



# PENNSYLVANIA HIV PREVENTION COMMUNITY PLANNING UPDATE

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

## Young Adult Roundtable News

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In 1995 four diverse groups of youth at risk for HIV infection were founded to assist in Pennsylvania's need assessment process. Since their inception, the Roundtables have evolved in purpose to assist not only in the ongoing statewide HIV prevention needs assessment, but also in the development of interventions targeting young people and in the facilitation of youth participation in the community planning process. University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Prevention Project staff, with the guidance and support of the Division of HIV/AIDS and the HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee have coordinated and facilitated seven Roundtables across the Commonwealth. Each Roundtable is attended by at least one Committee member mentor who serves as liaison between the Planning Committee and the Roundtable and mentor to the young adults.

Currently 129 youth and young adults participate in the seven Roundtables. Members are almost evenly split by gender (64 are male and 65 are female); almost half (63) identify as straight, 32 as gay, 5 as lesbian, and 19 as bisexual, and 4 as unsure at this point; the youngest members are 13 and the oldest is 30 years of age, with most Roundtable members (22) reporting an age of

17; half of the members are under the age of 18.5; 51 (39%) identify as Caucasian, 40 (31%) as African-American, 23 (18%) as Latino, and 14 (11%) as multi-racial; and 10 (8%) are certified peer educators.

## State HIV Prevention Plan On The Web

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The Pennsylvania Prevention Project at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health has put the Pennsylvania Comprehensive Community HIV Prevention Plan on the Internet at its award-winning web site.

Developed by a forty member statewide committee, The Pennsylvania Community HIV Prevention Plan provides guidelines that people must follow when using state and federal money to develop HIV education and prevention projects. The Plan, which covers Pennsylvania excluding Philadelphia, describes how HIV prevention programs should occur and which priority populations should be targeted in different regions.

In operation since July 1997, the web site <http://www.stophiv.com> is the first and thus far only statewide on-line comprehensive resource directory for HIV/AIDS information in Pennsylvania. It won the best web site for health education and promotion at the

1997 National Public Health Association conference.

With more than 1,250 HIV/AIDS related agencies and organizations in Pennsylvania available on the web site, HIV-infected individuals, physicians, and anyone interested in learning more about HIV/AIDS can access information on education and prevention; health care services; support groups; screening and testing; and other services such as financial assistance and transportation services available for HIV-infected residents of Pennsylvania. Among the features offered on

<http://www.stophiv.com> is a bulletin board for case managers who coordinate care of HIV-infected people. For more information about the Pennsylvania Prevention Project and its stophiv.com Internet Project, call Michael Shankle, M.P.H at (412) 383-2612, or access site <http://www.stophiv.com>.

## Committee Prepares The Plan Update

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In May the Pennsylvania HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee commenced to update the statewide HIV Prevention Plan for the year 2000. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidance request that the Plan, as submitted last year (the red cover Plan), be resubmitted as is with progress reports and

changes attached. That Plan had been reviewed by both the assigned Federal Project Officer at the CDC as well as an external review team. External review teams were composed of four individuals: (1) an Epidemiologist, (2) a behavioral scientist, (3) a "community" person, and (4) a health department person. This year the assigned CDC Project Officer was also present to provide input for the review team.

That review had an overall rating scale ranging from 0=not stated/not found to 5=outstanding. The Pennsylvania HIV Prevention Plan's overall rating was 4=very good. Innovative practices cited were the World-Wide-Web site operated by the University of Pittsburgh to include HIV Prevention Community Plan and youth and young adult site. In addition constructive criticism is offered to further improve the Plan.

It is the constructive criticism provided that sub-committees of the HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee have been focusing upon during their quarterly telephone conference meetings. At the May meeting of the Committee three small groups were created to address improvements in the areas of counseling, testing, referral and partner notification (CTRPN); developing a crosswalk between the Department of Health's grant application and budget to the HIV Prevention Plan; and a review of priority populations, goals, and objectives.

The Committee will meet for two full days in July and August and

the final grant application and Plan updates are due to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in mid September.

### **Ryan White HIV/AIDS Regional Planning Coalitions**

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In the development of the current Plan last summer HIV Prevention Committee members recognized, in part through the gap analysis, that the regional Ryan White HIV/AIDS Coalitions were involved in a provision of HIV prevention and education. At the March meeting of the Committee Bonnie Brautigan, Chief of the Community Program Section of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of HIV/AIDS provided the Committee with a historical perspective of the Coalitions and an overview of their current operations. Information packets were distributed to the Committee relative to each of the seven Coalitions. Information included: (1) FY 98-99 priority/target populations, budgeted amounts to each targeted area, (2) HIV prevention and education subcontractor listing, and (3) a description of one or two most effective HIV prevention programs.

