



Imagine Hope

Quarterly Report | April - June 2019

Early Intervention Services

A program of DBHDD / Office of Addictive Diseases



Vivian Hunter, CSB of Middle Georgia/ Quentin's Place in Dublin, GA

Helping Clients Find a Path to Recovery

*"When I come to work, I say hello to everyone with a big smile.
They don't want someone coming in grumpy.*

They need somebody to smile and show that life can be good." - Vivian Hunter

During the final quarter, HIV testing at Quentin's Place in Dublin, Georgia, was up 30% over the same quarter last year - lifting the annual total by nearly 15% over the previous year. "We can do better," says Vivian. "I know that's good, but I want to do great; I want the gold balloons."



One of the highlights of the annual meeting is the announcement of which agency performed the highest number of HIV and HCV tests - marked by the presentation of a set of gold balloons "spelling out" the winning numbers.

For those who have not attended the annual meeting for Early Intervention Services workers, the agency that conducts the highest number of tests – HIV and HCV – receives gold balloons.

"A lot of the people that we serve are homeless," says Vivian. "They've been out in the street, living in the woods. People can lose their way. We try to get them back on track to a successful, healthy life."

Quentin's Place is a 16-bed stabilization unit for individuals in crisis - people with either a substance use disorder, a mental health diagnosis, or a combination of the two. During a stay of up to 7 days, clients attend educational groups on mental health, on drugs, and on HIV prevention. Helping clients learn their HIV status is a routine part of the service.

"When I come to work, I say hello to everyone with a big smile. When they comment on it, I tell them, 'I got to bring sunshine!' They don't want someone coming in grumpy. They need somebody to smile and show that life can be good."

"When you meet someone for the first time, you don't know what they have encountered in their life. I want clients to know that they can talk to me about anything. When they share their story, I try to encourage them. I let them know that it doesn't matter what has gone on before. I say, 'You can't live for your past. Now is the day to press toward your future.'"

“Sometimes when a client has hurt loved ones, they don't think they can get back to where they need to be, but they can. I've seen it. Clients come back to tell me that they haven't done drugs in two years. Or they bring a friend to us - someone who needs our help.”

“When people are in a dark place, they need help. We're here to shed some light on their lives. Hearing the next happy chapter in their lives fills my heart with so much joy.” - Vivian Hunter

Workers at a crisis stabilization unit, who see clients at the beginning of their journey to recovery, seldom get to see the end of the story. But Vivian routinely asks clients what they are going to do when they leave Quentin's Place. Many start by avoiding the people who shared their substance use; most go on to a 6-month or 12-month residential recovery program. And they share forgotten dreams: to work, to go back to school. A client may stop by to report that they got their degree. Or come in to introduce her to the child they have been reunited with. “When people are in a dark place, they need help. We're here to shed some light on their lives. Hearing the next happy chapter in their lives fills my heart with so much joy.”





Gigi Robinson, New Horizons CSB in Columbus, Georgia

Resourceful EIS Worker Opens New Doors to Clients

“Always keep your eyes and ears open for new ways to help consumers get the best possible care. You never know when it might be the day a new treatment or a new way to reduce risk is announced.” - Gigi Robinson

A guiding principle for Gigi Robinson, HIV Early Intervention Specialist at New Horizons Behavioral Health in Columbus, Georgia is, “always keep your eyes and ears open for new ways to help consumers get the best possible care. You never know when this will be the day a new treatment or a new way to reduce risk is announced.”

So when the **Ladies Who PrEP Summit** was hosted by the Columbus Health Department, Gigi was among the first to register. PrEP stands for pre-exposure prophylaxis: medication taken before exposure to HIV. It is a once-daily pill that can greatly reduce the risk of contracting HIV. EIS workers are encouraged to educate clients who are at high risk about the potential benefits and requirements of the treatment.

Individuals who share injection drugs or have unprotected sex – either with HIV-positive partners or partners whose HIV status they do not know – are at very high risk for exposure to HIV. To significantly reduce the risk of transmission, clients must take the medication every day at the same time. “This pill *reduces* the risk; it doesn’t eliminate it. For greater protection, I

strongly recommend condoms," says Gigi. "Also, PrEP can't protect from other sexually transmitted diseases."

Gigi shares two resources for PrEP with clients – the Columbus Department of Public Health and Walgreens, where individuals who have a prescription from a primary doctor can enroll in a drug assistance program to cover the out of pocket cost.

Having the latest information on resources available to clients leverages Gigi's interventions and helps her to empower clients. Outreach allows her to reach those at risk beyond the walls of the agency, into the community - where clients return. The New Horizon outreach team includes social worker Tito Terry and Cure Outreach Specialist Larry Rush. "Whenever I have a big testing event, says Gigi, "Larry and Tito help me; when they have a big event, I help them."



New Horizons EIS Workers Gigi Robinson, Larry Rush, and Tito Terry with Supervisor Gloria Mott.

The data below represents the individual and cumulative efforts of the statewide DBHDD HIV / HCV Early Intervention Services Program.

