

# The New Haven Mayor's Task Force on AIDS

## ***REPORT***



A Community Conversation on HIV/AIDS  
*held*

Wednesday, October **14**, 2009

Hill Regional Career High School  
140 Legion Avenue, New Haven, CT

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

***Questionnaire & Discussion Summary  
& Recommendations***

# 2009 MTFA Town Meeting at Glance

## Summary of Questionnaires (n=40 38 English 2 Spanish)

Who filled out a questionnaire?

47.5% (19) Male 50% (20) Female  
 15% (6) Bisexual 22.5% (9) Gay 2.5% (1) Lesbian 60% (24) Straight  
 45% (18) African American 17.5% (7) Hispanic 22.5% (9) White 12.5% (6) Other  
 5% (2) Don't Know HIV Status 30% (12) Negative 60% (24) Positive  
 Ages from 19 to 85 average age of 47.97 with 78% (31) between the ages of 40 to 60

**All most everyone thought Career High School was a good location** 97.5% (39) 2.5% (1) said No  
 Suggestions included Southern Connecticut University as a location that might attract college students

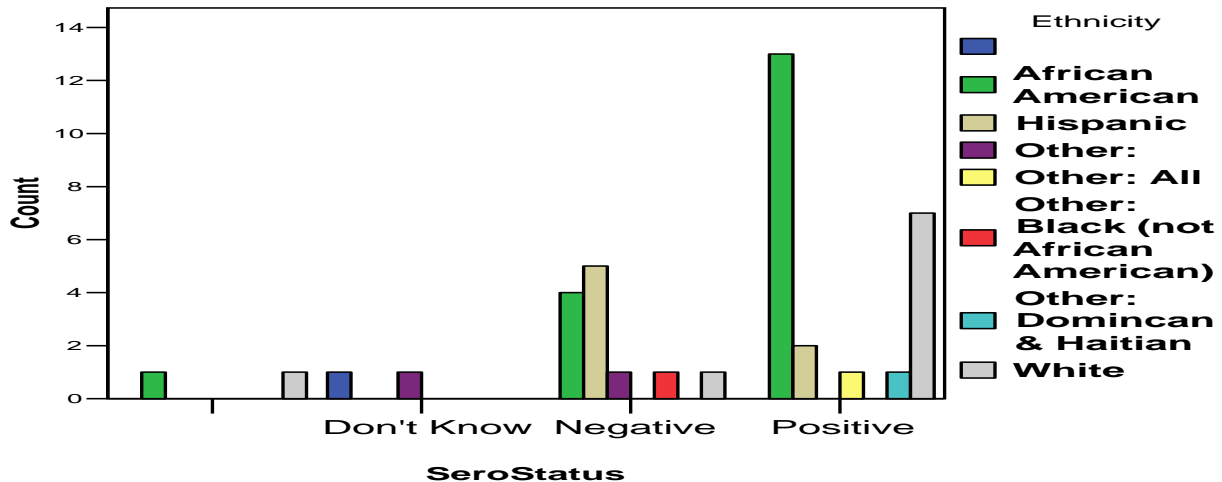
**Majority said New Haven was doing a good job at HIV Prevention and HIV Care:** 67.5% (27)  
 Yes 12.5% (5) No Those that said Yes also gave comments to make prevention better (see comments below).

70% (28) respondents said Yes to “Is New Haven doing a good job at caring for people with HIV/AIDS?” 15% (6) said No

### Looking at HIV Status vs. Sexual Orientation:

	Orientation				Total
	Bisexual	Gay	Lesbian	Straight	
<b>SeroStatus</b>					
Don't Know	0	0	0	2	2
Negative	0	1	1	10	12
<b>Positive</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>24</b>
Total	6	9	1	24	40