In 1988 the Department of Health subcontracted with the original six community-based AIDS service organizations which eventually became 13 funded organizations. In part, they had been contracted to provide HIV education/prevention services. In 1990 the Ryan White HIV Care

Act was initiated. That federal legislation required the development of coalitions consisting of partnerships of individuals interested in HIV services or planning for HIV services that included both public and private partners within the community of those affected by AIDS. The Commonwealth was divided into the seven current regions and a process commenced on subcontracting within these regions for services. In essence the past nine years have been spent on developing a comprehensive regional HIV/AIDS service delivery system.

Representatives of the seven Ryan White HIV/AIDS Coalitions were invited to the May HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee meeting in Harrisburg. Members of the Committee were randomly divided into groups to meet at separate tables to talk with the Coalition representatives. Sets of HIV prevention related questions were provided to all parties prior to the meeting. Those questions primarily evolved around need assessments and the Coalitions response to HIV prevention needs as well as how the statewide HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee relates to the geographic diversity of the Commonwealth.

In order to develop a well-informed Prevention Plan the Committee needs to better understand the gaps of HIV prevention needs and services on a regional basis and the Coalitions need to clarify the prevention planning process and it's relationship to Coalition work. Coalition members expressed that

this was a good opportunity not just to meet Prevention Committee and let them know that Coalition folks are available to share information, but to see some opportunities for collaboration for the future. Coalition representatives expressed their desire to meet again with the Committee in November to further dialogue about the utility of the HIV Prevention Plan and how it was implemented within their areas.

### **Current HIV/AIDS Epidemiology For The Plan Emerging**

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Epidemiologists from the University of Pittsburgh and the Pennsylvania Department of Health have been hard at work on developing the current HIV/AIDS epidemiological profile for Pennsylvania. This profile informs and guides the Committee on creating and adjusting the Plan to meet the emerging needs. The following are some of the summary statements developed: Geographic distribution: when considering average annual rates of change in AIDS cases, counties that typically would not be considered places where the epidemic was predominant (in other words, some counties with more rural or small-town populations) actually have higher average annual rates of change than those with the largest metropolitan areas. Also, the proportion of new AIDS cases seems to be decreasing in the Philadelphia Area Planning Coalition, remaining about the same in the Southwest and North

Central regions, increasing in ADISNET and the South Central regions, and probably increasing in the Northwest. (2) Modes of transmission: The proportion of new AIDS cases likely infected through IDU is increasing for men and women throughout the state; the proportion of new AIDS cases likely infected through heterosexual contact is increasing for men and women in all areas of the state except Allegheny County (in the county, there may be an increase in heterosexual contact by women with HIV+ males of unspecified risk); the proportion of new AIDS cases likely infected through MSM is declining throughout the state, but remains overwhelmingly predominant as a mode in Allegheny County and is still significant among adolescent/young adult males compared with other modes of transmission for this population. (3) Race/ethnicity: The proportion of AIDS cases among racial/ethnic minorities is increasing, especially for African Americans, followed by Latinos/as. African Americans and Latino/as are disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The proportion of new AIDS cases among whites is decreasing, but whites still constitute a large overall proportion of new AIDS cases each year. (4) Gender: The proportion of AIDS cases among females is increasing, especially among women of childbearing age. AIDS cases among women of childbearing age are mostly black and consist mainly of injection drug users and heterosexual women who have had sex with male injection drug users or HIV+ males of unspecified risk. Estimated HIV prevalence data

suggests males and injection drug users are the predominant sources of new HIV infections, and transmissions are cascading from racial/ethnic male injection drug users and their sex partners who are mostly racial/ethnic minority women of child-bearing age; the epidemic is further cascading to the offspring of these women. Further, the proportion of female adolescent/young adult (13 to 24 years) AIDS cases is increasing, and sexually transmitted disease data suggest a high potential for heterosexual transmission of HIV to female adolescents. (5) Age: The proportion of AIDS cases diagnosed each year that were probably infected when individuals were 30 to 50 is increasing. AIDS incidence trends among 13-24 year olds, in general, seems to be stabilizing, but the relatively small numbers of cases limits the interpretability of these data. This apparent trend is offset by evidence that gonorrhea and primary syphilis is evident at increasing rates among 15-19 year olds, especially females, suggesting the likelihood of recent HIV infections increasing in this age group. Estimates of HIV prevalence suggest that 20-44 year olds (followed by over 44), constitute the predominant pool of infected persons who are the potential sources of new infections.

### **Community Demonstration Projects**

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The Pennsylvania Prevention Project at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health is in the process of

implementing numerous HIV prevention community demonstration projects. The Pennsylvania HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee, primarily through its Community-Based Initiatives Sub-Committee, has provided general guidelines for the implementation of community demonstration projects and the Division of HIV/AIDS in the Pennsylvania Department of Health provides the federal funding to the University to develop HIV prevention community demonstration projects consistent with the annual HIV Prevention Plan developed by the Committee. Demonstration projects are funded for a three-year period and receive assistance on seeking alternative continuation funding.

