



PENNSYLVANIA HIV PREVENTION COMMUNITY PLANNING UPDATE

A quarterly publication of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of HIV/AIDS

2005 HIV Prevention Plan

The Pennsylvania HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee is charged with creating the Pennsylvania Department of Health's annual HIV Prevention Plan for all of Pennsylvania not including Philadelphia. Philadelphia receives funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) directly as well as they have their own Community Planning Group (CPG). Nonetheless the statewide CPG recognizes the continual interplay between Philadelphia and in particular the four surrounding counties (Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery). Hence, a member of The Philadelphia AIDS Planning Consortium (TPAC) and a member of the Philadelphia CPG serve on the statewide CPG. The statewide CPG insures that the Department of Health's HIV prevention grant application to the CDC is in concurrence with that Plan.

The statewide CPG has been working diligently since January to create the 2005 HIV Prevention Plan Update to be submitted with the Department of Health's grant application to the CDC by 9 September 2004.

HIV Prevention Intervention Poster Session

The task of creating a Plan requires a good understanding of

current Department of Health funded HIV prevention interventions and

programs. The Evaluation Subcommittee planned what is to become an annual event in which some of the many subcontractors from across the Commonwealth came to Harrisburg. At the regularly scheduled meeting of the full Committee in May twenty contractors presented posters and provided discussions about their HIV prevention programs. Local county and municipal health departments, Ryan White HIV/AIDS Regional Planning Coalitions and other subcontractors, such as the AIDS Factline, Council on Spanish Speaking Organizations of the Lehigh Valley and Pennsylvania Prevention Project, was invited to participate.

CHOICE Pennsylvania State AIDS Factline

One of the subcontractors present at the Poster session was CHOICE, the Pennsylvania State AIDS Factline. Their annual goal is to provide services to 2,700 callers per year, with an average of 675 calls per quarter. In fiscal year 2004 (1 July '03 through 30 June '04) they appear to be on target for calls in the risk categories of heterosexual, injection drug users and men who have sex with men. The "other" category goal will not be met, but that is good news. They are

encouraging consumers to more clearly identify their primary risk factor; hence fewer in that category.

The populations served by CHOICE are those individuals who tend to be in low income groups and at risk due to socioeconomic and/or environmental factors and unable to access services without assistance. They offer communication and public information and a hotline staff of professionally trained counselors to provide free, confidential, bilingual telephone education, referrals, counseling, and advocacy to callers about HIV/AIDS issues.

The subject of calls :

HIV 52%
HIV transmission 15%
HIV medical care 7%

HIV symptoms 7%
HIV case management 5%
HIV treatment issues 3%
HIV general information 3%
HIV legal issues 2%
HIV support/counseling 2%

Consumer demographics:

Female 58%
Male 40%
Mixed 2%

Caucasian 45%
African American 33%
Hispanic/Lation (a) 5%
Refused 5%
Unknown 5%

All services or interventions are delivered through confidential one-to-one telephone communication on the State AIDS Factline. Flyers and wallet cards are sent to community centers in counties throughout the state approximately six times per year in connection with holidays, National HIV Testing Day, local AIDS walks, and back-to-school events. Hotline information is dispersed in traditionally under-served, hard hit areas of the state.

What is talked about:

- ❑ HIV transmission, risk reduction, and testing
- ❑ Encouragement of persons at risk for infection to know their HIV status through testing and counseling
- ❑ Information regarding disease progression, symptoms and opportunistic infections
- ❑ Encouragement of HIV positive individuals to seek HIV/AIDS medical care and to maintain safer behaviors to protect themselves and others and prevent re-infecting themselves.
- ❑ Provision of information on treatment options, HIV medical care service providers and information on publicly subsidized health benefits.
- ❑ Provision of information regarding supplemental services including: nutritional and food resources, emergency housing and shelter, emergency medication supplies and pharmaceutical programs, and financial and utility services and HIV/AIDS support services
- ❑ Information about legal aspects regarding HIV/AIDS and referrals to legal services

- ❑ Provision of information on culturally and linguistically relevant services
- ❑ Discuss psychosocial issues, as well as all sexual health issues, including family planning, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy options
- ❑ Provide consumer—a forum for voicing complaints, concerns and compliments about HIV services throughout Pennsylvania

The feedback process is designed to resolve problems that Consumer's face when accessing HIV-related services and also acts as a mechanism for reporting systemic issues like gaps in services. This process also serves to give Consumers a voice in the care and services they are receiving.

