



HIV CARE CONTINUUM: SUCCESS STORY

THE RUTH M. ROTHSTEIN CORE CENTER

COOK COUNTY HEALTH SYSTEM – CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

ABOUT

The Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center is a clinic for the prevention, care, and research of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases located in Chicago, Illinois. The Center uses a “one-stop shop” model to offer patients all the services they need under one roof. Services include primary and specialty medical care, dental care, social and support services, prevention and education programs, and opportunities to participate in research. The Center also has an on-site screening clinic that offers screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), rapid HIV testing, PrEP services, and tuberculosis (TB) screening.

BACKGROUND

The CORE Center began offering HIV services in 1998. In 2009, they started the Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS) Initiative for Women of Color. The CORE Center utilizes peer navigators and involves the local Chicago community in the development and implementation of their many programs and services.

CONTENT AREAS COVERED

Social Determinants of Health

Routine HIV Testing

Link to Care

Medication Adherence

PROVIDING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SERVICES

- Hiring considerations
- Diverse Advisory Board and Steering Committee
- Conduct trainings
- Conduct surveys to assess patient perception of care
- Assess all policies involved in providing culturally sensitive care

AT A GLANCE...

TYPE OF CLINICAL SETTING:

HIV Outpatient Specialty Center

PATIENTS SEEN YEARLY:

4,930

COLLECT SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

YES

COLLECT GENDER IDENTITY:

YES

SEX AT BIRTH:

Male: 73.2%
Female: 26.4%

(<1% of patients report a gender identity that is different from their sex assigned at birth)

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LINK TO CARE

In 2009, the CORE Center established the SPNS Initiative for Women of Color to enhance retention in care, specifically for women. The seeds were sown by CORE's robust PEER educator program. SPNS was an evolution of the PEER educator program. Since implementation, this program has received broad support.

The CORE Center also offers additional support services such as a Linkage to Care Leader. This staff member is based at the hospital and monitors real-time results in the laboratory system, has worked extensively with patient navigators and peer educators, and underwent a 40-hour comprehensive training program that focused on linkage and retention in care.

LINK TO CARE TIPS:

- Have champions
- Listen to the community
- Accept that change takes time

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED:

- Conduct a literature review
- Implement a system-wide pop-up in the EMR
- Find and utilize capacity building assistance services

SUCCESSES

- Utilizing previous programs, such as the PEER educator program, to evolve into this new program
- Utilizing Healthy Relationships to build skills and increase engagement in care
- Recognizing that meaningful change takes time — and prioritizing it

CHALLENGES

- Pressure to meet numbers and quotas
- Finding the best way to work with other colleagues, especially given competition for funding and/or territory

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHERS FACING SIMILAR CHALLENGES?

- Consider how best to develop trust with the population you are serving
- Engage leadership to support project movement
- Thoughtfully approach projects
- Take the time needed to foster meaningful change
- Prioritize quality care
- Recognize that EMR is key when capturing sexual orientation and gender identity data
- Utilize available capacity building services

“Everyone can’t do everything... we need to learn from each other.”

*Allison Precht, Director,
Department of Preventive Health & Education
Ruth M. Rothstein CORE Center*

ADDRESSING SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- Work with many different community programs and the Cook County Health System
- Proactively link patients to benefits
- Constantly work to address stigma
- Conduct local outreach by working in different community-based venues
- Hire bilingual staff that reflects the population and provides a client-centered approach
- Identify the client's biggest needs
- Facilitate an LGBTQ committee to address the needs of clients, patients, and staff
- Implement a client satisfaction survey
- Conduct ongoing outreach