Integrating Hepatitis C Prevention, Care, Education, and Referrals in a Clinical & Social Service Setting

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Mission Statement: PPP is a non-profit, public health organization committed to protecting the health and welfare of drug users and sex workers. PPP works to reduce the harm associated with substance use and sex industry work by offering a safe and humane alternative to the war on drugs.

Key Principles of Harm Reduction:
- Designs public health interventions that minimize the harmful effects of drug & promotes safer use.
- Understands drug use as a complex, multi-faceted issue that encompasses behaviors from severe abuse to total abstinence.
- Meets people where they are in the course of their drug use.
- Ensures that people who use drugs have a real voice in the creation of programs.
- Affirms people who use drugs that they are the primary agents of change.
- Empowers communities to share information and support each other.

Services:
- Syringe Exchange Program (SEP), Street-side Health Project Free Clinics (SHP), Drop in or Harm Reduction Services Center (HRSC), Individual and Group Level Harm Reduction Counseling, Case Management, Overdose Prevention Training, Testing and Counseling, Buprenorphine Clinic, Medical, Social Service, Legal Referrals
HCV Initiatives in a Social Service Environment

- Hepatitis C Health Education Workshops
- Hepatitis C Support Group
- Hepatitis C Antibody and Confirmatory Testing
- Primary Care/Hepatology Referrals
- Hepatitis C Patient Case Management
- Hepatitis C Patient Leaders
- Harm Reduction Counseling and Supplies

Hepatitis C Health Education Workshops

Goals:
- Destigmatise Hepatitis C in the community, by erasing misconceptions
- Identify Hepatitis C positive individuals who are loss to care
- Provide Clients with information to pass to the community

Results:
- Hepatitis C Positive individuals who are loss to care learn how to manage their disease, and services/medical referrals availables
- Clients learn prevention methods on the contraction of Hepatitis C
- Clients become Hepatitis C advocates in the community, by dispersing information booklets, and information learned
Hepatitis C Support Group

- Meets on first Friday of every month.
- Provides a safe place for clients to get peer and medical support before seeking treatment, during treatment, and after treatment.
- Averages around 30 individuals each meeting

Hepatitis C Antibody Confirmatory Tests and Primary Care/Treatment Referrals

- Antibody testing six days a week. Confirmatory testing on site once a week.
- Clients who test positive for the antibody test and/or confirmatory test are linked to care.
- Clients are linked to care based on the following criteria: Coinfection vs monoinfection, insured vs uninsured, in care with a Primary Care Provider vs not in care with Primary Care Provider.
- Clients are linked to Primary Care Facilities with the intent of HCV Screen
- Clients are able to receive a medical appointment in less than two weeks.
- Clients are offered an escort to medical appointments
Hepatitis C Case Management

• Liaison between medical facilities and patients by helping to navigate medical system.
• Assist clients with needed medical, and social services that are vital in the path to treatment E.G. housing
• Weekly Meetings on progress of client in Hepatitis C management
• Ensuring success of client to follow through medical treatment

Hepatitis C Patient Leaders

• Patients who want to be Hepatitis C Advocates by becoming leaders in the community
• Individuals are taught how to properly educate their peers on Hepatitis C with supervision
• Patient Leaders participate in care outreach

Results

• Increase in individuals entering Prevention Point to be tested and / or linked to care.
• Better Rapport with the Clients: They feel more comfortable hearing the information from a health educator in addition to a person who they are familiar with in the community.
• Patient Leaders increase interest in personal health to be an example for others.
Harm Reduction Counseling and Supplies

- Comprehensive Risk Reduction Counseling and Services
  - Promotes public health interventions that minimize the harmful effects of drug use
  - Case Management
  - Harm Reduction Education

- Safer drug use material distribution
  - Syringes
  - Cookers
  - Cotton
  - Sterile Water
  - Crack Pipes

HCV Initiatives in a Primary Medical Care Setting

- PPP Street-side Health Program
  *all volunteer-staffed street side medical clinic that occurs 4 times a week
  *provides basic wound care, medical check-ups, prescription medication, and other basic medical services

- Health Education and Health Screening Tools administered to patients by medical staff in the Clinic

- Hepatitis C Positive individuals who self report are identified in the intake process.

- Hepatitis C and HIV testing incorporated in medical clinic
Identifying Lost to Care Hepatitis C Patients in Streetside Health Project Medical Clinic

• Every Patient who self reports as being Hepatitis C Positive on the intake form meets with linkage staff during the course of medical visit.
• Patient offered referral to Hepatology and/or Primary Care Facility
• Special chart is created, and Patient is offered escort to medical appointment
• The Patient is provided information on services provided at Prevention Point and the community available for Hepatitis C Positive Individuals

HCV Health Education and Medical Screenings

• Physicians incorporate HCV Health education and screenings into patient visit.
• Medical Students and nursing students are taught to incorporate health education quickly but efficiently into medical visit.
• Patients leaves the clinic with information on how to prevent contracting Hepatitis C and/or how to manage having Hepatitis C
• Patients are offered free Hepatitis A and B Vaccines along information on additional chronic conditions and harm reduction tools.
Number of Hepatitis C Referrals from August 2011-August 2012

HCV Initiatives September 2013-March 2014
### Demographics of Patients who attended first medical appointment

![Pie Chart showing demographics]

#### PPP RAPID HCV TESTING NUMBERS

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| % Positive | 33% | 37% | 28% | 33% | 57% | 38% |

4/10/2014
SUCCESES

• Increased awareness regarding access, newer treatment regimens, and newer treatment guidelines for Hepatitis C among patients and in the community
• Increased awareness has resulted in increased linkage
• Increased awareness and training to medical staff regarding how to increase access and linkage to hepatology care
• Renewed and strengthened partnerships with Infectious disease providers for co- and mono-infected individuals
• Expanded Medical Assistance access and advocacy for more patients who are motivated for medical care to treat their Hepatitis C
• Development of a model for primary and hepatology care referral
• Incorporation of pilot confirmatory testing on site

CHALLENGES

• Limited number of hepatology providers for mono-infected patients
• Even more limited number of primary care providers willing to treat mono-infected patients in primary care setting
• Requirement to have primary care provider and referral prior to hepatology care
• Low awareness among patients and primary care/triage providers regarding newer access, treatments, and standards of care
FUTURE STEPS

• Expansion of HCV confirmatory testing on site
• Increasing number of linkage and referral staff
• Increase training of HCV Screening tools for medical staff in the medical clinics
• Increase HCV referral and health education at mobile sites
• Expand HCV Outreach in the community

Special Thanks to :

• Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia
• Health Federation of Philadelphia
• National Health Corps: Philadelphia Health Corps
• Philadelphia Department of Public Health: Adult Viral Hepatitis Program
• Partnership Comprehensive Care Infectious Disease
• PHMC Care Clinic
• HEPTREC
• Gilead Sciences
• Merck and Co.
• Temple University Hepatology & HCV Support Group