

# The Point: SHARP News

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## SHARP State Updates

### Alabama

SHARP Director Robert Greenwald and community partner Kathie Hiers of AIDS Alabama will be meeting in November with the Alabama State Health Officer and AIDS Director to discuss the possibility of a section 1115 Medicaid waiver to expand coverage to low-income, pre-disabled people living with HIV. Medicaid 1115 waivers allow states to try new approaches to expand coverage, and are one approach to improving access to care cited in the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) released this past summer. The NHAS implementation plan calls on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to “promote and support the development and expedient review of Medicaid 1115 waivers to allow States to expand their Medicaid programs to cover pre-disabled people living with HIV” by the end of 2010.

### Arkansas

The Arkansas HIV Community Advocates (AHCA), the state’s first grassroots HIV advocacy coalition, held its kickoff meeting in August in Little Rock. Nearly 30 people attended, including members of the Consumer Advisory Board, community-based providers, healthcare providers, state government officials, industry representatives and other advocates. Patrick Packer, Executive Director of the Southern AIDS Coalition (SAC), and David Munar, Vice President of AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), co-facilitated the meeting. Coalition members formed subcommittees to work on an advocacy agenda and plan, and on how the group would structure itself. The Living Affected Corp offered to serve as administrative convener of the group. AHCA also met in September, had a teleconference in October, and will meet again November 10. AHCA has prioritized exploring a section 1115 Medicaid waiver to expand Medicaid eligibility to low-income, pre-disabled HIV-positive people as one of its first advocacy action items. AHCA will also weigh in on the search for a new Section Chief for the HIV/STD/Hepatitis C section at the Arkansas Department of Health (former Section Chief Kevin Dedner is now working with the Robert Wood Johnson Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity), ensuring that community perspectives are represented.

On November 30, SHARP team member Amy Rosenberg will participate in a panel discussion sponsored by the Arkansas Minority Health Commission (AMHC) titled “Act Aware: Let’s Talk About It... HIV/AIDS in Arkansas.” The purpose is to foster community discussions regarding HIV/AIDS in Arkansas (with a special emphasis on the minority and LGBT communities), the lack of state contribution to HIV/AIDS, the stigma and prejudices still attached to HIV/AIDS and the growing need for more education among legislators and policy makers. The discussion will be moderated by Dr. Creshelle Nash, Medical Director of AMHC, and confirmed panelists include Diedra Levi (Brothas & Sistas/LA Corp), Patrick Packer (Southern AIDS Coalition), Dr. Nate Smith (Arkansas Department of Health), and Ann Dixon (Consumer Advisory Board). See the events listings in this newsletter for time and location information.



**Find us online!** *SHARP state reports and executive summaries, as well as this newsletter, are posted on the Treatment Access Expansion project website as they become available. View and download the reports and summaries at [http://www.taepusa.org/SHARP\\_library.html](http://www.taepusa.org/SHARP_library.html).*

### **Los Angeles County**

After incorporating comments from community partners, the SHARP report on access to care for Latinos in Los Angeles County has been completed and is now in the production phase. SHARP team members will consult with community partners on plans for the report release.

### **Louisiana**

Louisiana's ADAP, like other SHARP states', is currently falling behind growing need. While the Office of Public Health does not keep a waiting list, it is estimated that the unmet need for ADAP exceeds 500 individuals statewide. To help relieve pressure on the program, the New Orleans Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) has agreed to contribute \$100,000 toward the cost of HIV medications for ADAP clients who are residents of the New Orleans EMA. Further relief is expected to come from the implementation of the recently-approved Medicaid 1115 waiver for the New Orleans metro area. The waiver will allow the state to provide a limited benefits package through Medicaid to uninsured residents of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Orleans, and Jefferson Parishes with income up to 200% of the federal poverty level—regardless of disability status—in the years prior to the general expansion of Medicaid eligibility in 2014 under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA).

A first draft of the Louisiana SHARP report was circulated to community partners in late September. SHARP staff incorporated suggested changes and corrections and is in the process of circulating a revised draft and developing an executive summary for use as an advocacy tool. We encourage all community partners to review the revised report and draft executive summary and send any suggestions or comments to Dorothee Alsentzer.

In August, the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network (LAAN) elected a new 25-member board with representatives from all nine health regions. SHARP researcher Dorothee Alsentzer will meet with the new LAAN board members on November 11 to identify priorities for next steps, including strategic planning of the SHARP report launch in early 2011.

