

THE BASIC NEWS

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Fall,

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Fall edition of our newsletter. I wish that I could tell you all about the wonderfully exciting things that were happening in our area for clients living with HIV/AIDS and for those at risk of contracting the virus. Unfortunately, the difficulties of the current down trends in the economy have finally caught up with us. Since our last edition, several significant things have happened. Because of reduced funding, the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, which some of you know as ADAP, is now closed to new enrollees and a waiting list has been established statewide. As of September 2, 2010, over 1500 persons are on that waiting list, which makes Florida the leader in the number of persons on a waiting list established by any state. Likewise, and due to a decrease in state funding, no new enrollees are being admitted into the AIDS Insurance Continuation Program, AICP, and a waiting list has also been established for that program which helped to keep persons living with HIV/AIDS on private/group insurance policies. Since these two programs are currently closed, local agencies, such as BASIC, are now faced with the prospect of trying to fill in the gaps, while monies under the Ryan White program has remained stable for the past several years. This in spite of the fact that the number of clients needing services has continued to rise over the past years.

The news for persons at risk of contracting HIV is not much better. BASIC was not awarded Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, funding to continue its prevention programs for African American women at risk of contracting HIV. It appears that in this five year funding cycle, the CDC has chosen not to fund small metropolitan or rural areas, and has concentrated its funding to major cities. The end result is that there are no longer any formal prevention programs for women in our area, while the risk for women in our area to acquire HIV remains high.

The most positive news is that BASIC remains enthusiastic in its commitment to meet the care and treatment needs as well as the prevention needs of persons in our area, but that it will also have to rely more heavily upon local resources. In this endeavor, everyone can be helpful by urging your friends, families and acquaintances to contribute to BASIC so that it can continue current programs.

Sincerely,
Valerie Mincey, MSW.
Executive Director



NEWS BRIEFS

WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES NATIONAL STRATEGY ON HIV/AIDS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In the United States, approximately 56,000 people become infected with HIV each year and more than 1.1 million Americans are living with HIV. To combat this growing epidemic, the White House released the [National HIV/AIDS Strategy \(NHAS\)](#) on July 13, 2010.

The vision of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy is to make the United States “a place where new HIV infections are rare, and when they do occur, every person, regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socio-economic circumstance will have unrestricted access to high-quality, life-extending care, free from stigma and discrimination.”

The NHAS has three primary goals:

- 1) Reducing the number of new infections;
- 2) Increasing access to care and optimizing health outcomes for people living with HIV;
- 3) Reducing HIV-related health disparities;

To accomplish these goals, the NHAS calls for a more coordinated national response to the HIV epidemic, and the White House has issued a Presidential Memorandum directing agencies to take specific steps to implement this strategy.

At the local level, these three primary goals will be used as a basis for the Local Comprehensive Plan of Care and Treatment: 2012-2015 which is currently being developed through a subcommittee of the CPAN. HIV positive persons in our area have already been asked to complete an online survey of clients needs, and a report will be developed by the Bureau of HIV/AIDS in Tallahassee during the next month summarizing the results of that survey. For anyone who completed the survey, our sincere thanks. Your input is extremely important in the planning process. Anyone who wishes to be a part of this planning process should contact Ron at 785-1088 #117

NATIONAL GAY MEN'S HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY: SEPTEMBER 27

The third annual National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on Sept. 27, 2010, marked an occasion to reflect on how profoundly HIV/AIDS has affected gay and bisexual men. It also is a fitting time to recognize how much this group has influenced the development and implementation of strategies to prevent and treat the virus and the disease.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to exact a terrible toll on gay and bisexual men. Although men who have sex with men make up only about 4 percent of the U.S. male population ages 13 years and older, sexual transmission of HIV from one man to another accounted for more than half of all new HIV diagnoses in 37 states in 2008. The epidemic is particularly acute among 13- to 29-year-old black males who have sex with other males. More new HIV infections occurred in this population in 2006 than

in any other age or racial group of men who have sex with men.

Stigma and fear hamper efforts to make HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment accessible to all gay and bisexual men. Often faced with prejudice and discrimination, these men frequently lack open and ready access to HIV prevention, treatment and care, increasing their risk for HIV/AIDS.

Yet many gay and bisexual men have been instrumental as AIDS activists in raising awareness about the public health impact of HIV/AIDS, shaping the HIV/AIDS research agenda and advocating that this research is well funded. Tens of thousands of gay and bisexual men have participated as volunteers in HIV/AIDS research, including clinical trials of antiretroviral drugs that now form the basis of lifesaving treatment regimens available to millions of people with HIV infection.

[The HIV/AIDS epidemic isn't just happening in faraway places. Every 9½ minutes someone in the United States gets infected with HIV.](#)

HIV and AIDS: We Are All Part of the Solution

The AIDS DRUG ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ADAP) WATCH

As of September 7, 2010, there were 3,558 individuals on AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) waiting lists in 11 states. **Florida has the highest number on a waiting list**

(1506). Eighteen ADAPs, eleven with current waiting lists, have instituted cost-containment measures since April 1, 2009. In addition, 13 ADAPs, including three with current waiting lists, reported they are considering implementing new or additional cost-containment measures by the end of ADAP's current fiscal year (March 31, 2011).

