

North Central District AIDS Coalition History

The Ryan White CARE Act, a piece of federal legislation sponsored by Senators Kennedy and Waxman, was passed in 1990. The bill allowed for federal disaster funds to be appropriated to cities and states particularly hard hit by HIV infection. The CARE Act also required funded states and cities to engage in a comprehensive planning process for direct services to People Living with HIV/AIDS. The North Central District AIDS Coalition (NCDAC) was formed in May 1991 in response to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, regionalized planning strategy. The Coalition was required to begin disbursing direct service funds immediately for a fiscal year 1991/1992 starting date.

The founding members of the Coalition were primarily people already associated with AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) and Department of Health staff. In fact, the first lead agency, later to be referred to as fiscal agent, was the Williamsport-based ASO, AIDS Resource Alliance. The NCDAC set consumer involvement as a high priority from its inception. The By-laws adopted in October 1991 reflected this consumer orientation by setting a goal that one third of the membership should be consumers. NCDAC involvement grew to include clergy, drug and alcohol providers, nurses, health care administrators, community members and case managers. The Coalition selected Family Health Services of Bellefonte as the fiscal agent for the Coalition effective July 1, 1992.

The NCDAC held its first goal-setting meeting in December 1992 and met the top goal of hiring a staff person in August 1993. Mary Jane Isenberg was the first Coalition Coordinator and she provided much of the impetus and legwork to move the Coalition to the next stage of organizational development. The NCDAC was incorporated on October 20, 1993 and received 501 (c) (3) status on February 2, 1994.

NCDAC continued its fiscal agent relationship with Family Health Services of Bellefonte through June 30, 1995. On July 1, 1995, NCDAC became its own fiscal agent and contracted with the PA Department of Health to subcontract and administer approximately \$850,000.00 in funds for the twelve county area through June 1996.

From August through December 1994, the Coalition contracted with an independent consultant to develop an assessment of needs of persons who were HIV infected in the North Central Region. In January of 1995, the Board was presented with the completed document The Needs of People Living with HIV/AIDS in North Central Pennsylvania - An Assessment. This assessment was used to prioritize future services and develop specific short-term programs.

In the spring of 1996 NCDAC signed a three-year, \$2,000,000 contract to provide services in the region through June of 1999.

A two-year contract was signed in the Spring of 1999 that provides for funding in the twelve county area through June 30, 2001.

At one time, NCDAC contracted with eight separate agencies, and currently contracts with three agencies to provide a wide variety of direct services and education/prevention programs, including housing, direct emergency assistance, case management, and client advocacy.

NCDAC employs a staff of three persons including an Executive Director, a Fiscal Administrator, and Administrative Assistant. Staff is charged with all aspects of contract management and reporting to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of HIV/AIDS for the twelve-county region.

The current budget of the North Central District AIDS Coalition for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018 is \$1,339,056 of state, federal and housing funds. Of this amount \$107,957 is earmarked for and prevention services. All funds for services are allocated through an RFP (Request for Proposal) process and funding decisions are the sole responsibility of a board-appointed Independent Procurement Panel. The Pennsylvania Department of Health has the final approval of all contracts.

The Coalition membership, comprised of representatives of medical providers, social service providers, persons living with HIV, interested individuals and a variety of other professionals meet on a quarterly basis to conduct planning and priority setting activities. Of that group a

Board of Directors has been elected who oversee the business of the North Central District AIDS Coalition and supervise staff activities. Approximately 12 to 15 persons attend the quarterly Advisory Board meetings and serve on the Coalitions various committees. At the present time approximately 36% of the Coalition membership is persons living with HIV/AIDS, while 36% of the membership is male and 64% female.

In addition to planning and contract administration, NCDAC provides a variety of training and technical assistance opportunities to its subcontracted agencies.

At the present time, services are accessible to all residents of the twelve-county region and education/prevention activities are being conducted in each county.