

Philadelphia FIGHT Prison Linkages

Institute for Community Justice – Reentry Division

Prison Linkages Program

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Why the intervention is necessary

- Prison and jail populations shoulder a disproportionate burden of chronic health conditions, such as HIV, hepatitis C, mental illnesses, untreated and undertreated asthma and diabetes, and addiction.
- In a Philadelphia program for individuals with serious chronic illnesses (not HIV), clients received one visit from a social worker during their incarceration and information on a medical clinic they could access upon release. With no additional intervention, 10% of individuals linked to care.
- What do we learn from this? It's about relationships. One visit isn't enough to build trust and get someone into care!

Prison Linkages

What we do

Linkage Specialists ensure linkage to HIV primary medical care and social support services for HIV infected individuals while incarcerated and upon release into the community.

- Schedule and visit with inmates face to face to make linkage with HIV related services upon release. Perform needs assessment; develop a discharge plan and review action plan with client and assure that appropriate structure of support is in place.
- Collect all necessary information to start SPBP paperwork behind the walls; obtain current HIV related lab work from jails and then fully complete and submit SPBP application the upon discharge.
- Assist client in attending all medical appointments; maintain interdepartmental communications for continuity of care.

Prison Linkages

What we do

- Maintain contact with client and document encounters in client's chart and enter data into Ryan White CareWare.
- Coordinate with courts, Mental Health Services, Public Defenders Office, Housing Services, Forensic Intensive Recovery- FIR, and probation/parole to provide services.
- Process & respond to referrals for clients lost to care and assist in keeping clients in care by proactively addressing barriers
- Clients can be seen as a walk-in at FIGHT's Health Centers and be seen the same day or within 24 to 48 hours of discharge.
- Collaborate with AACO, Action AIDS/Linkages, PA MidAtlantic to provide coordinated prevention and treatment interventions for currently and formerly incarcerated PLWHA.

Success of Enhancing Linkages

- Over 85% of individuals we've engaged with on the inside have been successfully linked to medical care at one of FIGHT's Health Centers which includes: the Jonathan Lax Center, John Bell Health Center or Clinica Bienestar – our satellite site in partnership with Prevention Point Philadelphia
- Of those who have been linked, 88% have remained in care (defined as 3 medical visits)
- Of those who did not successfully link to care, 12.5% have been linked to care at other clinics, and 25% have had their care interrupted by incarceration at either the state level or in other county jails

Clinica Bienestar

- Clinica Bienestar is a comprehensive HIV primary care clinic and collaboration between Philadelphia FIGHT Community Health Centers and Prevention Point Philadelphia (PPP).
- Clinica Bienestar provides HIV primary care, Hepatitis C treatment, case management, harm reduction services, linkage to drug and alcohol treatment programs, and on-site medication assisted treatment for opiate use disorder.
- Since 2016, the Prison Linkages Program has partnered with Clinica Bienestar to provide bilingual linkages services during the weekly clinic. This ensures continuity of care and support for clients who become incarcerated.

Specific Challenges and Responses

Challenges

- Incarceration and warrants interrupt treatment, housing, and insurance
- Opiate use disorder
- Housing instability and homelessness
- Language Access
- People with records barred from public housing, jobs

Strategies

- Legal advocacy to resolve barriers to care
- Building a relationship behind the prison walls
- Integrating overdose prevention & harm reduction
- Bilingual staff, advocacy
- Collaboration with community partners for housing, job search, benefits

Snapshot of Clinica Bienestar

Clinica Bienestar serves 121 people living with HIV or AIDS in Philadelphia County.

- 50% of our patients are Latino, 25% are African American, 25% are Caucasian
- 98% of our clients receive Medicaid
- 65% of our patients have achieved viral suppression (compared to 57% city average)

Our clinic retention rate is 90%. Because the vast majority of our patients continue to access services at Clinica Bienestar, this provides an opportunity for additional interventions to address barriers to med adherence.

References

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