

P3 Primary Prevention for Positives Systems Integration Project

People with HIV are a unique population needing access to services that are not traditionally linked: care and prevention. They need treatment and care services to stay healthy, and prevention services to help keep themselves and their partners healthy. In the Fall of 2002, AIDS Partnership California (APC) expanded their Prevention with Positives (P3) Initiative by awarding System Integration Grants to two CBOs and one county to integrate prevention and care services for people of color with HIV. These three demonstration projects sought to integrate services on a county, neighborhood, or inter-agency level so people of color with HIV could seamlessly access a full range of needed services. Please see the evaluation of the APC P3 Initiative at www.aidspartnershipca.org/assets/PWPFinalEvaluation.pdf

Cross-cutting issues in Systems Integration

Facilitators

- **Commitment.** Overall, the service providers in these projects are committed to the idea and process of systems integration. Providers understand how it will help HIV+ persons, and many have dreamed of this kind of "one-stop shopping" system of care for years.
- **Consultants.** Hiring consultants to conduct some activities helps alleviate the time constraints that CBOs often experience.
- **Paradigm shift.** Systems integration is part of an overall paradigm shift that is occurring among the HIV/AIDS community in the US. Prevention with Positives programs are occurring across the country, and some areas have begun to integrate systems.

Barriers

- **Lack of time.** HIV/AIDS service agencies are already struggling to provide quality services with limited resources. Trying to get multiple agencies to meet to discuss systems integration was a challenge.
- **Varying bureaucracies and policies.** Because the various medical and social services organizations traditionally have worked separately, each has its own unique way of doing things. Linking services through these different systems of care can be complicated and cumbersome. In some cases, total integration was not possible.

Lessons learned

- **This will take longer than you thought.** Because of the demands on time and the complication of working with diverse agencies with diverse operations, systems integration is a long and time-intensive process.
- **Consultants can be objective and increase cooperation.** Agencies are often seen as competitors, and each may prioritize securing funding and staffing for their own organization. Using a consultant who is not part of the healthcare or social services system helps agencies focus on the goal of helping HIV+ persons.
- **Don't say integration, say coordination.** In the beginning, projects may not be able to fully integrate all services under one roof with joint forms and procedures. Coordinating referrals, using a subset of common intake variables or sharing one or two staff, are successful efforts.
- **Systems integration has to start at the highest level.** Systems integration will need support, funding and infrastructure from policy makers to be fully implemented. Government policies often restrict how much service agencies can make changes.

AIDS Partnership California (APC) is a private-public funding collaborative that includes foundation and corporate funders and the California State Office of AIDS. APC is a program of Northern California Grantmakers, an association of 200 foundations, corporate giving programs and individual donors.
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