



OC In+Care

Newsletter for providers serving people living with HIV in Orange County

This issue of the In+Care newsletter is about supporting clients to be advocates for their own health. Studies show that individuals who are actively engaged in their health care have better health outcomes¹. By helping clients/patients² be their own health advocates, both the patient and provider will get the most out of their health services. The intent of this newsletter is to help encourage clients to be an active participant in their health care. Keep reading to find out more!

5 Ways to Promote Client Self Advocacy

1. Provide materials that are simple and easy to understand. Providing educational materials (ex. brochures, newsletters, factsheets, etc.) that are easy to understand will increase clients' knowledge and their ability to discuss any concerns they may have. Clients will be more confident in their choices and decisions if they understand the information you provide them. You may need to explain the information to clients to help further understanding.

2. Ask for questions.

Encourage clients to ask questions during their visits. When clients ask questions, they are actively engaging in their own health care. Continue to remind clients that they have a role in improving and maintaining their health.



3. Check for understanding. Ask your client questions about their health plans or their lab results. This helps ensure that they have a clear understanding of their health. Furthermore, ask clients to identify actionable steps to achieve health goals and to repeat back information they were given during the visit.

4. Ensure clients are part of the decision-making process.

When developing health or treatment plans with your client, it is critical that they are part of the decision-making process. Often times, clients see providers as authority figures and may be hesitant to voice their opinions. It is up to you, the provider, to help encourage collaborative decision-making. Asking clients for their opinions will let them know that their views are important and valued. Clients should know that they are responsible for their own health.



5. Have an open dialogue about HIV. As providers and clients talk about HIV, the more we work towards reducing HIV-related stigma. Talk to clients about the importance of monitoring or lowering their viral loads. Encourage clients to also have an open dialogue with family and friends to reduce HIV stigma.



¹ Hibbard, J. H., & Greene, J. (2013). What the evidence shows about patient activation: better health outcomes and care experiences; fewer data on costs. *Health affairs*, 32(2), 207-214.

² For this newsletter, clients and patients are used interchangeably.

Advocating

HIV advocacy has a long history that began since the beginning of the HIV epidemic. Since the 1980's, individuals, regardless of their HIV status, have come together to promote the needs for people living with HIV disease (PLWHD).

There are many opportunities for clients and providers to get involved in advocating for the needs of PLWHD in Orange County.

1. Attend local HIV advocacy meetings. Some agencies have an HIV advocacy committee that discusses important issues affecting the PLWHD community. These committees are often open to PLWHD, providers of HIV services, and people who are interested in supporting the HIV community. (See table for a list of Orange County Advocacy Groups.)

2. Be part of an HIV Planning group. In Orange County, the HIV Planning Council (Council) is in charge of identifying goals and strategies for Ryan White funded services. The Council is a planning group composed of service providers, PLWHD, and other knowledgeable individuals in the field of HIV. Being part of the HIV planning process is a great way for you to provide your expertise to help meet the goals of reducing new infections and meeting the needs of those living with HIV in Orange County. For more information on the Orange County HIV Planning Council, please visit <http://ochealthinfo.com/phs/about/dcepi/hiv/council> or call (714) 834-8399.



3. Attend community events. Year-round, various fundraisers, galas, and community events bring awareness to the HIV community. By attending HIV-related community events, you are showing your support and advocating for individuals living with HIV. You can contact a local AIDS services organization for upcoming events or go to the HIV Planning and Coordination website: <http://ochealthinfo.com/phs/about/dcepi/hiv/events>.



Orange County Advocacy Groups	
HIV Planning Council	Who: Opened to everyone interested. When: 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00pm. Where: Santa Ana For more information, call (714) 834-8399
PrEP Coalition	Who: Currently opened to HIV providers only. When: Monthly (call for exact dates) Where: Various locations in Orange County. For more information, call (714) 834-7701 OR (714) 500-0350
Needle Exchange	Who: Opened to everyone interested. When: Every Monday at 7:00pm. Where: Location alternates between Orange and Irvine. Call or email to confirm. For more information, call (714) 794-5643 OR email staff@ocnep.org
Shanti Ambassador Program	Who: Opened to everyone interested. When: Contact admin@shantioc.org Where: Laguna Hills For more information, call (949)452-0888

Other Advocacy Resources	
Harm Reduction Coalition	advocates for harm reduction strategies such as: syringe access, overdose prevention, access to quality healthcare and reduction of stigma. For more information, please visit: http://harmreduction.org/our-work/policy-advocacy/
Positive Justice Project	advocates for the decriminalization of HIV. For more information, please visit: http://www.hivlawandpolicy.org/initiatives/positive-justice-project
Positive Women's Network USA	advocates for changes that improve the lives of women living with HIV by including women in policy and decision-making roles. For more information, please visit: https://pwnusa.wordpress.com/
National Minority AIDS Council	advocates normalizing discussion about race within the HIV movement, reducing new HIV infections, and retaining people of color living with HIV in care. For more information, please visit: http://www.nmac.org/

ORANGE COUNTY HIV QUALITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



In+Care OC is a project of the Orange County HIV Quality Management Committee. The Committee works to increase the quality of Ryan White services. For more information about the committee, please call (714) 834-8063. If you have feedback or suggestions for future newsletters, please contact **Mindy** He at MHe@ochca.com.