### **Mississippi**

Mississippi SHARP has been in full swing since summer, and SHARP team members Amy Rosenberg, Emily Broad, and students Stacy Clark and Rachel Mehlsak have been on several trips to the state, meeting with community partners in North Mississippi, Jackson, the Delta, Hattiesburg, Gulfport, and Biloxi. The SHARP team has met with many individuals at the Health Department, including State Health Officer Mary Currier, State Epidemiologist Paul Byers, Director of Communicable Disease Joy Sennett, Health Officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs (District 7 and 8), and several Health Department HIV social workers. The team also met with other providers and consumers including representatives from University of Mississippi Medical Center, the AIDS Education & Training Center, the Southeastern Mississippi Rural Health Initiative (Hattiesburg), G.A. Carmichael clinic (Canton and Yazoo City), the AIDS Services Coalition (Hattiesburg), the Mississippi Center for Justice, Planned Parenthood, and community

members from the Delta and the Gulfport/Biloxi area. The team has also spoken with representatives from the Office of Healthy Schools in the State Department of Education, the State Department of Mental Health, individuals from faith communities, Mississippi State's Social Science Research Center, and Coastal Family Health Center on the Gulf Coast.

On September 21, the team attended the HIV/AIDS town hall meeting in Jackson, organized by A Brave New Day and AIDS Action in Mississippi. The meeting was called to open the dialogue between the HIV community and the Mississippi State Department of Health, and was well-attended by activists and consumers from around the state, several top health department officials, and state representatives Stephen Holland and John Hines, Sr. (both are members of the Public Health Committee in the Mississippi House of Representative; Rep. Holland is the Committee Chair). The meeting focused on action items for the HIV/AIDS community in Mississippi and feedback from the community around the vacant State AIDS Director position and what criteria would be used to fill this position.

On October 29, the SHARP team hosted a meeting of community partners who have been involved in the SHARP research so far to help prioritize the list of healthcare access challenges and opportunities that will be included in the report. The meeting included 25 individuals from around the state representing the health department, the academic community, the healthcare provider community, consumers, and AIDS service organizations. Comments from the meeting will inform the SHARP report, which will be circulated to community partners for comment the week of November 8.

### Advocacy Trainings

*SHARP is pleased to offer our community partners advocacy trainings from the experts at AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC). Trainings cover the areas of general advocacy ("Advocacy 101"), operations, communications, political strategy, grassroots mobilization, and public health, and can be tailored to your particular needs and time requirements. See the complete list of training topics at the TAEP website ([http://taepusa.org/SHARP\\_library.html](http://taepusa.org/SHARP_library.html)). For more information, contact Amy Rosenberg or Dorothee Alsentzer.*

### North Carolina

North Carolina AIDS Action Network (NCAAN) policy and advocacy coordinator Kathryn Schley has left NCAAN to join the Infectious Disease Clinic at Duke as a clinical social worker. Kathryn was instrumental in organizing NCAAN's successful Advocacy Day in May, and in moving the coalition forward with its advocacy agenda. She will be truly missed at NCAAN, but hasn't gone far, and will remain integrally involved with the HIV community through her new work at Duke.

Starting November 8, the new NCAAN coordinator is Lisa Hazirjian. Lisa is an advocate and community organizer, and joins NCAAN after having worked on the Obama campaign and a local civil rights initiative. She served as the Project Coordinator for the National Coalition for Sexual Health, a national HIV/AIDS policy/advocacy coalition. Lisa is also familiar with North Carolina, having earned both her undergraduate degree in Public Policy and a Ph.D. in History at Duke. The SHARP team welcomes Lisa and looks forward to working with her, NCAAN, and other community partners on upcoming advocacy efforts.

## South Carolina

Following its annual meeting in August, the SC HIV/AIDS Care Crisis Task Force (SCHACCTF) is currently mapping out plans for its advocacy strategies relating to ADAP, prevention, and Medicaid in advance of the next legislative session. Statewide involvement will be critical in advance of and throughout the 2011 legislative session to educate the public and South Carolina's lawmakers about the need for state investment in HIV prevention and treatment services. As part of a strategy to focus attention on these needs, SHARP staff and community partners are in the process of planning a public roll-out of the SHARP report for the State of South Carolina, which is currently in production. Community partners will be notified when the final report has been published and is available on-line. If you have ideas you would like to share regarding the public roll-out of the report, please contact Dorothee Alsentzer, 617-390-2556, [dalsentzer\[at\]law.harvard.edu](mailto:dalsentzer[at]law.harvard.edu).

Together with SCHACCTF, the Southern AIDS Coalition (SAC), and AIDS Foundation of Chicago, SHARP held an advocacy training retreat for 20 grassroots advocates on October 14-15 in Greenville. The event, made possible by Bristol-Myers Squibb, included skills-building workshops and substantive presentations on topics ranging from the impact of federal healthcare reform on South Carolinians living with HIV/AIDS to engaging South Carolina's faith-based communities in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

## World AIDS Day and Upcoming Events

### November 15, 2010

#### Medicaid 1115 Waiver Webinar

Join SHARP on 11/15 at 1:00 p.m. ET to learn more about this process and how you can rally state and federal support for HIV care expansion with [Medicaid's 1115 waiver option](#). To participate, call in to 1-888-517-2470 and enter passcode 8583668# when prompted.

