



Hiv-Norden - Samarbetsorganet för de Nordiska paraplyorganisationerna för personer som lever med hiv
HIV-Nordic - The co-operative body of the Nordic umbrella-organisations for people living with HIV

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Minutes Board Meeting, HIV-Nordic, 30th - 31th October 2021, 10.00-18.00 and 9.30-16.00 UTC+1

Present:

Nonni Mäkikärki, HivFinland
Sini Pasanen, HivFinland
Emanuel Karlstrøm Hiv-Sverige
Simon Blom, Hiv-Sverige
Bente Bendiksen, HivNorge
Jacob Hermansen, HivNorge
Preben Bakbo Sloth, Hiv-Danmark
Einar Jonsson, HIV-Island

10.21 Opening, election of meeting secretary and chair

Chair of meeting - Emanuel Karlstrøm, Hiv-Sverige
Secretary of meeting - Bente Bendiksen, HivNorge.
Opened and elected.

11.21 Approval of Agenda

Approved

12.21 HIV and COVID-19

Presentation of the preliminary report of the HIV and COVID-19 project, given by project manager Anni Mattinen. Approximately 60 participants, and the experiences within the Nordic countries, were quite similar. Some of the main findings: the organizations were the key voice in distributing information about HIV and COVID-19. People felt that the experiences on life during the pandemic was not impacted by their HIV status. They rather emphasized that their experiences were “like everyone else’s”. Treatment and care continued

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the same way (60%), but at the same time the discussions highlighted some changes.

In addition, every organization will provide a short summary on our experiences during the pandemic. The final report will be finalized by the end of November and a video with the findings will be presented, under the headline “How did other people living with HIV coping during the COVID-19 pandemic”. The board of HIV-Nordic discussed different ways to use this report in our further work. HIV-Nordic will make the findings available also for health care professionals, authorities, and the pharmaceutical companies.

13.21 Review and approval of the minutes from last Board Meeting

Approved

14.21 Orientation from the Nordic Countries

Updates from HivNorway

- From August we started with activities again, like theme meetings, workshops and seminars, both digital and physical. Fex. Coursing for peer-to-peers and hivinformants on user involvement and media training, information evenings on mental health and open nights and seminars for pioneers and for men who do not define themselves as heterosexuals (queer 2021). And of course, the Nordic Meet Up.
- Our opportunities to join Oslo Pride were a bit unpredictable due to covid-19, until a few days prior to the event, so apart from giving sessions on the Pride House, HivNorway decided to prioritize other activities this year. A booth at SLM Oslo (Scandinavian Leather Men Oslo, a fetish and BDSM club for gay men,) and social gatherings for PLWH. Attended Pride Kristiansand with a booth and in the parade, and in Arctic Pride in Tromsø in November.
- We hired a new legal advisor in 40% position from August this year, expanding the juridical areas where we now offer legal support.
- Workshop with the Directory of Health and organizations on the field of HIV and sexual health, giving input to the evaluation of the national strategy of HIV and sexual health - in November 2021.
- One colleague is working 50% for the organization Sex and society, offering non-therapeutical support to chemsex users.
- Pre-work to a documentary on the history of HIV in Norway, in collaboration with the production company Zaccapa film.
- HivNorway attended the IAS conference virtually with three participants.
- Conference on chemsex (Chemsexkonferansen), together with Chemfriendly Norge (main organizer) Skeiv Ungdom (Queer Youth), Skeiv Verden (Queer World), HivNorge, Foreningen Tryggere ruspolitikk (Safer Drug Policies) and Sex og Samfunn (Sex and Society). Subjects: Chemsex in Norway, the history of chemsex,

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problematic drug use, sexological wellbeing, as a health care provider - how to meet a chemsex user - among other things.

- Chemsex.no was launched.
- The national quality register for HIV is finally approved, after some setbacks on the way.
- Rainbow telephone - a psychosocial activity for queers, both by phone and in-person visits.
- Creating and distributing information on HIV and covid in nine different languages on our website. Videos in all these languages are also in the making.
- Planning World Aids Day - event with infotainments, entertainment, and socializing.
- No funding from MAC this year, because people have not been buying make up and lip sticks when wearing masks.
- National project on injectable HIV treatment started this spring at Oslo university hospital.
- Home testing project together with City Mission and the organization for Gay and Lesbian Health. We will start providing home test kits this autumn.
- HivNorway is working towards Oslo becoming part of the UNAIDS Fast-Track City program through contacting and influencing political leadership and the city council.

