

# NEWS & VIEWS

APRIL



VOLUME 9

ISSUE 04

## OPEN DOOR ELGIN CENTER IS NOW OPEN



By Christine M

Open Door opened their new Elgin Health Center on March 4<sup>th</sup>, and welcomed clients to an Open House on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Open Door is committed to improving the quality of all services offered and the new center will help us do that in a variety of ways. There is more space, new exam room furniture and equipment, an easily accessible behavioral health group room and Case Managers have individual offices.

The Open House was our first official welcome for

clients. We had lunch, had a fun spending time and visiting and took tours to acquaint everyone with the new facility. Special guest former Open Door Executive Director Hugh Epping was excited to see how far the agency has come, but more importantly was thrilled to reconnect with clients he knew. The feelings were mu-



tual – reunions are special!

If you were unable to attend the Open House and would like a tour, please stop by 166 Larkin Ave., Elgin during business hours – Monday thru Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. No need to wait for an appointment, we'd like you to become familiar with the new facility.

Special thanks to the CAC members who were on hand to give guided tours and help set and clean up. Open Door is a special place because of you, our very important clients. We will continue to work hard to provide everyone the best healthcare in the Fox Valley! By Dean B

As a client of Open Door

for about 16 years I have seen changes but I can say



that the new location is outstanding and will serve the clients more efficiently. The look is very welcoming, warm, and bright.

If you have not had a chance to see the new building, please take a look and I am sure that you will be just amazed and have a warm feeling as I did.

## It's Time to Take Action May 12!!!! Special Advocacy Issue

Join your Peers and fellow Advocates from around the state as we respond to the proposed cuts to essential programs for people living with HI. In this special Advocacy issue learn what these cuts mean. Please, join us as we put together a group from Open Door to travel to Springfield on May 15<sup>th</sup> to educate there legislators on how cuts will effect us , our loved ones, and our communities. For more information on the issues and how to register and become a part of this exciting and important day, contact a Peer Advocate at either Center. Carmen Earsery in Aurora ext. 322, Bryan Gooding in Elgin ext. 223 ( More information in this Issue)

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## **TIPS FOR CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATOR**

Bryan Gooding  
Member IL- ASAP

There are 3 basic ways to make contact with your legislator. Email/ letter writing, phone calls, or meet in person.



The easiest is to make a phone call or write a letter. When writing a letter to your senator or representative there are a few things to remember. Identify yourself as a constituent, include your full name address and contact information. Your legislators like to hear opinions from constituents and want to be kept informed what is going on in their district. Base your letter on your own experiences and observations. Personal stories on how a particular issue or piece of legislation will affect you or your community have a greater impact. If writing about a specific bill, describe it by number or name. Even more important is a concrete statement of the reasons for your position—particularly if you are writing about a field or subject in which you have specialized knowledge. Legislators have to vote on lot of things with which they have had little or no first-hand experience. Some of the most valuable information they receive comes from facts presented in letters from people who have knowledge in the field. Short well thought out letters that present a definite position are almost always the best. Do not engage in letter writing

overkill. Quality, not quantity, is what counts. Ask for a reply.

It takes minutes to place a call to your legislator, and it can make a world of difference. Prior to placing the call become familiar with the issue you wish to comment on, and ask to speak to your legislator directly. Telephone calls are often taken by a staff member, not the legislative member. If your legislator is not available it's a good idea to write down the name and title of the person you spoke with. Keep in mind that it is important to develop and maintain a good relationships with your legislator's staff members. Often you may get more time and be able to explain issues in depth to the staff member. Ask to speak with the assistant who is working on your issues (i.e, healthcare, budget, education) When speaking with your legislator or their staff, identify yourself by name, the organization that you represent if any, or the town from which you are calling. Legislators are most responsive to their constituents, the individuals who keep them in office, and tell them you voted for them. Engage them in conversation, for instance, you can ask your legislator if they are familiar with the issue you are advocating for. Your legislator may not have prior knowledge, so be prepared to educate them. Use personal and local examples to make your point. Ask them for their support and thank them for their time and consideration. If you reach a voice mail, leave a short message identifying yourself and contact information, and ask for a return call.

