



National HIV Prevention Conference

Atlanta, Georgia - Jun 12-15, 2005

[TITLE:] BEST PRACTICES FOR REACHING AND ENGAGING YOUTH IN HIV PREVENTION AND CARE

Natl HIV Prev Conf. 2005 Jun 12-15 (abstract no. MR-F0101)

Hidalgo, J; Hannay, JE

YES Center of George Washington University, Washington, DC

ISSUE: Reaching and Engaging Youth in HIV (prevention and Care) Services.

KEY POINTS: Based upon a qualitative research study conducted for the Division of Community Services of the federal HIV/AIDS Bureau (publication pending), this session will discuss effective strategies for reaching and engaging high risk and HIV-infected youth in prevention and care services. Authors will present key findings from that study and engage session participants in activities generate further insights on this issue. Key findings of the study revealed that sites around the US which effectively reach and engage youth give attention to: offering high quality medical care, case management, health education and risk reduction, counseling and psychosocial care, and secondary prevention counseling; patient confidentiality and informed consent; community-based outreach that informs youth about HIV issues and services; strong working relationships with community-based HIV and STD counseling, testing, and treatment services; accurate, current, and youth-oriented HIV education; support activities for HIV infected youth via professional counseling, small groups, and peer buddies; frequent use of social networks of youth to promote entrance and maintenance in care; offering of ancillary services (e.g., transportation assistance, on-site child care); careful attention to recruiting, orienting, and supporting staff; locating services in community settings accessible to mass transportation; clean, functional, uncluttered, inviting, and youth-oriented facilities; involving youth in planning, development, implementation, and evaluation activities; openness and originality in programming; and strengthening institutional and local financial and in-kind support mechanisms.

IMPLICATIONS: While a number of the characteristics of effective HIV programs for youth mirror those of adults, there are a number of factors that are unique and distinct. These must be considered and planned into services offered if programs for youth are to

effectively reach the target population. This session will present the research findings and facilitate a discussion among participants on other issues that must be considered that were not covered or revealed in the report.



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