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ONAPC [Office of National AIDS Policy Council] Policy Meeting 5/23/94

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May 6, 1994

MEMORANDUM TO KRISTINE GEBBIE

FROM: Carlos Vlez, J.D.

Subject: Strategy for Governmental/Non-Governmental
Collaboration on Needle Exchange

On April 29, 1994, Andrew Barrer and I met with Camille Barry and Sarah Vogelsberg of the Office of the Secretary, HHS, and Lorraine Fishback, OASH/OHPE, to discuss what strategy we could follow to gather consensus within the administration and the HIV/AIDS and substance abuse communities on the issues related to needle exchange programs. Although Fran Page is the lead person on substance abuse issues, she was not able to participate in this meeting. The primary focus of the meeting was the need to arrive at a common theme that could be the administration's position on the need to address needle exchange from a public health perspective.

We narrowed down the basic requirements for framing the discussion. Although we are aware of the congressional restriction which must be fulfilled (i.e., reduction in HIV transmission without an increase in injecting drug use in the community), we also recognized that demonstrating these two issues by themselves may not be sufficient to gain popular support for needle exchange programs. This process must include the assessing of the public health impact of needle exchange and the implementation of programs were the prohibition to be lifted (i.e., what shape should needle exchange programs take and what restrictions will be imposed on their implementation).

We all agreed that following a more global strategy would be beneficial. To that end, we agreed that a high-level meeting within HHS will be necessary to arrive at consensus on what will be the department's position, especially in relation to the health impact and programmatic implementation, prior to approaching other governmental and non-governmental entities. Andrew and I agreed to work with OS and OHPE to arrive at this HHS position. Once the HHS position is arrived at, an interdepartmental agency including Justice and ONDCP would be necessary to arrive at a common administration position.

Following this process, meetings can be held with non-Federal and non-governmental entities will be consulted to seek their input and collaboration in assessing the global strategy towards needle exchange programs. Once the various alternatives and issues are discussed, the administration will be better prepared to make a determination on needle exchange to satisfy the congressional and public health requirements. It was apparent from the discussion

that the process will take several months to be completed.

The participants in the meeting agreed to go back to their office to seek input from other staff on how the process will be framed and what type of public health issues must be addressed as part of the discussion. A follow-up meeting will be arranged with the same participants from OS and OHPE within 3 weeks to discuss the logistics for the HHS/PHS senior staff meeting.

I would like to call a meeting of ONAP staff that will have impact on this issue, similar to the one held last month in your office. In addition to Fran Page and Andrew Barrer, I would like to ask Arthur Lawrence, Tim Fox and George Walter to participate. I will work with Retina Holmes to coordinate the best time to hold this meeting. The topic of discussion will be the development of ONAP's preliminary position on the public health and programmatic impact of needle exchange programs. This will be our position to be shared with HHS/PHS senior staff.

cc: Fran Page
Andrew Barrer
Tim Fox
Camille Barry
Sarah Vogelsberg
Lorraine Fishback

[155] From: Carlos Velez 5/20/94 1:08PM (997 bytes: 1 ln)
To: Retina Holmes, Kristine Gebbie, Frances Page
To mailing list: #ONAPC-LEAD
Subject: Re[2]: Policy Meeting

----- Message Contents -----

Text item 1: Text_1

Policy Meeting Agenda
May 23, 1994
3:00 PM

Substance Abuse Policy

1. ONAP Vision on Substance Abuse and HIV (10 mins.)
2. Political Considerations (20 mins.)
Prevention, Services, Research
Drug Interdiction
3. Needle Exchange Strategy (20 mins.)
4. Substance Abuse Block Grants (10 mins.)
Coordination of Substance Abuse, and HIV/AIDS Prevention and
Services Funding/Strategy
Community Planning Process and Ryan White CARE Act
5. Next Steps (5 mins.)