



Imagine Hope

Quarterly Report | January - March 2022

Early Intervention Services

A program of DBHDD / Office of Addictive Diseases.



Measuring Success at Aspire

"As of this quarter, I have been able to confirm that 8 clients that I diagnosed chronically infected with HCV - clients that I was able to help navigate through the linkage continuum - have been cured."

- Theresha Threadcraft, Aspire

Theresha Threadcraft, RN works closely with Aspire co-workers to engage clients in testing for HIV and HCV. "Everyone supports the testing program," says Theresha. "They know how important it is for clients to know their status and receive any necessary treatment."

This quarter, Theresha provided 82 clients – primarily from the crisis unit and the MAT clinic – with HIV and hepatitis C testing. Of those tested for HCV, 4 were confirmed HCV/RNA-positive (chronically infected with HCV) and in need of medical treatment.

In addition to screening, Theresha provides linkage to clients in need of hepatitis C care. In 2019, when she began testing for HCV, she learned all she could about what treatment was available in Albany - and found that gastroenterology services were available to clients with little or no resources. "From there, everything started falling into place."

"When a client is confirmed RNA-positive I help them fill out the financial assistance application. Once they qualify, the cost of treatment is usually covered. In the beginning, I contacted the pharmaceutical company to arrange for medication through their patient assistance program; now the Nurse Practitioner at the provider does that. But I still monitor each request for medication. Recently the medication for two clients didn't arrive. When I followed up, I found out the pharmaceutical company needed additional documentation, so I sent it to them and the meds arrived safely."

"This work gives me joy," says Theresha. "Here's how I measure success: this quarter, I was able to get one newly diagnosed HCV-positive client into treatment, another that I had already linked began taking medication, and a third client that I linked to care completed their medication. Of the clients whose linkage I have navigated, to date, I have been able to confirm that 8 clients - clients who were chronically infected with HCV - have been cured. One of those individuals had been infected for many years and expected to die from it. That individual is now in recovery from substance use and free of hepatitis C."





Making a Difference in North Georgia

"I have a true belief that if we can help one person - I don't care if there's 300 that come through the door - if we help one person save themselves, that one person will make a difference. They could save their whole family."

- Jeanette Loudermilk, The Pittard Clinic

In the mountains of north Georgia, COVID has changed patterns of drug use according to Jeanette Loudermilk of The Pittard Clinic, an MAT provider in Toccoa, Georgia. "Prior to COVID we were seeing methamphetamine and opiate use and a little bit of heroin. Now we're seeing lots of fentanyl mixed with other drugs like heroin and even marijuana. It's really scary because fentanyl interferes with methadone so a lot of patients are dropping out of treatment because we can't get the withdrawal under control."

Despite the challenges, Jeanette's commitment hasn't wavered. "I am definitely 100% committed. Addiction is a horrible disease. It affects so many generations - it robs children of their parents and parents of their children. It destroys people mentally, it takes a toll on the

body - and it puts them at risk for HIV and hepatitis C. So I have a lot of passion for this job. I have a lot of empathy for the people that we serve and for their families. We do what we can do to help people restore a semblance of their life - but the real hard work is up to them."

"We live in a very close knit community with a lot of bias against addiction. When one of our patients is sick and goes to a doctor, they're not treated real well – they're judged harshly for their addiction.

So when we offer free HCV treatment in-house it's a big help because that's one less worry, one less hurdle – and it's an incentive to stay in treatment because now they can get their addiction under control and get their hepatitis C cured at the same time."

"As dark as it sometimes seems, there is always hope. A patient may quit treatment 10 times, but there's always hope that the next time they walk through the door, something in them has changed. Or something about the way we are doing things will change - it will click - and they will be on that true road to recovery. That's what you live for isn't it?"

"I have a true belief that if we can help one person - I don't care if there's 300 that come through the door. If we help one person save themselves, that one person will make a difference. They could save their whole family."

"We want to see people have a life they never thought would be within their reach. And it's an honor to be part of that success story - to witness people growing to their full potential."





Fulton Behavioral Health Services Launches HIV Testing

"I like the challenge - learning what I can do to help a patient get tested. I've learned to be patient and keep an open mind... but above all, I've learned to listen – really listen - to what the patient is saying."

- Anne Bruno-Gaston, Fulton County Behavioral Health Services

Newcomer Anne Bruno-Gaston, MPH, MT AAB of Fulton County Behavioral Health Services is in a learning curve – and enjoying it. "I worked in the public health system for 24 years, but now I'm serving a different population – and I'm interacting with patients. They're not coming in to be tested; they're here for behavioral healthcare. And it's my job to engage them in HIV testing."