Serenity Hall, Inc. of Erie and AIDS Resource of Williamsport will be developing a street outreach project targeting African American and Latino men who have sex with men. The York Health Corporation of York and a consortium of the AIDS Community Alliance with the Urban League, Spanish American Civic Association, Central Allison Hill Community Center, and Women's Health Services in the Lancaster area will be developing street outreach to injection drug users who identify as African American, Latinos and their sexual partners. In addition, the New Directions Treatment Services and Hispanic AIDS Education Consortium in the Lehigh Valley will be developing a perinatal HIV transmission prevention project for Latinas and African American females.

### **Technical Assistance And Skills-Building Conference in HIV Prevention**

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**“HIV Prevention Program Planning and Evaluation”**, a technical-assistance, skills-building conference, was held at the University of Pittsburgh on June 3, 4, and 4, 1999 for organizations involved with or interested in initiating HIV Prevention Programs in their local communities. This training was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Prevention Project (PPP) at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health part of a contract from the Pennsylvania Department of Health to provide facilitation and assistance in HIV prevention planning and evaluation. The ultimate goal of such training is to support a cadre of agencies in planning and complementary evaluation approaches so that better programming can occur, agencies may share programming tools and understandings, and ultimately, the spread of HIV can be dramatically slowed if not stopped completely.

Specific objectives of this training included:

- Building, among participants, a common understanding of conceptual framework for program planning and evaluation.
- Assisting agencies in identifying programming areas that need to be reinforced and others that need to be reformulated for

improved programming and evaluation.

- Providing the opportunity for agency staff to meet PPP staff to build relations for future technical assistance needs.
- Providing the opportunity for participants involved in HIV prevention programming to meet and share ideas and concerns with one another.

In accordance with the first of the above objectives, PPP staff and expert consultants “walked participants through” an HIV prevention planning cycle. Starting with needs assessment and ending with reformulating programs based on monitoring and evaluation data collected during program implementation. Twenty individuals participated in the conference, primarily consisting of recent applicants of a new round of HIV prevention demonstration projects about to be implemented in the state, but including other agency representatives interested in HIV prevention programming. Other such training should occur later this year and likely in the year 2000; therefore, if you or your organization may be interested in participating, you should contact the PPP office at (412) 383-3000.

### **HIV Prevention Leadership Development Conference**

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The HIV Prevention Leadership Development Conference took place in Pittsburgh from June 17 – June 20, with a total of 18 community individuals from 4 different communities. A total of

8 representatives from Erie, including PA HIV Prevention Community Planning Committee members: Tracey Thomas, Sonny Concepcion, and Sarita Rodriguez, 5 from Pittsburgh, including Committee member Jazmine Brockington, 3 from York and 2 from Williamsport. This conference was organized by PA Prevention Project staff and requested by several participants in the Community Leadership Development (CLD) Initiative and Community Wide Planning (CWP) groups across the State. Since the inception of Community Leadership Development groups, community members formed to address the development of plans and activities that would target at-risk individuals into HIV counseling and testing. These groups were composed to target two groups, Minorities (African American and Latinos/Latinas), and MSMs (Men who have Sex with Men). Targeting mainly Minorities and MSMs, these community groups would develop HIV prevention activities that would result in increasing community awareness of the importance of HIV counseling and testing. A year later, Community Wide Planning groups were established in York and Erie with the purpose of developing a plan, using the CDC guidelines, to obtain funding for HIV prevention activities. All groups have been working hard to sustain HIV prevention activities in their communities, as well as, other communities which are in the early stages of planning. Each group has a Chair or Leader who plans the meetings, writes the agenda for each meeting, facilitates meetings, recruits new

members, actively participates in the events, maintains a budget, monitors and evaluates the process, and is the liaison between the community and with PA Prevention Project staff. These community leaders have a very big task, and hence this conference was developed to assist them in the further development of activities in their communities.

The conference was planned with a specific purpose. To bring together those involved in HIV prevention initiatives, so that they can become more effective in preventing the spread of HIV in their communities, especially among people of color, and to promote capacity building and infrastructure development to support local HIV prevention efforts in their communities. Six main focus areas that were addressed at the conference were recruitment, retention, leadership, organizing, (planning, budgeting, evaluation), and networking. Feedback from the communities, committee members and PA Prevention Project staff showed that the conference was very helpful and would assist them in continuing to develop their community groups.

### **Upcoming HIV Prevention Committee Meetings**

The following dates are upcoming HIV Prevention Committee Meetings that are held at the Sheraton Inn East in Harrisburg.  
July 21, & 22, 1999  
August 18, & 19, 1999

September 15, 1999  
November 17, 1999.

#### **COMMUNITY PLANNING PHONE GUIDE**

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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]*