States that have instituted cost containment measures and those considering them, in addition to implementing waiting lists, are reducing program financial and medical eligibility, capping enrollment, reducing the number of drugs on the formulary and cutting other services, all of which impact access to life saving HIV medications for medically vulnerable individuals. Two states disenrolled clients as their programs decreased income eligibility levels. In total, 27 states have implemented or are anticipating implementing cost-containment measures (reported as of July 22, 2010). Four additional states reported that they project implementing a waiting list in ADAP FY2011 (beginning April 1, 2011).

The program's viability depends on federal funding awards and state general revenue support for the state's fiscal year (in most states this began on July 1, 2010). With growing client demand for ADAP services (from FY2008 to 2009, ADAPs nationally experienced an average monthly growth of 1,271 clients, an unprecedented increase of 80 percent from FY2008 when the average monthly growth was 706 clients over FY2007), minimal federal increases and continued cuts in state funding, it is paramount that emergency federal resources be made available to stave off the crisis many

ADAPs and the clients they serve are facing.

BASIC IS HAVING ITS ANNUAL BEACH BALL ON OCTOBER 15.

BASIC is holding its third annual beach ball at Pineapple Willy's on Thomas Drive on October 15, 2010. For those who have attended in the past years, it is a wonderful evening of food, entertainment and fellowship. You don't want to miss it. All monies raised go directly to services in our area.



STUDY SHOWS HIV HITS HARDEST AMONG THOSE IN POVERTY

In a study of rates of HIV across the United States, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that poverty is the single most important factor linked to HIV infection among inner-city heterosexuals.

"In this country, HIV clearly strikes the economically disadvantaged in a

devastating way," said CDC HIV/AIDS expert Kevin Fenton. He said the research showed there was "a widespread HIV epidemic in America's inner cities."

More than 1.1 million people in the United States are infected with the human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS, according to the CDC, and there are around 56,000 new infections here in the US every year.

Many studies have shown that blacks, gay and bisexual men and Hispanics are the most affected groups, and Fenton said this study found heterosexuals in the poorest city neighborhoods are also hit hard. The researchers found no differences in HIV prevalence by race or ethnicity in heterosexuals in poor areas.

It found that HIV rates were especially high among the poorest people. **Those living below the poverty line were at greater risk for HIV than those living above it** -- with rates of 2.4 percent versus 1.2 percent -- and prevalence for both groups was far higher than the national average of 0.45 percent.

CPAN (THE CENTRAL PANHANDLE AIDS NETWORK) HOLDS TOWN HALL MEETING

After a series of disappointing setbacks due to decreases in available funding for services to persons with HIV/AIDS, CPAN held a town hall meeting on September 23 in Marianna, Florida to allow time for residents in the community, both those living with HIV and those who are affected by the disease, to talk with lawmakers about the service cuts. Persons living with HIV/AIDS were also given some basic

understanding of how to best talk with decision makers about issues which affect their lives through an empowerment program called "Activate U," which was sponsored by Okaloosa AIDS Services, Information and Support, (OASIS).



REVISE SOCIAL SECURITY HIV DISABILITY REQUIREMENTS SAYS INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE

A new report issued by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) on September 13 says the criteria used by the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) to gauge HIV-related disability is outdated and should be overhauled to include new qualifications based on CD4 cell counts and specific sets of medical conditions.

The IOM recommendations, which have yet to be officially reviewed by SSA, reflect the fact that modern-day antiretroviral (ARV) therapy can often improve the health of HIV-positive people with low CD4 counts or a history of AIDS-related opportunistic infections

and, in turn, effectively reduce the need for disability benefits. The report also stresses the need for disability benefits for people living with HIV experiencing certain non-AIDS-related complications and ARV treatment-related side effects that can lead to disability.

WORLD AIDS DAY: DECEMBER 1

It's not too early to begin talking about World AIDS Day on December 1. Students at the Chipola Community College are beginning their plans on a concert with the theme "Live to Love." on that date. In Panama City, nothing has been formalized, but we are open to suggestions for something that may be a little different than past years. You can get your ideas to anyone at BASIC, 785-1088 or to Valerie at #112, Ron at #117, or Debbie at #115.

BASIC IS STILL LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO MENTOR CHILDREN

Every

We are currently seeking motivated, fun-loving, adult role model mentors to help encourage and inspire the potential of each of our mentees. We offer a volunteer program to help enrich the lives of both the mentor and the mentee, with personalized ongoing training. Our program matches one adult for each child, meeting weekly for at least one hour, for a period of one year.

As residents of Northwest Florida, individuals have the perfect opportunity to directly impact their communities and the lives of their mentees. Mentors can offer leading by example in so many different areas including:

Impact a life, volunteer today!

For information, call Jennifer French at 785-1088 #133 or Rebecca Miller at 785-1088 #113. You can also apply online to become a mentor or a mentee at www.basicnwfl.com

Check out BASIC's website at www.basicnwfl.com.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

In 2009, just 4 percent of the domestic HIV/AIDS budget was spent on prevention, and this includes prevention research. Yet, for every infection prevented, \$355,000 is saved in the costs of providing lifelong HIV care and treatment.