositivity for the overall HRH category. M. Andrews-Conrad recommended that if the proposal was not accepted for the risk group definition, the question about incarcerated partners could be re-added to the risk assessment for further assessment. The committee agreed to re-examining the data submitted with the proposal at an upcoming meeting to determine if the question should be re-added.
 - **Committee decision:** Not accepted, but will be reevaluated according to discussion above.

ACTION ITEM: The additional language for the PWID definition will be drafted.

3) **Other Business** – No other business discussed.

4) **Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 11:20am.