



**Community Outreach and Advocacy
Community Forum Draft Notes
Thursday, March 22, 2007**

4:30 to 6:30pm

**The Women's Building, 3543 18th Street #B
San Francisco**

Committee Members Present: Newell (Co-chair), Barnes, Cooper

Committee Members Absent: Flores (Co-chair), Penagos

Other Council Members Present: Antonetty, Hicks, Kleffner

Others Present: Michelle Long (SFDPH HHS), Dean Goodwin (SFDPH HHS), Bill Blum (SFDPH HHS)

Council Support Present: Enrique Asis, Joe Lynn, Jack Newby, Michelle San Pedro, Ray West

General Public: Approximately six (6)

1. Welcome and Introductions

At 4:40 PM, Council Member (CM) Hicks welcomed the group and introduced CM Barnes and CM Newell (Co-chair) as the co-facilitators of the meeting. There were six (6) members of the public present.

2. Purpose of Meeting

CM Hicks explained that the Council is trying to get a better idea of how to serve the women's community. The input from this forum helps the Council in critical decision-making.

3. Advocacy Project Overview

HIV Consumer Rights Advocate, Joe Lynn distributed brochures regarding the Community Rights Advocacy project and explained his role as a grievance liaison.

4. Explanation of Forum Agenda

CM Newell (Co-chair) and CM Barnes explained their roles as co-facilitators. They re-iterated that the purpose of the forum was to extract input from the community to guide the Council in the prioritization and reallocation decision-making process. CM Newell and CM Barnes established the ground rules for group discussion.

5. Large Group Discussion

➤ Ice Breaker

CM Barnes led the group in introductions. Everyone introduced themselves, stated which county they live in, and what they love about living in the area. There were residents of Marin, San Mateo and San Francisco counties.

➤ **Forum Questions**

Led by CM Barnes

• **HEALTH CARE/MEDICAL NEEDS/VITAL SERVICES:**

What do you identify as your main health care and medical need(s)?

When do you seek it and how often?

Where do you seek care?

What is your care seeking behavior?

What would your ideal primary care look like?

What would your ideal support group look like?

What are the most important services to you?

COMMUNITY RESPONSES:

▪ **The women identified the following as vital services:**

- Consistent primary care providers
- Dental and Mental health services,
- Substance abuse treatment,
- Housing
- Finances (steady employment, money management advice),
- Employee benefits (insurance, allowance of personal days), and benefits counseling.

▪ **Personal response:**

One woman stated that she does not feel like she's being taken seriously by her nurse practitioner because she's not "as visibly ill" as other patients. She would like to feel like she's given the same amount of attention and quality of care.

▪ **Personal response:**

One woman feels that many support groups made up of mostly younger individuals and mostly male. She would like to see more support groups for older individuals so that she can talk with peers.

▪ **Personal response:**

A woman who works within the Latino community feels that most Latina women aren't very open to sharing their experiences in large groups. She thinks women would feel more comfortable in the more intimate setting of a home. She also feels that the stigma of having HIV/AIDS, language barriers, a lack of transportation and childcare prevent Latina women from attending support groups.

- **Personal response:**
One woman expressed her frustration with finding credible, long-term primary care providers. She does not like switching providers and having to re-tell her case history every time.
- **Personal response:**
One woman stated that she experienced domestic violence, and she feels that her domestic violence case worker was not well-educated about specific needs of working with people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH/A). She would like to see case workers more knowledgeable about the needs of PLWH/A.
- **HOUSING:** What is your living situation? Do you need to support dependents for housing?

COMMUNITY RESPONSES:

- Two San Francisco County residents stated that they live in HOPWA subsidized apartments.
- **Personal Response:**
One woman lives in a Single Room Occupancy (SRO) facility in the Tenderloin area of San Francisco. She is frustrated that she cannot access food whenever she wants because the SRO locks up all the food. She would also like to see more nutritional food available.
- **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:**
 - Some women expressed that a “tip-line” or “help-line” would be helpful. Some women feel that they are “out of the loop” because they don’t know where to start looking for help (re: medical/dental/mental health, social services, etc.) The tip-line should be able to provide information on resources available to them and also provide information on other things e.g. remedies for a cold sore.
 - **Personal response:**
One woman stated that she has a difficult time getting vouchers (food, clothing, transportation) in a timely manner. She attributes “bureaucracy” to the delay.
- **ACCESS/BARRIERS/STIGMA:** Explain any issues you may have that prevent or impede you seeking care such as where services are available, stigma, etc.

COMMUNITY RESPONSES:

- Environments where they seek care tend to be more male-oriented and the women stated they don’t feel comfortable discussing women’s issues in groups with men (e.g. menopause).
- Some women pointed that different ethnic groups stereotype HIV/AIDS as a “gay white man’s disease” and so many men do not use condoms because they feel that they are less likely to become infected with HIV/AIDS.

- **Personal response:**

A woman who works within the Latino community feels that the stigma of having HIV/AIDS, language barriers, lack of transportation and childcare prevent Latina women from attending appointments, classes, seeking health services, etc.

- **Personal response:**

Another woman stated that condom use is a stigma within the Latino/a community. She feels that there's a lack of knowledge about the disease and safe sex practices (condom use).

➤ **Other Forum Questions whose answers were compressed in the comments above :**

- **Substance Use Treatment and Support:** Are you looking for treatment or support or both? What are your needs? Do family members have substance use problems that interfere with your HIV care?
- **Role as Caregivers:** Do you care for any children? Do you care for other family members? Does your role as a caregiver interfere or prevent you from seeking care?

6. Large Group Report Summarization

The focus group came to a consensus that the most important services to them are:

- Consistent and reliable medical care
- Adequate mental health services
- Substance abuse rehabilitation programs
- Women-focused social services
- Women-focused healthcare (e.g. menopause)
- Easier access to services (transportation and childcare).
- More specifically, there is a need for more Spanish-speaking service providers.

7. Review and Completion of Survey Form

A needs assessment survey was distributed, completed, and submitted by everyone. The surveys will be forwarded to the Needs Assessment Committee.

8. Thank you Give-Away/Return Forms

CM Barnes and CM Newell (Co-chair) thanked everyone for attending and providing their input. They encouraged the participants to consider joining the council. Mr. Newby made an announcement for a needs assessment regarding women's healthcare that will be coming up soon. Three people won a raffle for Safeway gift cards for their participation in the forum.

9. Adjourn

CM Barnes adjourned the meeting at 6:05 P.M.