"It gives me satisfaction when someone agrees to be tested - there's a success in someone learning their status. This is like a dream job for me; I'm so grateful to my supervisor Lynnette Allen for giving me the opportunity to do work that I love."

“There are times when I need guidance – from Lynnette, but also from my peers. I learn from everyone – the intake person, the nurses, the doctors – things like when to approach a patient. I don’t want to offer HIV testing if someone is having a crisis.”

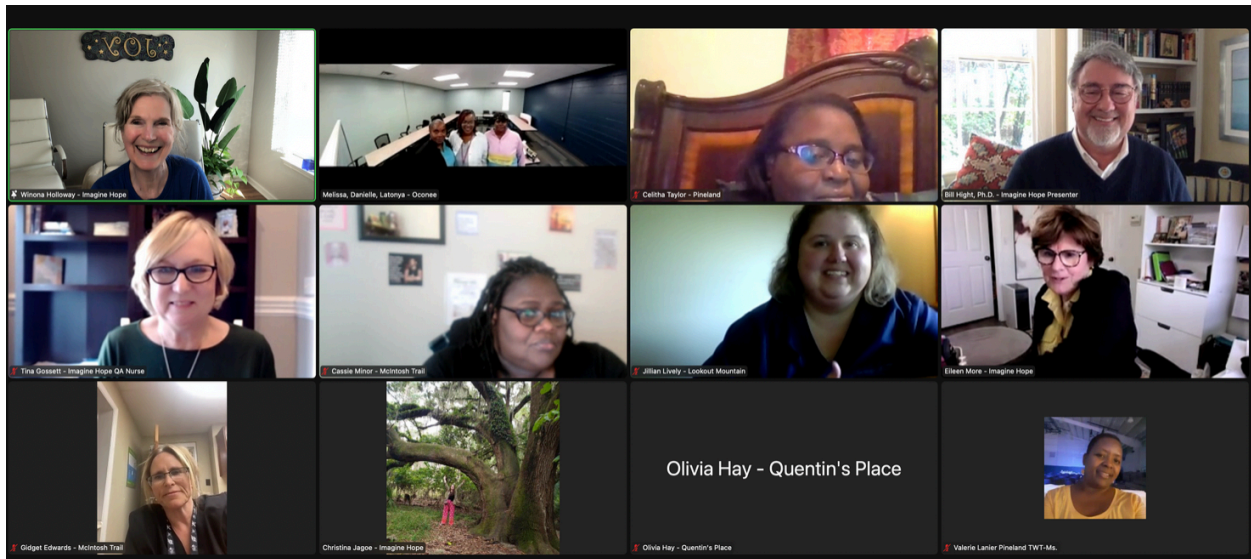
This quarter, Anne provided HIV testing to 59 individuals and made a note of the reasons clients declined. Objections included fear the result would be positive, stigma, and mistrust. “Trust a big issue,” says Anne. “I let them know that the testing is confidential. Then I say, ‘I would like to educate so you will know how to protect yourself from HIV.’ So they sit down and listen to the story. I like to start by asking them what they know. ‘How do you think you get HIV?’ And we go from there – risk factors, prevention, and the miracle of HIV treatment. Once they start listening, some of them decide they want to know their status after all. And even if they still say no, I know they’ll be back. Maybe by the next visit they’ll agree to be tested.”

“I like the challenge. I like learning what I can do to help a patient get tested. I’ve learned to be patient and keep an open mind. I had to be willing to make changes in the way I approach a patient, but above all, I’ve learned to listen – really listen - to what the patient is saying.”





INSTI HIV Testing & Prevention Counseling / Part 1 - March 3, 2022



INSTI HIV Testing & Prevention Counseling / Part 2 - March 30, 2022



INSTI HIV Testing & Prevention Counseling / Part 2 (aka Booster) - March 30, 2022



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

January - March 2022

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	17	17	0	0	0	0
		Cobb CSB	7	7	0	0	0	0
		Douglas CSB	2	2	0	0	0	0
		Highland Rivers	355	355	0	0	0	0
		Lookout Mountain	51	51	0	0	0	0
		MedMark Chatsworth*	5	5	0	0	0	0
		Pittard Clinic*	125	125	0	0	1	1
		Ringgold*	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	562	562	0	0	1	1		
HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory				
		Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care	
	Avita	109	17	17	9	4	0	
	Brand New Start Cumming*	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Brand New Start Dallas*	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Cobb CSB	7	1	1	1	1	0	
	Gateway Tx	15	5	5	2	2	1	
	Highland Rivers	317	39	39	23	13	5	
	Lanier*	50	15	9	7	2	0	
	Lookout Mountain	62	13	12	6	4	0	
	MedMark Chatsworth*	25	6	6	3	2	1	
	Pittard Clinic*	130	20	20	9	1	0	
	Ringgold*	40	10	10	2	0	0	
	Woodstock*	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	755	126	119	62	29	7		