Updates from HivFinland

- **Criminalization of HIV transmission and exposure to transmission**
Precedent from Supreme court on 15th September 2021:
A had been aware of his HIV infection and had unprotected intercourse with B one time. The HIV infection had not been transmitted.
The Supreme Court considered that being on HIV treatment and having an undetectable viral load means that an HIV-positive person doesn't have to disclose his/her HIV-status in a sexual relationship, even if not using condoms.
As a result:
The charge of attempted aggravated assault was dismissed.
Nor had A by his conduct exposed B to serious danger to life or health. The alternative prosecution for causing danger was also rejected.
Precedent På Svenska: <https://korkeinoikeus.fi/sv/index/ennakkopaatokset/hd202164.html>
- **Webinar** on Oct 27th with professor of Criminal Law from university of Helsinki. One group was watching the webinar in Helsinki, one in Tampere and one in Oulu, and many followed online. At least 50 people participated, and many have asked if a recording is available.
- **New website.** We will publish a new website by the end of November. There has been some challenges with the old website that couldn't be fixed without changing the whole structure. The new website will be accessible and optimized for mobile devices. There will be a ChemSex section, even though HivFinlands chemsex-project ends by end of this year.
- **Peer support activities.**
Peer support courses in September: One course for people over 55 years old, one for women and one for men. All together 50 participants.

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Tuesday Café is open again, approximately 15-20 visitors every Tuesday. Thursday activities have been arranged, for example Pizza Thursday. Group meetings for women, men, 55+ year olds and young people. Also, the Chemsex group will continue having meetings despite the project ending this year.

- Video “**Facts about HIV in one minute**” (visual storytelling video) was published in Finnish on 4th June. In November we will have an English version of it.
- **Pride week in Helsinki - Pride in Progress**
We organized a virtual panel discussion “40 years of epidemic and 25 years of treatment”. The panel took place at the Pride House in Helsinki City Hall. The Pride week had an anniversary theme and our theme suited it more than perfectly. We got lots of publicity during Pride week.
- **PrEP** is finally free of charge in Finland (in public health care), since July 1st 2021.
- **World AIDS Day**
A campaign for young people 2020 - 2021. The WAD committee (five organizations) has published materials to support discussion around HIV and STIs for teachers and people working with youth. It is also possible to order condoms and lubricants for a WAD event.
Positiiviset, HivFinland will publish our WAD magazine on the topic of 40 years since the epidemic started and 25 years of treatment.
- **Annual meeting and Christmas party** will be on 20th November. We have two annual meetings, one in spring and one in autumn. In the autumn meeting we choose a chair and half of board members. We have eight members and chair. We elect chair and four members annually.
- **Stigma Index.** We are continuing doing the Sigma Index 2.0 which was put on hold due to the epidemic.
- **ECDC, AAE, EATG Stigma Survey.** We are participating in The European Stigma Survey (3rd November 2021 - 9th January 2022).

Updates from Hiv-Denmark

- Annual meeting in mid-September, choosing a new board and a resolution giving the new board the opportunity to merge with Aidsfondet. The board of Hiv-Denmark chose to work on strengthening the organization and not merge but working close with Aidsfondet.
- On the agenda: new website, funding, strategy on focus subjects, member recruitment.
- Some priorities: womens network, meet and greet (network for migrants and their relatives), activities at Café Knud, peer-to-peer network, activities outside of Copenhagen area.
- Survey in the mid-April on the knowledge on HIV among health care professionals in Denmark, revealing poor knowledge on HIV, risk (or non-risk) of transmission, treatments etc.
- In collaboration with artists, planning a monument for 25 years with treatment and 40 years with HIV.

Updates from HIV-Island

- Funding is more than ever difficult.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the prevention programs are cancelled.
- Our Red ribbon annual magazine will be published 1. December.

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- We have started again with social activities for our members.
- PrEP is going well. Most gay men.
- Statistic from 2020, there are 33 reported cases. There are 21 men who have sex with men, and 9 women.
- Still, we don't have rapid tests for HIV.