### Ethnic Affiliation



## Comments on prevention and care

Better HIV Prevention	Better HIV Care
<p>           \$\$            A testing 'van' mobile testing / counseling            Better condom usage and more outreach to adolescence and youth            Closer contact            Do (current) education somehow on a constant basis            Making the awareness of HIV/AIDS more of a priority in urban areas. There is a big concentration of me on the down low who are scared to talk or seek help.            Media, outreach, advertising, poster            More \$, More innovative strategies            more better approach getting to the youth            More Early Education            More education within the community            More for MSM            More Funding            More funding into necessary programs like syringe exchange, outreach, etc.            More funds for prevention and housing            More information also have more meetings at different locations            More outreach            More outreach to MSM esp. those using crystal meth.            More Programs            More workshops church and school            Obviously, Ryan White funds are as a result of fewer new cases of HIV/AIDS. Mandatory class for awareness in high school &amp; middle schools. Testing offered for all ER patients School &amp; T.V. Education            Strong outreach including in Spanish to the schools in New Haven            Through the development or implementation of more programs            Use condoms            We need more prevention. We need to get out into the community.            With more resources we could always offer more services            Within your limits. All Agencies to unite and work together         </p>	<p>           Communication Pt to Medical Provider            Give clients a ??? to realize that it's alright to be honest with themselves            I don't know            Money            More \$            More \$, More Services            More alternative therapies &amp; Holistic care            More funding            More funding            More funding            More funding            More information to public about assistance            More mental health services / support groups. The mental ill/depressed are most at risk and least represented            More money            more outreach more information            More skilled workers who are HIV themselves and not scared of self disclosure            More support groups            Prevention and Education            same as above            Tender loving care            They need to utilize some of these abandon buildings to house. Everyone needs a stable living quarters especially when they are ill.            This is a tough question personally for me to answer this            Use more condoms            We need to work more with the Hispanic community         </p> <p> <i>Note the need for more funding and money, but not specifying why. Could it be that, over time, consumers equate services with funding streams?</i> </p> <p> <i>Clearly the need for more focused, drill dill down conversations need to be had.</i> </p>

**Medical Care**

Almost everyone has seen a Physician within the last 12 months: 92.5% (37)

Suggestions to improve medical care (note positive comments as well):

Suggestions to improve Medical Care	Suggestions to improve AIDS Services
Better doctors. Everything is fine in this area Have the Dr. listen and not judge the word that the patient may speak and believe I am not on any medications it has been 22 years since my diagnoses in '87 I must say I receive great medical care Is dong just fine for the moment More attention to gay men's health issues, like HPV More facilities More frequent dr. visits More holistic approach rather than 'specialty' More options with doctors/specialists My doctors are good Not having to go at all. I know I must go. Nothing Respect <i>Seems like the respondents either were satisfied or had a need for more attention in terms of appointments, specialty care, and being respectfully heard.</i>	At this time I've gotten and have all the things I want and need. Be honest about the care of the clients. The funds are for us. Better case manager/client ratio. #1 though is - more alternative therapies! This area is missed by many agencies Better listeners Closing communication w/case manager Dental Everything Increase funding (eg. Ryan White) Is dong just fine for the moment Massage Therapy Money More funding More Funding More funding More Housing Nothing at this time

**Unmet Needs**

Several individuals indicated that currently all of their needs are being met. No one entered more than 4 unmet needs.

NEED 1	NEED 2	NEED 3	NEED 4
Cardio-Stress Test			
Dental	Health Care	Auto Insurance	Financial Aid (School)
Dental	Housing		
Dental	Housing		
Dental			
Dental			
Housing (Help with Mortgage)	Lights	Gas	Oil for heat
Housing	Case Managers who listen	compassion and understanding	access to other resources
Housing	Dental		
Housing			
Massage	Yoga Classes	More Support Groups	
Mental Health	Housing	Medications	Money
Money	Dental	Podiatrist	Physical Therapist
Money	Justice	Proper interaction from authority & Pros	Relationship
More Drug and Alcohol Counseling	Support Groups		
Psychological	Not to be counted as data		
Social Support			

## Has the economy effected your health?

No 42.5% (17) Yes 32.5% (13)

Decompensated & minimal services available

Foolishly worked all life and saved. The bug debilitated me, lost job. Had foolishly also had some money in mutual funds - so besides my pension being devastated by the virus, the economy killed some of my savings. Forced me to come back to CT from Midwest

Heating my house

I am nervous with wondering how to pay my bills and eat.