Finally you can meet with your legislator in person. Talk-

ing to an elected official may seem intimidating at first, but it is important to remember that it is a normal part of their job. They want to know what you think and how they can help, especially if you live in their district. Do your homework. Try to know the basics about the piece of legislation you are going to address. If there isn't any specific legislation, be able to explain what you are concerned about and why. Call the office and ask to speak the person who schedules the legislator's time, to secure an appointment. You can either go alone or in a group with other like minded advocates. If the legislator is unavailable, ask to schedule an appointment with the staff member who handles your issue. Don't feel bad if you don't get to speak to the legislator every time. Legislative staff members work very closely with the legislator and they are good allies.

When addressing your legislator address them by their title, Senator, Representative and their last name. Be personal tell them a little about yourself—where you live, what you do for a living, if you are representing yourself or an organization. Be sure to tell them that you live in their district (if you do). Connect your talking points to your story (how it has impacted you or your community). If possible provide at least one piece of data that will support your point of view. If available you can always provide them a short brief or fact sheet on your topic. Be focused remember they may have only a few minutes to share with you so stay on topic. Also, don't let the legislator change the subject either. Be polite, but be firm. Stay positive. Don't be argumentative. You may not agree with the stand your leg-

islator is taking on a particular issue but remember your goal is to have a long-term relationship; you are looking for common ground on the issues in which you are interested. Don't be defensive. They may ask tough questions. They are probably asking the questions that will be asked of them. Give them information that will help them justify why they should support your issue. The legislative process involves compromises, and you always have the right to participate in the process. Just be positive while you firmly state your positions. Don't leave without asking them to support your issue. If there is a bill associated with the issue,



be specific and ask them to support the bill. You can ask them, "Will you support this legislation?" Ask them if they have any questions or need any additional information. Thank them for their time and attention. Follow up with a thank you note and anything else you promised.

We can all be advocates for issues that concern us. The way to do this, is through effective communication with the individuals who are making the decisions and policies that affect you. You can increase your impact by engaging in grassroots education of family, friends, and community members to help gather support for your issue. Encourage them to contact their legislators, together we are stronger. Make your voice heard!



## **THE SAME FIGHT WITH NO REAL SOLUTIONS! HIV SERVICES UNDER ATTACK**

By Bryan Gooding, Member Illinois Alliance for Sound AIDS Policy.

*Governor Bruce Rauner has proposed the most destructive budget that the HIV community has seen in years. His budget contains a \$1.6 billion cut to Medicaid, a \$6 million slash to HIV funding line representing a 25% cut and a reduction in funding for the African American HIV/AIDS Response Fund by 66% to \$500,000. (From Aids Foundation of Chicago press release)*

Here we are again! It doesn't seem to really matter who is in the hot seat, each year the Governor's office releases a Doomsday Budget. This year, they propose to balance the budget by cutting essential services; at the expense of children, seniors, the working poor, the chronically ill, and our most vulnerable populations, instead of addressing the real problem which is revenue. Shamefully our State Legislators, both Republican and Democrats, year after year lack the courage or political will to face up to, or put forth any real long term solutions. The word revenue isn't a popular one, but to continue to kick the can down the road by making cuts to programs that effect health and welfare of the people of Illinois is unacceptable. Some solutions might include; re-instating the tax increases, moving toward a progressive tax, increasing revenues from alcohol and tobacco sales, gambling, and getting rid of corporate loopholes and subsidies. The point is there are many solutions, cutting programs that support health and

welfare will only cost the state more money in the long run, by compounding the problem, resulting in poor health outcomes, and a lesser quality of life for all the citizens of Illinois.

Again, dramatic cuts to programs and services to people living with or at risk for HIV are on the chopping block. The Governor's office proposes a 6 million dollar or 25% cut in funding for HIV/AIDS. These cuts will mainly be directed at the medication and premium assistance programs (ADAP/CHIC). This safety net allows people to access life saving medications, assist in paying insurance premiums, provide people living and working with HIV to have access to insurance. The ACA has allowed insurance coverage, like myself, for the first time. These programs actually save the state money over the long course by keeping people healthy and avoiding the costs of catastrophic care. Outreach and prevention funding is also in danger. Cuts include limiting access points to education, testing and services to populations most at risk; such as our youth and communities of color, resulting in increased infection rates. Each new HIV infection has the potential in costing the state \$250,000 or more over a lifetime of care. If you rely on any of these service or think that they are important, Take Action! Tell your legislators to protect HIV/AIDS funding from these cuts.

