

**Office of AIDS  
November 2007 – Branch Updates**

**HIV Education and Prevention Services Branch**

**HIV Community Prevention Section**

**Contact: Gail Sanabria, Chief  
(916) 449-5790**

Included in the 2007-08 State budget, was again the \$5.6 million augmentation which restores HIV E&P funds to the FY 2001-02 levels for local health jurisdictions (LHJ) who receive less funding than the 2001-2002 formula provided. LHJs who currently receive more than their FY 2001-02 allocations will continue to receive their current formula-driven amount for FY 2007-08. Review and approval of the submitted scopes of work and budgets for these augmentations are currently being done with an anticipated date of completion of December 1.

Current recruitment is in process for filling two Intervention Specialists positions, one to replace Kevin Sitter who went back home to Minnesota and a new Intervention Specialist position. I recently hired three new Associate Health Program Advisors Clare Rohde, Dennese Neal and Mary Anne Salvage. While the section is in a transition period, I am excited to have this new team.

**HIV Counseling, Testing, and Training Section**

**Contact: Sandy Simms, Chief  
(916) 449-5812**

The HIV Counseling, Testing and Training (CT&T) Section held the HIV Counseling and Testing Coordinator's Meeting at the Marina Del Rey Marriott Hotel in Marina Del Rey California on October 9 through 11, 2007. Additionally, on the morning on October 9, 2007, there was a Neighborhood Intervention Geared towards High-risk Testing (NIGHT) Program Coordinator's meeting. At both meetings, the Program Coordinator from each local health jurisdiction was invited to attend, as well as a representative from subcontracted community based agencies that perform higher numbers of HIV counseling and testing (C&T) services. Office of AIDS staff identified by management were also invited to attend, so there were staff from the HIV Counseling, Testing and Training Section, HIV Community Prevention Section, HIV Prevention Policy and Program Development Section, HIV Prevention Research and Evaluation (PRE) Section, Care Section and Early Intervention Section. In total, there were 141 attendees at the three-day conference.

The goal of the NIGHT Program coordinator's meeting was to disseminate and discuss information relevant to their program. NIGHT Program Coordinator's received statewide and county/city specific data on the demographics and risk behaviors of their clients for fiscal years 2004/05 and 2005/06. They were able to compare how their NIGHT program was performing compared to statewide averages. Also, there was a discussion among attendees as to the future direction of the NIGHT program, how the

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restructured program will affect them, and what tools programs need in order to help increase the number of services they are able to provide to high-risk clients.

The goal of the HIV C&T Coordinator's meeting was to disseminate final guidance documents and provide technical assistance regarding the upcoming restructured HIV C&T Program. Throughout the three days, participants listened to plenary presentations on the various aspects of the restructure including the Client Assessment Questionnaire, Staff Roles and Responsibilities, Local Variance Allowance, Verified Medical Visit and Hepatitis C Integration. Participants were then separated into breakout groups based on local health jurisdiction size, and were given the opportunity to discuss each restructure program area with OA staff. Participants were specifically asked to come to the conference having discussed how program components would be integrated into their test sites, and questions that they had regarding process or guidance was responded to in the breakout sessions.

Other topics presented at the conference include:

- An overview on the direction that the federal government is going presented by Rashad Burgess from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- An overview on the direction that California is looking towards presented by Michelle Roland, OA's Division Chief
- Evaluation data from the pilot of the restructured program and modifications that have been made to the guidance documents based that data presented by Deanna Sykes from the PRE Section
- Rapid Testing Update presented by Vanessa Lee from the CT&T Section
- An overview of the statewide programs that are funded partners of the CT&T Section and local C&T Programs, including the California AIDS Clearinghouse; California HIV/AIDS/STD Hotline; UCSF AIDS Health Project; California STD/HIV Prevention Training Center; AIDS Healthcare Foundation; and, the Los Angeles County Office of AIDS Programs & Policy.
- An overview of the newly reimbursable Partner Counseling and Referral Services presented by Phoenix Smith and Tom Gray from the STD Control Branch
- An overview of the reimbursable Hepatitis C program presented by Alessandra Ross and Tom Gray from the STD Control Branch.
- An overview of where the Local Evaluation Online (LEO) program is and a roll-out/training schedule presented by Christopher Krawczyk, PRE Section Chief

**HIV Prevention Policy and Program Development Section**

**Contact: Brian Lew, Chief**  
**(916) 449-5812**

**African American**

The California Department of Public Health, Office of AIDS (CDPH/OA) continues to provide leadership to reduce the HIV incidence and prevalence among African Americans in California through the deployment of services which include: (1) the African American Gay Men/MSM Action Plans, (2) technical assistance and capacity

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building activities through ONTRACK Program Resources, (3) working with the African American HIV/AIDS Coalition and their regional committees, and (4) HIV testing in emergency departments.