Based on the data they note:

Overall there has been an increase in calls that span a broader range of risk categories, stemming from a variety of factors including CHOICE's reliance on Consumer self-identification. CHOICE feels that they have been successful in reaching their goal of providing client centered education.

The increase in reported heterosexual risk is due to the increase in calls from women (58%) who are calling for both themselves and their partners, spouses and /or family members who are male, voicing concerns about HIV/AIDS.

CHOICE has also noted a trend in callers being referred to the Hotlines by word of mouth and

other agencies. This is likely a reflection of the proactive work of CHIOCE during the past fiscal year to raise community awareness about HIV/AIDS and reproductive health services and their availability through the Hotline.

In the past year there has been a significant increase in calls from youth. Fully 50% of the consumers are under 30 years of age and 27% of those are under 22 years old.

The most significant barrier faced by CHOICE is the seeming reluctance of consumers to identify their needs and/or risk factors resulting from the perceived stigma of HIV/AIDS. Although this has steadily improved over the past several years it is an ongoing need.

State AIDS Factline: 1-800-662-6080

People of Color Living with HIV/AIDS Leadership Forum

17-20 August 2004 at the Le Meridien Hotel, Chicago, IL. Contact POC organizers by telephone: 202/234-5120 Ext. 307 or by email: jgonzalez@nmac.org

Persons living with HIV are an integral part of the program offered by their organizations. The People of Color (POC) Leadership Forum will focus on building individual skills of the participants to address quality assurance issues in their organizations regarding Counseling, Testing and Referral Services; Prevention Case Management; Partner Counseling

and Referral Services; and Prevention with Positives. The sessions offered will provide information on important elements of these interventions, including: certification requirements, confidentiality standards, staff roles and responsibilities, record keeping requirements, safeguarding test results, reporting and development of memoranda of collaboration among prevention and care providers.

The forum will provide a space where persons living with HIV can discuss how to address quality management issues in their organizations regarding the implementation of these interventions.

Pennsylvania Young Adult Roundtable Trends and Membership Demographics

The Pennsylvania Young Adult Roundtables began in 1995 with four groups (Allentown, Erie, Pittsburgh, and York) with the mission of providing high-risk young people across the state not including Philadelphia, parity, inclusion and representation in the HIV prevention community planning process. The number of Roundtable groups has varied over the past ten years, generally resulting in greater numbers of young people each year in a greater variety of locations throughout the state, participating in the planning process. Average group size has fluctuated, but hovers around the goal of fifteen.

In 2004 there are six Roundtables involving 105 youth and young adults with an average group size

of 18. Roundtables are currently in Allentown/Bethlehem, Erie, Harrisburg, the Northeast, Pittsburgh, and Williamsport.

Certain groups of young people, by virtue of their demographic or behavioral characteristic (typically those comprised of young men who have sex with men, young people living with HIV/AIDS and young people in recovery from IDU), have been challenging to recruit and/or to maintain. Recruitment, for example, has been an insurmountable challenge in our statewide attempts over the years to initiate a Roundtable comprised of young people living with HIV/AIDS.

Each year new Roundtable members are recruited to existing groups in order to compensate for group attrition, which is typically between 35-50%. New members are recruited to existing groups by demographic or behavioral criteria that match the existing group composition (African American, Latino, recovering IDU, young mothers and self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young persons.)