Updates from Hiv-Sweden

- Since the annual meeting of 2021, Elisabeth Flodin is new chair of Hiv-Sverige, replacing Christina Franzén. A new board was also elected consisting of Conny, Hans, Conny and Niklas. Josefin and Steve are substitutes.
- Article published in Expressen on the 9 June 2021, the article was aimed at the issues with late presenters, poor hiv knowledge in healthcare workers in primary care and called for increased efforts and funding for hiv.
- Hiv-Sweden has also raised and applauded the introduction of injectables in Sweden. Injectables are starting to become more available and the option is slowly being rolled out, although the current high price point will likely prohibit extensive use. It also remains to be seen how availability shapes up for people attending a clinic in the smaller and mid sized regions. We have also tried to raise the issue with mothers living with hiv having to cover costs for breast milk substitutes out of pocket in some regions, whereas in others it is free of charge.
- Despite numerous attempts to push the agenda forward, there is still no word from the government about the proposed investigation into amending the Communicable Disease Act. The act concerns both criminalization and regulations for people living with hiv, despite praxis being changed in light of U=U, the law in itself remains unamended.
- Arranged a webinar with Suzann Larsdotter on the topic Sexual health for people 40+ living with hiv, 23 september. Apart from the live session, a recorded session is available on Youtube.
- Arranged a half day event on Candelight Memorial Day the 17 of May, Staffan Hildebrand, last years honorary Red Ribbon among the participants.
- 364 new cases of Hiv was reported during 2020, according to national statistics from Folkhälsomyndigheten. 62% of the cases were in men, and the age group with most reported infections were 30 - 39. Compared to 2019, when 446 cases were reported, 2020 saw a drop of 18 percent. Looking at the otherwise steady trendline it is probable to think that the 2020 drop is influenced at least partly by the

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pandemic and decreased international travel, since fluctuations like these are uncommon under normal circumstances.

- As for our member organizations; Postiva Gruppen Syd has launched a new peer-support method “Plusverket” (plusverket.se). Efforts are ongoing in co-creating a system with the clinics. Politically a bill proposing to implement peer-support for people living with hiv has been put up for a vote early 2022 at the regional health care board. Get togethers and activities for people living with hiv, such as dinners, drop-in are running as normal at their meeting space in Malmö, also public awareness knowledge campaigns, such as the collab with Malmö Konsthall and an upcoming World Aids Day campaign with libraries is in the works. Positiva Gruppen Väst released a new multilingual website where thematic facts are combined with stories from people living with hiv and resources to access support in different ways, see levamedhiv.org. Several awareness and visibility campaigns has also been launched, Pride in Gothenburg, Kulturnatta with the theme “Livet, Hivet & Vi:et!”. Drop-in has been and continues to be online every thursday.

15.21 Fast-Track Cities initiative and PrEP-injection

The secretary in General of HivNorway Anne-Karin Kolstad presented the Fast-Track City initiative, with seven commitments for cities and municipalities to reach the 95-95-95 goals. Oslo would like to be a part of the Fast-Track Cities. We have a lot to learn from the other Fast Track Cities and this initiative and commitment is uniting the HIV work over borders. Kolstad and the board of HIV-Nordic had a discussion on the possibilities this might give for the Nordic countries and might be used actively in our advocacy work, and as a tool to keep HIV on the official agenda. HivNorge will collect information on the experiences from Copenhagen as a Fast-Track City so far, and exchange and share experiences with the other Nordic countries during the process.

PrEP has been available in Norway since 2017. But there are groups who are not reached with the preventive tools available. PrEP-injection has shown to be very effective in the research projects. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States will decide in January 2022 if this is approved in US, and then the process of approving in Europe will probably start within the EMA (European Medicine Association) The board of HIV-Nordic discussed the possibilities to get this in Europe, the costs, methods, and questions regarding PrEP-injections. Suggestion from HivNorge is to address the health authorities in each country, with the demand to approve PrEP-injection in the different countries. HivNorge wish to map the PrEP situation in the Nordic countries and the routines on getting PrEP.

16.21 Economics

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The membership fee will remain the same this year. The invoices will be sent in November.

17.21 Future HIV-Nordic projects and initiatives, including possible new funding alternatives

Suggestions discussed:

Encouraging and supporting openness on living with HIV.

Peer-to-peer development and education.

Storytelling workshop, creative narratives.

Nordic Culture Point funds cultural and artistic projects.

Nordiska Ministerråd funds projects which includes Nordic countries, Baltic countries and Poland and Russia.

18.21 Other subjects - Update web, suggestions

The board decided to continue with virtual meetings in addition to the physical meetings.

The country updates will be published on the HIV-Nordic website.

19.21 Unsolved queries, Q&A, next meeting

Meeting for preparing the annual meeting and preparing applications at November 23.

Next meeting and annual meeting will be held in Iceland in February.

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