**African American Gay Men/MSM Action Plans**

Data has shown that African American gay men/MSM are disproportionately impacted by HIV in California. Following the CHPG recommendation that the top 18 local health jurisdictions (LHJ) create Action Plans to address this issue, CDPH/OA has required Action Plans that must: (1) be in conjunction with local community planning priorities, (2) consider social, economic, cultural and political factors that contribute to risk, (3) be in the context of health and wellness, and (4) have C&T and HERR activities that target African American gay men/MSM. The majority of LHJs have submitted Action Plans and they have been reviewed the Gay Men/MSM Task Force. The Task Force intends to request additional information from the LHJs.

**ONTRACK Program Resources Technical Assistance**

ONTRACK Program Resources has five part-time regional coordinators that provide guidance and assistance to the regional coalitions. In addition, they have completed 17 focus groups and will use that information to provide on-site technical assistance to HIV prevention providers. ONTRACK is in the process of contracting with an organization to develop their electronic service directory.

**Technical Assistance to Regional Coalitions**

Reggie Caldwell from the California Office of AIDS and Jamal Bey at ONTRACK Program Resources has provided technical assistance to four African American Regional Coalitions--Sacramento/Central Valley, Bay Area, Los Angeles and Inland Empire. The primary activities have been assisting the coalitions in developing a working structure that is specific to their regional needs.

**HIV Testing in Emergency Departments**

CDPH/OA has been awarded an HIV testing grant that will integrate HIV testing in the emergency departments (ED) in Alameda County Public Hospital/Highland, Alta Bates/Summit and San Francisco General Hospital. The goal of the program is to provide rapid HIV testing within EDs, specifically targeting African Americans, and to link those who test HIV positive to HIV services. The three components of this program are (1) screening, (2) notification of results and (3) services for newly identified HIV positive individuals. These services include: comprehensive medical and psycho-social assessment, direct linkages to medical care, risk reduction counseling, incentivized social networking, Partner Counseling and Referral Services and linkages to ancillary services.

**IDU**

Over-the-counter pharmacy sale of syringes is moving forward in Los Angeles, where both the Rite Aid and Walgreens chains have signed up to participate. In Long Beach, the health department is moving forward to obtain city council approval; over 50 people attended a community forum to answer questions and address community concerns.

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AB 110, which would allow OA funds to be used to purchase syringes, was signed by the Governor on October 12, 2007.

OA has funded two educational videos that will be available for distribution in January. The first is a “roll-call” video for police department education on syringe exchange and needle stick injury prevention. This video is being produced in response to a CHPG recommendation. The second video addresses pharmacy sale of syringes and is geared towards pharmacists.

In June, OA announced that it would fund syringe exchange programs directly for the first time. The contracts with the programs are currently being processed; all programs should be ready to expand their services by January.

LHJs were informed that they would be allowed to use their augmentation funds (the \$5.6 million that was allocated to counties which had previously had their HIV prevention funds reduced) in order to enhance syringe collection and disposal. Three LHJs are currently exploring this option.

**Perinatal Project**

The Perinatal Project will begin its final year of funding. So far OA estimates that 100 hospitals are providing rapid HIV testing in labor and delivery (RTLTD). Project staff will make an oral presentation and three poster presentations at the National HIV Prevention Conference in Atlanta this year. The project staff has also been collaborating with the Black Infant Health (BIH) Program of the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division to provide training to BIH Coordinators.

**Center of Excellence (CoE) for Transgender HIV Prevention**

The CoE was fully staffed when its contract began July 2007. They have begun collecting information from Transgender HIV prevention programs around the state. The Community Advisory Board (CAB) for the CoE met for the first time in August. The CoE staff explained their expectations of the CAB members and provided examples of CAB governance that the members could follow. The last CAB conference call was October 18, 2007.

**Latino Initiative**

The HIV Latino Initiative is moving forward in two major areas. One, Project Concern International (PCI), the contractor CDPH/OA hired to provide technical assistance and capacity building to CDPH/OA-funded agencies has recently completed an extensive needs assessment. PCI is now conducting regional meetings with those stakeholders who provided input into the needs assessment to ask their help in developing the type of assistance needed. In addition, the CDPH/OA Latino Advisory Board is finalizing work plans to a list of recommendations it believes will address Latino HIV/AIDS education and prevention needs.

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**Legislation**

In addition to AB 110, the Governor also signed AB 682 which will streamline the HIV testing process eliminating a separate written consent which many medical providers identified as a barrier to increased HIV testing in emergency departments, labor and delivery, medical clinics, and other settings. Instead, medical providers will inform patients that the test is being given; patients may “opt-out” of the test. Medical providers will also give the individual information that will help them make an informed decision.