Here are some additional issues to ponder. One of the biggest casualties of the current budget is the proposed cuts in the African American HIV/AIDS

Response Act. Under the 2015 budget the program was allocated 1.5 million dollars, and at time of printing the funds were never given out and now they want to cut the funding by 66% for FY2016. We effectively received zero for 2015, so 66% of zero is zero. The proposed cuts and the holding back of current funds to a community in crisis unacceptable. The African American community is disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, which accounts for 67% or more of new infection, while make up only 12% of the population. Barriers to care include stigma, people of color are less likely to have access to or seek testing, receive treatment, and medications. Take Action! Ask your Legislators to not only fully fund the African American HIV/AIDS Response Act at 1.5 million for the FY16 budget but release the money promised under the current budget. Black Lives Matter!

Lastly is the proposed \$1.6 billion in cuts to Medicaid. Medicaid is the largest insurer of children and the disabled in the State of Illinois. We need to continue this investment in their health. Among other services, recently reinstated were dental, however in the new budget this benefits will disappear, child-care, gone. Medicaid also provides care for thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS. This money is matched dollar for dollar by the federal government under Medicaid expansion; cuts would actually decrease the money coming into our state, and possibly endanger future federal moneys. Healthcare is a human right not

a privilege! Take Action! Ask your Legislators to say no to cuts to Medicaid and support the continued full funding and implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

The time to take action is now! Springfield has until June 30 to pass a budget. Through sustained advocacy efforts, making our voice heard, we can effect change and hopefully protect essential services, as we have in the past. Call, write, email or visit your state Reps and Senators. You can multiply your impact by educating your family and friends on the issues and encouraging them to take action also.

Come to Springfield with us! April 15 and May 12, AIDS Foundation of Chicago and IL-Alliance for Sound AIDS Policy are sponsoring Advocacy Days 2015. Join others living with HIV, service providers, friend, allies, and Advocates as we take the issues directly to Springfield. Participants take part in training on the issues, and are given help in connecting them to their own stories, then they meet with their legislators and ask them for their support. Open Door Clinic will be organizing a group of clients to go down state on May 15. You can go on either date. Just be sure to reach out in any way you can and make your voice heard. For more information on Advocacy Days or the issues you can contact: Bryan Gooding, Open Door Clinic, 847-695-1093 ext 223 Molly McAndrew, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, 312-334-0915 Register for Advocacy Days at [aidschicago.org/advocacydays](http://aidschicago.org/advocacydays)

**THE CAC HAS A NEW SOCIAL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM IN PROGRESS.  
WHEN YOU ATTEND AN CAC EVENTS YOU COULD WIN A CHANCE  
TO BE A VIP WINNER FOR A VERY  
SPECIAL VIP ONLY EVENT**

## **AFC RELEASE 2015-2016 LEGISLATIVE POLICY PRIORITIES**

The year 2015 ushers in significant changes in political leadership in Illinois, with Governor Bruce Rauner taking office as the state's first Republican chief executive officer in 12 years. He has proposed a reckless budget with devastating cuts to HIV funding and Medicaid, and supportive housing is under attack.

In the midst of these troubling changes, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) is committed to continuing, creating and advocating for sound HIV policy. In this vein, we have released our [2015-2016 policy priorities](#). These priorities were formed in consultation with community members across the state, and outline the focus of our legislative advocacy and policy work for the coming years.



*Policy and legislative priorities include:*

- Protection of funding and support of HIV prevention and care services;
- Continued promotion and support of the implementation of health reform in Illinois;
- Support for legislation that reduces the cost of HIV medication; and
- Maintenance of state funding for mental health and substance use programs and services.

[You can read the full list of policy priorities here.](#)

Advocacy for and support of these issues is more important now than ever. Governor Rauner has proposed the most destructive budget that the HIV community has seen in years. It contains a \$1.6 billion cut to Medicaid, a \$6 million slash to HIV funding and a 66% reduction to the African American HIV/AIDS Response Fund.

Join us for our [annual Advocacy Days](#) and tell your legislators they must not support this budget! Details and registration information for all three [2015 Advocacy Days can be found here.](#)

## **ATTENTION NEW GROUPS ARE FORMING**

### **Latino Support Group Spanish only**

**Elgin: 3-4pm Mondays**

**Aurora: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday times to be determined**

**Call 847.695.1093 for more information.**

### **Pain Management Group**

**Elgin on 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday each month 12-1**

### **Health and Wellness Recovery Group**

**Aurora: Mondays 10-12**

### **Motivational Incentives Group**



# II Spring Fling

May 16, 2015 3pm to 7pm

Location:

First Congregational Church  
of Geneva

321 Hamilton Street Geneva, IL 60134

You, your family, and friends are invited to attend the  
Client Advisory Committee's  
Cinco de Mayo II Spring Fling.