### November 20, 2010

#### Spartanburg, SC

Piedmont Care presents "Band-AIDS IV," a free AIDS awareness event featuring musical performers Big Water, Rachel Chalmers, One Love, The Wheresville Project, Revestation, Imagine That, and CBS at The Showroom (149 South Daniel Morgan Avenue) from 6 pm to 10:30 pm.

Contact: Piedmont Care, (864) 582-7773

### November 30, 2010

#### Little Rock, AR

"Act Aware: Let's Talk about It...HIV/AIDS in Arkansas" from 6 to 8pm at the UALR Cooperative Extension at 2301 South University Avenue

Contact: Cozetta Jones, [cozetta.jones\[at\]arkansas.gov](mailto:cozetta.jones[at]arkansas.gov)

### December 1, 2010

#### Anniston, AL

World AIDS Day Celebration of Life Karen Morris Memorial AIDS Walk and reception

Contact: Julie Hope, [jhope\[at\]hscal.org](mailto:jhope[at]hscal.org)

**December 1, 2010**

## **Alabama**

AIDS Alabama's World AIDS Day events include testing at various colleges, an open forum at Miles College, and a program titled *Past, Present and PROMISE* in South Birmingham. A candle light vigil and additional details are still in the works.

Contact: Nigel Weatherspoon, [nigell\[at\]aidsalabama.org](mailto:nigell[at]aidsalabama.org)

**December 1, 2010**

## **Mobile, AL**

The Mobile AIDS Coalition in conjunction with RSA Battlehouse Hotel will present the lighting of the RSA Battlehouse hotel with red lights along with a program to be held at the Government Plaza from 5 to 8pm. The program will include local singing talent, school bands and choirs, speaker and speaker panel.

Contact: [www.lightsforrights.org](http://www.lightsforrights.org)

**December 1, 2010**

## **El Dorado, AR**

South Arkansas Fights AIDS (SAFA) is holding a service for World AIDS Day

Contact: Sue Worsham, [sueworsham\[at\]suddenlink.net](mailto:sueworsham[at]suddenlink.net)

**December 1, 2010**

## **Louisiana**

The CHANGE Coalition will be holding events around World AIDS Day in New Orleans area.

Contact: Eric Oleson, [EOleson\[at\]ProjectLazarus.Net](mailto:EOleson[at]ProjectLazarus.Net)

**December 1, 2010**

## **Okatie, SC**

The ACCESS Network, Inc. hosts an afternoon service at the Church of Palms with keynote speaker Deadra Lawson-Smith.

Contact: Brenda Singleton, 843-379-5600 or [brendasmoe\[at\]aol.com](mailto:brendasmoe[at]aol.com)

**December 1, 2010**

## **Durham, NC**

The World AIDS Day event will start at 6:30pm at the Historic Hayti Heritage Center.

Contact: Danielle Myers, 919-596-9898 or [Danielle.gary\[at\]aasc-c.org](mailto:Danielle.gary[at]aasc-c.org)

**December 1, 2010**

## **Baton Rouge, LA**

Tim Young, Executive Director of the HIV/AIDS Alliance for Region Two (HAART), will be participating in the panel at the Annual World AIDS Day Lunch and Learn.

Contact: Kelli Irving, BlueCross BlueShield, [kelli.irving\[at\]bcbsla.com](mailto:kelli.irving[at]bcbsla.com)

December 11, 2010

Charlotte, NC

“An Evening of Hope and Inspiration...featuring the Hoppers and Jeanne White Ginder”

Jeanne White Ginder shares the story of her son, Ryan White, and the Hoppers their musical stylings to the event. Tickets are \$20 and benefit the Jeanne White Ginder Food Pantry in Rosedale, ID.

Contact: 704-372-1000 or [www.carolinatix.org](http://www.carolinatix.org)

## Feedback Please!

We'd like to make *The Point: SHARP News* useful for you—please give us your suggestions for what you'd like to see included in future issues. Here's how to reach SHARP staff:

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The State Healthcare Access Research Project is conducted by the Health Law and Policy Clinic of Harvard Law School and the Treatment Access Expansion Project. The Health Law and Policy Clinic has provided legal services to low and moderate income people living with HIV/AIDS for 20 years, and is an active participant in HIV healthcare access advocacy efforts. TAEP is a national organization focused exclusively on HIV healthcare access advocacy. The mission of both organizations is to help bring quality, comprehensive healthcare to more people living with HIV and AIDS.



Health Law and Policy Clinic of  
Harvard Law School



The State Healthcare Access Research Project (SHARP) is conducted by Harvard Law School and the Treatment Access Expansion Project in collaboration with Bristol-Myers Squibb's (BMS) WithInSight Initiative. BMS has no review or editorial discretion as to content.

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