Age is clearly a primary factor when recruiting Roundtable members, who ideally, are between the ages of 13-18. With certain populations such as young men who have sex with men the age range is extended (usually to 21) in order to accommodate the special environmental and personal factors that effect those young people. Another example is the anticipated group of young people living with HIV; are expected to be older as a function of various factors around diagnosis: age, acceptance and

willingness to share that information with others in their community. As a result, over the past ten years, average age of Roundtable members has increased and remains between 18 and 19. Increasing age of Roundtable members was the deciding factor in terminating the Lehigh Valley, Norristown and York Roundtables in 2004. These groups, each with an average participant age over 23, have experienced difficulty over the past three years in recruiting new members in general and, more specifically, those under the age of 21.

Diversity underlies “representation” and is essential for effective and meaningful community planning. Therefore, diverse groups of high-risk young people (as determined by age, sex, race/ethnicity, geographic location and sexual orientation) comprise the statewide project. To maintain geographic diversity, the Roundtables attempts to convene at least one group in each of the seven Ryan White HIV Regional Planning Coalitions. The Northeast (Carbondale) Roundtable, for example though comprised of a different demographic—young people who live in rural communities—replaced the Wilkes-Barre Roundtable, comprised of LGBT young people in the region.

Though incomplete, the composition of the Roundtables attempts to reflect the AIDS epidemic among young people in our state, as we best understand it from current, available data (primary and surrogate). Therefore, with each passing year and with feedback from Roundtable

members, Committee members, Department of Health staff and needs assessment date, Roundtable composition changes. Because Roundtable members are recruited using convenience sampling, it is important to note that the opinions of Roundtable members, both individually and collectively, though compelling and essential to the community planning process, are NOT representational of all young people like themselves who reside in the state of Pennsylvania. It is noteworthy, however, that those opinions and recommendations of Roundtable members, as expressed in the Roundtable HIV Prevention Consensus Statement, are consistent with national data for young people, as published by SIECUS, Advocates for Youth, Planned Parenthood and Kaiser Family Foundation.

While it is important to consider needs assessment information from the widest variety of high-risk young people, particular groups of young people—runaways, for example—are not compatible with the structured organization of the Roundtables. Roundtables require ongoing contact with Pennsylvania Prevention Project staff with members and their regular attendance at meetings. Needs assessment information from such groups of young people is better obtained through focus groups, key informant interviews and other methods of inquiry.

Note: John Faber PhD, LSW of the Pennsylvania Prevention Project at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health has been involved since the inception of Roundtables in 1995.

In May of this year John stepped down as Director of the Roundtables and is shifting his focus to the Roundtable intervention developed by the Young Adult Advisory Team (YAAT) with the Pennsylvania Prevention Project. Once completed he has not doubt this unique intervention will be effective in helping many young people across the state and, eventually, across the country, to reduce their risk of HIV infection/reinfection and to make healthier, informed decisions about their sexual behaviors.

Michael D. Shankle MPH of the Pennsylvania Prevention Project has taken over the helm of Young Adult Roundtables following many years of also working with and supporting Roundtables across the state. 412-383-2612.

Today

Today could be known as the first day of the rest of my life,
 Today starts a new day because I am HIV+,
 Today is different because I have to tell you,
 Today is imagining how long I will have,
 Today I am happy but yet crying in my despair,
 Today is like all other days except I am different,
 Today I have to plan my life,
 Today I have to tell all I love them,
 Today I have to...
 Today I have to...
 Tomorrow I think of Today.

Today I think what I will do tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow...

Age 15

Taken from AIDS Poetry Project on the topic of Acceptance

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This Newsletter Is Now Available Online At <http://www.stophiv.com>

[This newsletter is produced at the Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Prevention Project for the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Division of HIV/AIDS Pennsylvania HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee. In addition, this quarterly newsletter is intended to keep the traditionally non HIV Prevention community posted of the activities of the Pennsylvania HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee and is distributed by the Division of HIV/AIDS]