

Central Florida HIV Planning Council

World AIDS Day (WAD) Workgroup Meeting Minutes

July 11, 2025

Call to Order: The World AIDS Day Workgroup was called to order by the Workgroup Chair, Rene Cotto-Lewis at 2:05 PM via Webex.

Participants Present (all via Teleconference): Rene Cotto-Lewis, Emma Bailey, Gabriella Rodriguez, Ira Westbrook, Kara Johnson Williams, Kimberley Brown, Pedro Huertas-Diaz, Sarah Southern, Sueanne Vazquez, Andre Antenor, Charlie Wright, Yasmin Andre, Vel Cline

PCS Staff Present: Whitney Marshall, David Bent, Laura Perez

Approval of the Agenda:	<p>The workgroup reviewed the meeting agenda and approved it as presented.</p> <p>Motion: Sueanne Vazquez made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Kara Johnson Williams seconded the motion. The motion was adopted by majority vote without debate.</p>
Approval of the June 13 Minutes:	<p>The workgroup reviewed the June 13 minutes and approved them as presented.</p>
Open the floor for Public Comment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no public comments. • PCS did not receive any comment cards.
New Business:	<p>Event Programming/Event Flow</p> <p>Members discussed ideas for event programming. PCS informed the committee that the venue has yet to be finalized and encouraged the workgroup to think of the venue space more abstractly for the time being until details are confirmed.</p> <p>The following ideas for event programming were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A spoken word poet (like last years event) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Members were provided with the context that last year's poet was the winner of a spoken word contest held by the HIV Stigma Task Force, which was funded by EHE. • Quilt ceremony • Testimonials from the long-term survivors of HIV study • Spiritual praise dancers • Descolonizarte Teatro <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Members were encouraged to keep the event programming around an hour to and hour and a half • Highlights from other World AIDS Day events that were held earlier in the week • A choir or candlelight vigil

Gabriella said that she would like to arrive an hour or two early to be able to rehearse for the quilt ceremony. Some members expressed a desire for the event to be more high-energy. Members discussed potential ways to involve younger people in the event, suggesting potential collaborations with UCF HEART, Rollins College, Orlando Youth Alliance, Orlando Youth Action Fund, and Impulse Group. Members also discussed having some sort of presence at WAD events happening on December 1st.

As part of the discussion, the following ideas for displays at the event were suggested:

- Quilt display (like last year's event), plus a display of all quilts that QLatinx is the steward of as a gallery. More pipe and drape would need to be purchased to display the quilts.
 - The October RWCM will have community members make their own quilt pieces, and those can be displayed as well.
- *Ofrendas* provided by QLatinx that can be built upon depending on the size of the space
- Art pieces made by participants of the LTS study
- Informative, interactive display where people can write out calls to action and/or pledges for resilience, keeping the placement in mind so it is not located somewhere that attendees will only walk by once

Unsung Hero Awards

Members discussed the Unsung Hero Awards:

- Unsung Hero Award – PWH who are not service providers who go above and beyond in the community
- Service Award – specifically reserved for any community providers doing exceptional work in the community in HIV prevention, testing, case management
- Lifetime Achievement Award – have to be working in the HIV field for 15 years or more.

Members discussed having only 3 awards for the entire OSA rather than 3 for the EMA and 3 for Brevard County. The workgroup reviews nominations and selects the winners. The workgroup chair suggested that the requirements for the Unsung Hero Award should also include someone who has demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity, stigma, or hardship related to their HIV status. The workgroup recommended that nominations for the awards open August 1st.

The workgroup discussed making an effort to involve all counties of the OSA in the event, not just Orange. There is more stigma in the rural counties, so it is important to highlight their efforts. The Part A Representative, Pedro Huertas-Diaz wants to have a member of the Planning Council come to a provider meeting to speak about WAD.

The committee agreed to extend the meeting by 5 minutes.

