

The Role of Peer Support Specialists within the Continuum of Services for Sexually Transmitted Infections

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Objectives

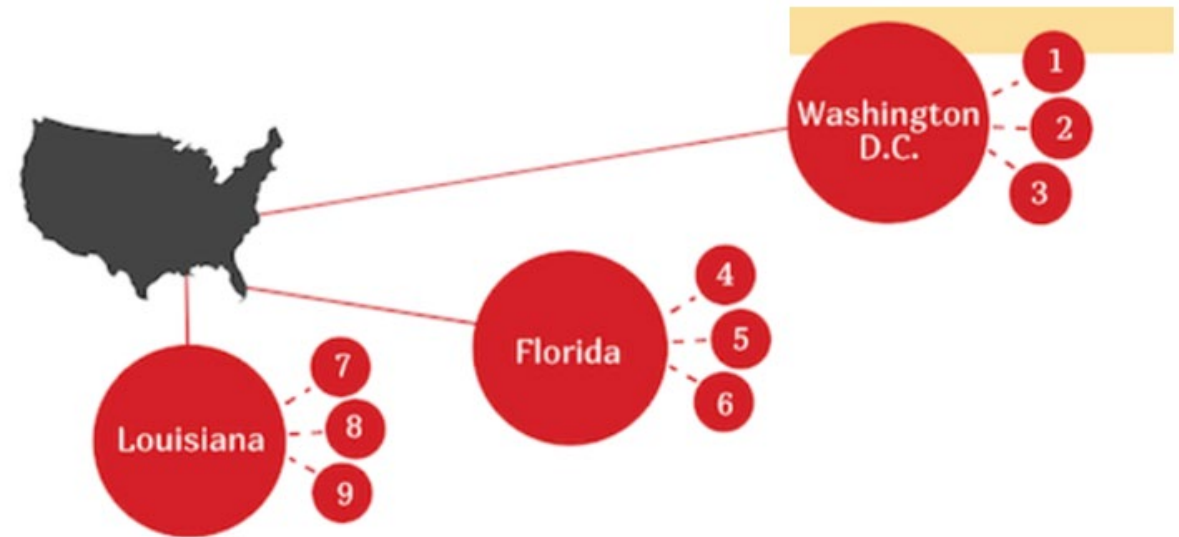
- Discuss successes, barriers, and practices implemented in a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS) Project, through the perspective of the Peer Support Specialist lens.
- Review the importance of peer support specialist (PSS) in contribution to providing a holistic approach to improve patients access to STI interventions, engagement / reengagement, and health outcomes.
- Consider lessons learned and key takeaways.

Improving Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Screening and Treatment among People with or at Risk for HIV

Morbidities related to bacterial STIs are higher among people with HIV

In 2018, a Health Resources and Services Administration HIV/AIDS Bureau Special Project of National Significance project was awarded to Rutgers School of Nursing Francois-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB) Center, Newark, New Jersey, to evaluate interventions to increase routine screening, testing, and treatment of bacterial STIs among people with or at risk of HIV due to consecutive increases in incidence rates in gonorrhea (GC), chlamydia (CT), and syphilis across the United States from 2014-2018. This is a 3-year initiative.


The FXB Center team identified 9 clinics in 3 jurisdictions with higher than national incidence rates of HIV, GC, CT, and syphilis. A baseline needs assessment of the clinics was completed in year 1.



Evidence Based Interventions

Four evidence-based interventions were selected to implement in each clinic to hopefully increase the rates of routine STI screening:


1
Sexual History Taking



screening
S

Using audio computer-assisted self-interview sexual health history for all patients at each non-acute clinical care/lab visit to identify risk & need for bacterial STI testing.

2
Patient Self-Collection



testing
T

Supporting patient self-collection of recommended urine & extragenital site GC/CT nucleic acid amplification test specimens.

3
Provider Training



intervening
I

Offering health care providers training on state-of-the-science recommendations for diagnosing and treating STIs.

4
Sexual & Gender Minority Welcoming Measures



services
S

Integrating welcoming measures & clinical team training to create a clinical safety zone to engage sexual health discussions & provide STI harm reduction services to those at highest risk, including young adults, men who have sex with men, & transgender clients.

Importance of Peer Support Specialist

- PSS bridge together research-supported health care engagement realms and self-management interventions.



Success and Barriers

Successes

- Improved self-management in patients diagnosed with an STI
- Promoted a common understanding of the participants' needs and preferences.

Barriers

- Stigma
- Lack of time
- Low-risk perception.

Lessons Learned and Key Takeaways

- Patient education is essential
- Patients are more likely to disclose information if they feel safe and comfortable
- Self-management leads to an improved STI testing and diagnosis
- PSS can build rapport and trust for future visits
 - Meaningful engagement

Thank You!