April - June, 2019

REGION 1	HIV	Site	HIV Testing				New Self-ID'd HIV Clients	
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Self-ID+	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		Avita	48	48	0	0	0	0
		Cobb CSB	48	48	0	0	0	0
		Douglas CSB	27	27	0	0	0	0
		Highland Rivers	242	242	0	0	3	1
		Pittard Clinic*	93	93	0	0	0	0
	Woodstock*	83	83	1	1	0	0	
	Total	541	541	1	1	3	1	
	HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory			
Total			Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care	
Avita		144	20	20	14	14	0	
Brand New Start/Dallas		10	5	5	4	4	0	
Cobb CSB		110	14	14	5	6	3	
Highland Rivers		519	54	54	36	20	3	
Pittard Clinic*		105	21	21	10	6	2	
Ringgold		32	6	6	4	2	0	
Woodstock*		83	22	22	13	7	2	
Total	1003	142	142	86	59	10		

* MAT

REGION 2	HIV	Site	HIV Testing				New Self-ID'd HIV Clients	
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Self-ID+	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		Advantage**	26	26	0	0	0	0
		Alliance Athens*	53	53	0	0	0	0
		CSB Ogeechee	86	86	1	1	1	0
		DM & ADR*	93	93	0	0	2	2
		GA Tx Services*	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Oconee**	0	0	0	0	0	0
		River Edge**	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Serenity BHS	37	37	0	0	1	0
Total	295	295	1	1	4	2		
HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory				
		Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care	
	Alliance Athens*	60	5	5	2	2	2	
	DM & ADR*	104	11	11	5	4	2	
	Total	164	16	16	7	6	4	

* MAT

** Turnover disrupted services

REGION 3	HIV	Site	HIV Testing				New Self-ID'd HIV Clients	
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Self-ID+	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		Alliance Conyers*	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Alliance Decatur*	69	69	1	0	1	0
		Clayton/PCLEC	89	89	0	0	0	0
		DeKalb CSB	101	101	0	0	0	0
		MARR Inc.	48	48	0	0	0	0
		Newport	49	49	0	0	11	11
		Odyssey	133	133	0	0	0	0
		St. Jude's	55	55	0	0	3	0
ViewPoint Health	128	128	0	0	0	0		
West Care	41	40	0	0	0	0		
Total	713	712	1	0	15	11		
HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory				
		Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care	
	Alliance Conyers*	37	5	5	4	2	1	
	Alliance Decatur*	58	6	14	5	4	2	
	Clayton	117	3	3	3	3	0	
	Lakeland Centres*	3	1	1	0	0	0	
	North Fulton Tx Ctr*	12	1	1	1	2	0	
	St. Jude's	61	17	18	14	17	3	
	ViewPoint Health	128	10	9	5	5	1	
	West Care	42	1	1	1	0	0	
Total	458	14	22	12	33	7		

* MAT

REGION 4	HIV	Site	HIV Testing				New Self-ID'd HIV Clients	
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Self-ID+	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		Aspire	130	130	0	0	0	0
BHS Tifton	15	15	0	0	0	0		
BHS Valdosta	40	40	0	0	0	0		
New Beginnings	112	112	0	0	0	0		
Total	297	297	0	0	0	0		

REGION 5	HIV	Site	HIV Testing				New Self-ID'd HIV Clients	
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Self-ID+	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		Gateway	386	386	1	1	1	0
Pineland	6	6	0	0	0	0		
Quentin's Place	103	103	0	0	0	0		
Recovery Place	92	92	0	0	0	0		
Unison	191	191	0	0	0	0		
Total	778	778	1	1	1	0		
HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory				
		Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care	
	Brunswick Drug Court	12	3	2	2	2	1	
Gateway	572	48	48	30	29	8		
Reliance*	3	1	1	1	0	0		
Recovery Place	85	9	7	4	4	4		
Unison	222	28	28	21	13	5		
Unison MAT*	8	4	4	4	2	2		
Total	902	93	90	62	50	20		

* MAT

REGION 6	HIV	Site	HIV Testing				New Self-ID'd HIV Clients	
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Self-ID+	Re-Linked to Medical Care
		McIntosh Trail	24	24	1	1	0	0
		Middle Flint	68	68	0	0	4	2
		New Horizons CSB	83	83	1	1	0	
		New Horizons NEXUS	86	86	1	1	1	0
		Pathways	66	50	0	0	0	0
	Phoenix Center	5	5	0	0	2	2	
	Total	332	316	3	3	7	4	
	HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory			
Total			Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care	
McIntosh Trail		24	0	0	0	0	0	
New Horizons CSB		48	3	3	3	2	2	
New Horizons NEXUS		35	0	0	0	0	0	
Pathways		17	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	124	3	3	3	2	2		

Statewide	HIV	Statewide	HIV Testing				New Self-ID'd HIV Clients	
			Tests	Post-Tests	HIV+	Linked to Medical Care	Self-ID+	Re-Linked to Medical Care
	Total	2,956	2,939	7	6	30	18	
Statewide	HCV	Statewide	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory			
			Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care
	Total	2,651	268	273	170	150	43	

HIV Totals, 2,956 HIV Tests, 7 New Confirmed HIV+ Diagnoses

From April - June 2019, DBHDD's EIS program tested 2,956 individuals for HIV, including 686 during outreach. Of those tested, 99% received their results. All 7 newly diagnosed HIV-positive clients were referred to medical care; 6 were confirmed linked and one was reported to Georgia Department of Public Health for follow-up. This quarter EIS workers provided on-going support to 96 HIV+ clients, served 28 new clients previously diagnosed HIV+, and re-linked 18 who had fallen out of treatment to medical care.

HCV Totals, 2,651 HCV Screens, 170 New HCV+ Diagnoses

From April - June 2019, DBHDD's EIS program screened 2,651 individuals for HCV. Of those, 298 tested HCV Ab+ and 191 were confirmed RNA+ or chronically infected with HCV. During the same period, 150 HCV+ clients took the first step in the linkage process by completing HCV education and 43 attended their first medical appointment.



Imagine Hope manages the Early Intervention Services Program on behalf of DBHDD / Office of Addictive Diseases