* 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	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Alliance Athens*	157	157	0	0	0	0
		CSB Middle GA / Ogeechee	0	0	0	0	0	0
		DM & ADR*	155	155	0	0	0	0
		GA Tx Services*	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Oconee	3	3	0	0	0	0
		Serenity BHS	52	52	0	0	0	0
		Walton County	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	367	367	0	0	0	0		
HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory				
		Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care	
	Alliance Athens*	154	31	31	14	11	0	
	DM & ADR*	129	9	15	2	5	1	
	GA Tx Services*	10	6	6	4	1	1	
	Walton County	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Total	293	46	52	20	17	2	

* MAT

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*	11	11	0	0	0	0
		Alliance Decatur*	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Ascensa St. Jude's	23	23	0	0	0	0
		CaringWorks	25	25	0	0	0	0
		Clayton Center	0	0	0	0	0	0
		DeKalb CSB	29	29	0	0	6	6
		North Fulton Tx Ctr*	59	59	0	0	0	0
		MARR Inc.	30	30	0	0	0	0
		Newport	47	47	0	0	9	9
		Odyssey	0	0	0	0	0	0
ViewPoint Health	59	59	0	0	1	1		
West Care	28	28	0	0	0	0		
Total	311	311	0	0	16	16		
HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory				
		Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care	
	Alliance Conyers*	14	0	0	0	0	0	
	Alliance Decatur*	24	7	7	5	2	0	
	Ascensa St. Jude's	19	2	5	2	2	0	
	CaringWorks	23	0	0	0	0	0	
	Clayton	29	1	0	0	0	0	
	Imagine Hope Outreach	10	10	12	12	10	4	
	Lakeland Centres*	1	0	0	0	0	0	
	North Fulton Tx Ctr*	8	3	3	2	1	0	
	ViewPoint Health	80	2	2	2	3	1	
	WestCare	28	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	236	25	29	23	18	5		

* 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	82	82	0	0	0	0
		Legacy	7	7	0	0	0	0
		New Beginnings	71	71	1	1	0	0
	Total	160	160	1	1	0	0	
	HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory			
			Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care
		Aspire	85	5	5	5	5	0
		Total	85	5	5	5	5	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
		CSB Quentin's Place	27	27	0	0	0	0
		Gateway	453	453	0	0	1	1
		Pineland	30	30	0	0	4	3
		Recovery Place	158	158	0	0	0	0
		Reliance MAT*	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Unison	177	177	0	0	0	0	
	Total	845	845	0	0	5	4	
	HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory			
Total			Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care	
Brunswick Drug Court		9	2	2	2	2	0	
CSB Quentin's Place		183	41	40	27	13	3	
Gateway		538	45	45	22	9	1	
Recovery Place		155	6	6	6	6	3	
Reliance MAT*		1	1	1	1	1	0	
Tx Center of Brunswick*		0	0	0	0	1	0	
Unison		78	21	21	14	8	3	
Unison MAT*		49	16	16	10	11	4	
Total	1013	132	131	82	51	14		

*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	111	111	0	0	0	0
		Middle Flint	99	99	0	0	12	4
		New Horizons CSB	30	30	0	0	0	0
		New Horizons NEXUS	3	3	0	0	0	0
		Pathways	37	37	0	0	0	0
	Total	280	280	0	0	12	4	
	HCV	Site	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory			
			Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care
McIntosh Trail		103	3	3	2	1	0	
New Horizons CSB		10	3	3	3	3	3	
New Horizons NEXUS		0	0	0	0	0	0	
Pathways		25	0	0	0	0	0	
Total		138	6	6	5	4	3	

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	2525	2525	1	1	35	25	
Statewide	HCV	Statewide	Ab Screening		RNA Confirmatory			
			Total	Ab+	RNA Tests	RNA +	RNA+ Educated	Linked to Medical Care
	Total	2520	340	349	198	124	31	

HIV Totals 2,525 HIV Tests, 1 New Confirmed HIV+ Diagnosis

From January - March 2022, DBHDD’s EIS Program screened 2,525 individuals for HIV, including 99 tested during outreach. Of those tested, 100% received their results and 1 newly diagnosed HIV-positive client was linked to care. This quarter nurses and counselors provided on-going support to 35 HIV+ clients, re-linked 25 previously diagnosed HIV+ clients who had fallen out of care to medical treatment.

HCV Totals, 2,519 HCV Tests, 197 New HCV/RNA+ Diagnoses

From January - March 2022, DBHDD’s EIS Program screened 2,520 individuals for HCV. Of those, 198 were confirmed RNA+ or chronically infected with HCV. During the same period, 31 attended their first medical appointment.



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