Join us to celebrate SPRING

**Please RSVP For This Event By 5/8/15**

Call either one of the clinics and ask for ext. 375

( All you need to do is leave a message )

OR

You can email your RSVP to [deanbnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:deanbnewsletter@yahoo.com)

OR

Drop your RSVP in the Communication & Suggestion Box at either clinic

MUSIC

DANCING

GAMES & PRIZES

FOOD

DOOR PRIZES





## **RSVPs are appreciated: Here's How**

There are three ways to RSVP for a CAC event:

Call Aurora Center at 630-264-1819 Ext 375  
OR Elgin Center at 847-695-1093 Ext. 375  
( All you need to do is leave a message )

**OR**

You can email your RSVP to [deanbnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:deanbnewsletter@yahoo.com)

**OR**

Drop your RSVP in the Communication &  
Suggestion Box at either center

When your RSVP, we can ensure there is enough food for everyone.

## **THE CAC IS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD CLIENTS TO JOIN**

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT  
DEAN B AT [DEANBNEWSLETTER@YAHOO.COM](mailto:DEANBNEWSLETTER@YAHOO.COM) OR  
CALL EITHER CENTER AND ASK FOR EXT 375 AND  
LEAVE YOUR INFORMATION  
OR  
CONTACT PERRY M. OR A STAFF MEMBER  
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

### **ELGIN CENTER**

**1665 LARKIN AVE  
ELGIN, IL 60123**

**PHONE (847) 695-1093  
FAX (847) 695-0501**

### **AURORA CENTER**

**157 S. LINCOLN AVE.  
ROOM K  
AURORA, IL 60505**

**PHONE (630) 264-1819  
FAX (630) 229-0182**

**[www.opendoor  
clinic.org](http://www.opendoorclinic.org)**

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED  
IN RECEIVING OPEN  
DOOR'S MONTHLY  
NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL  
OR HAVE ANY  
SUGGESTIONS YOU  
WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN  
THE NEWSLETTER.  
PLEASE EMAIL DEAN AT  
[deanbnewslet-  
ter@yahoo.com](mailto:deanbnewsletter@yahoo.com)**

## **A P R I L E V E N T S**

01 - Positive MH Group (E)  
12p - 1:30p  
02 - Motivational Incentives  
Group (E) 12p - 1p  
03 - HIV/AIDS Activity Education  
Group (A) 4p - 6p  
05 - Happy Easter  
06- Substance Use Group (A)  
11a - 12p  
06- Latino Support Group (E)  
3p - 4p  
07 - Positive Support Group (A)  
4p - 5p  
08 - Latino Support Group (A)  
Call for time  
09 - Motivational Incentives  
Group (E) 12p - 1p

10 - HIV/AIDS Activity Education  
Group (A) 4p - 6p  
13 - Health & Wellness Recovery  
Group (A) 10a - 12p  
13 - Positive Group (E) 1  
2p - 1:30p  
13 - Latino Support Group (E)  
3p - 4p  
14 - Positive Support Group (A)  
4p - 5p  
15 - Motivational Incentives  
Group (E) 12p - 1p  
15 - Pain Management Group  
(E) 12p - 1p  
17 - HIV/AIDS Activity Education  
Group (A) 4p - 6p  
20 - Health & Wellness Recovery

Group (A) 10a - 12p  
20 - Positive MH Group (E)  
12p - 1:30p  
20 - Latino Support Group (E)  
3p - 4p  
21 - Positive Support Group  
A) 4p - 5p  
22 - Positive Support Group  
(A) 4p - 5p  
23 - Latino Support Group (A)  
Call for time  
23 - Motivational Incentives  
Group (E) 12p - 1p  
24 - Positive MH Group (E)  
12p - 1:30p  
24 - HIV/AIDS Activity Education  
Group (A) 4p - 6p

24 - Bingo Night (E) 4p - 6pm  
29 - Positive Support Group (A)  
4p - 5p  
30 - Latino Support Group (A)  
Call for time

(A) Aurora Center  
157 S. Lincoln Ave Rm K  
Aurora, IL 60505  
(E) Elgin Center  
1665 Larkin Ave.  
Elgin, IL 60123  
(G) First Congregational Church  
321 Hamilton  
Geneva IL 60134