It has literally robbed me from just basic needs. Not just for myself but for my girls like the vitamins, minerals, prescribed over the counter meds. It leaves me robbing peter and john to pay Paul now. :-)

It just does

Lack of funds for dental

Not yet, however I am hoping that the declining economy will not cause fewer hours that the clinic will be operating

Rx expenses increased

Stress

Stressed out

## 2009 Community Conversation Discussion Notes

**CARE:** About 60 people attended the event. MTFA member Bob Sideleau facilitated the conversation about HIV/AIDS Care by first asking if people knew where HIV/AIDS care was available in the New Haven area, and respondents responded with St. Raphael's Healen Center, YALE New Haven Hospital Nathan Smith clinic, Fairhaven Community Health Center, the YALE Van, and Hill Health. Bob then asked if participants knew where HIV/AIDS services are available, and replies included AIDS Project New Haven, AIDS Interfaith Network, Hispanos Unidos, Fairhaven, the YALE Van, and the Needle Exchange Van. All in all, it seemed that the audience was well informed about where to get medical care and HIV/AIDS Service. Bob also asked those service providers to raise their hands, so that if any audience participant needed more information but was afraid to speak up, could later make a connection.

In discussing care, one participant reported that they work so it is difficult to attend service programs and support groups that meet during the day, and requested that their be more activities during the evening to allow working HIVers to attend. He also specifically request more Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) programs to help address the sense of isolation and associated risky behaviors that go along with it.

Another participant said that while it was easy to fire one's doctor and change medical providers, it seem much more difficult to change one's medical case manager. Luz Gonzalez stated that every agency must provide every client with a grievance form, and that no one is required to stick with a case manager, or a particular agency for that matter.

A question arouse about services for Hepatitis, and Bob Sideleau asked for service providers with Hepatitis expertise to raise their hands. A representative from SDC reported on their Hepatitis services, with particular mention about Dr. Doug Bruce.





**PREVENTION:** In discussing HIV prevention, it seemed there was a strong consensus there is still a lot of stigma and ignorance of HIV/AIDS, especially online. One respondent reported that in his online dating activities he asked a encounter if he would have asked if he was HIV if he did not disclose it previously, and the answer was "NO." Respondents reported that it seemed like people "don't want to know" about HIV, and some may think that since there are new medical treatments, they do not have to worry about it.

Bob Sideleau did mention about the online profiles and social marketing campaigns done by Guardian Health and the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health collective, but much more needs to be done.





MTFA member Dr. Judith Gordon mentioned that perhaps this is something the Mayor's Task Force could look into. Luz Gonzalez also mentioned that perhaps it's time to go back to basics and do outreach prevention that was conducted in the '80s to places like cruise areas, parks, and bars.

## Conclusions/Recommendations


### HIV CARE:

-  Advocate for increased funding
  - Dental, Housing, Emergency Financial Assistance, Complimentary Medical Services (massage, medical nutritional therapy)
-  Advocate for increased support systems/groups and services, especially for those working during the day
-  Consumer empowerment forums, especially addresses self advocacy and managing Dr./patient relationships
-  Better consumer communications about service availability and access methods

### HIV Prevention:

-  Advocate for increased funding for HIV prevention programs
-  Advocate for innovative methods to outreach to community, especially youth, MSMs and internet sites.
-  Advocate for early education and school based health programs
-  Advocate for more bi-lingual programs and materials

### Overall:

-  Continued conversations with more detailed focus on needs and concerns.