

**Office of AIDS  
November 2007 – Branch Updates**

**HIV/AIDS Epidemiology Branch**

**HIV Prevention Research and Evaluation Section**

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**Local Evaluation Online Activities**

The HIV Prevention Research and Evaluation Section (PRE) has received all the approvals required for the development of an Information Technology (IT) project. The LEO system will be developed by programmers from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Information Technology Services Division (ITSD). LEO will be developed and implemented in a phased manner in order to ensure that mission critical functionality is available when the HIV Counseling & Testing (C&T) restructure goes into effect January 1, 2008. Phase I will be developed and implemented for use January 2008 and when implemented will include functionality that will allow agencies to define their services, staff, subcontracts, contact information, and other agency information, and functionality related to HIV C&T activities. Phase II will be developed and implemented for use July 2008 and will include all remaining functionality, including HIV/AIDS Health Education / Risk Reduction functions.

PRE and Office of AIDS (OA) staff conceptualized LEO using a modular approach which allowed for the relevant data and intervention program experts to focus on conceptualizing LEO functionality to meet all the needs of that module. These modules were: Administrative, HIV C&T, HIV/AIDS Health Education / Risk Reduction (HE/RR), Training, Inventory, Invoicing, Reports, and Help. Within each module, LEO functionality was conceptualized based on historic feedback from our stakeholders, historical technical assistance and quality assurance needs of data system users, OA and CDC policy and program revisions, data standardization across OA programs and with the STD Control Branch, and in anticipation of future data collection needs and activities. The resulting functionality was then given a priority ranking.

OA will provide LEO users with training via web-based training and will provide users a “Quick-Start Guide”, which will be a condensed guidance document, and a Technical Systems Manual describing LEO functionality, navigation steps, frequently asked questions, and definitions of terminology.

PRE staff attended the HIV C&T Coordinator’s Meeting October 9 – 11, 2007 to answer service provider questions regarding data collection and LEO; PRE also gave a presentation on LEO conceptualization, development, implementation, functionality, user training, and plans for providing technical assistance. The response from service providers was very positive and appreciative regarding LEO functionality and OA’s plans for implementation and training.

**HIV Counseling & Testing Restructure Activities**

PRE have been involved in numerous aspects of the HIV Counseling & Testing (C&T) restructure activities. PRE has conducted some additional analyses of information

**Office of AIDS**  
**November 2007 – Branch Updates**

obtained during the C&T Restructure Pilot. These analyses primarily focused on evaluating potential negative consequences of the restructured program. Results from these analyses further confirmed that client and service provider experiences in the restructured program have been positive and that the Client Assessment Questionnaire (CAQ) is a reliable HIV risk screening tool. PRE has finalized the CAQ, a new version of the Client Information Form (CIF), the Testing Incident Report (TIR), lab slips, and the PCRS Partner Information Form (PIF). PRE has also written guidance for the use of these forms and has collaborated in writing other HIV C&T program guidance documents. PRE also played an integral part in planning the HIV C&T Coordinator's Meeting and gave multiple presentations at the meeting including pilot evaluation results, forms overview, use of the local variance allowance, verified medical visit, Hepatitis C Integration, service delivery processes and staff roles, and reimbursement. Finally, PRE has been working with researchers from the University of California San Diego to conduct an evaluation of repeat testers and offering these clients the option to opt-out of the counseling intervention. The opt-out evaluation is occurring in Los Angeles and San Francisco and includes three components: a secondary analysis of HIV C&T data, focus groups, and a client survey.

**California HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP) Activities**

Community Collaborative Research Project grantees for the 2004-2006 funding cycle submitted a series of abstracts to the 2007 CDC HIV Prevention Conference. These abstracts were accepted for a panel presentation. OA and CHRP will present an overview of the Collaborative Research Project program; grantees will present on their research and will provide preliminary results from their work. OA, CHRP, and grantees will also be meeting during the Conference to discuss plans for disseminating research findings.

OA and CHRP have also released the first two Request for Applications (RFA) for the 2007-2010 Special Initiatives Program and The Community Collaborative Research Project. The first RFA was to award funds for two initiatives: evaluating deployment of RNA testing for acute HIV infection in public health settings, and evaluating a new intervention targeting African American women at high risk for HIV infection. The second RFA was to award funds for testing promising interventions targeting African American and Latino MSM and their sexual partners.

Finally, OA and CHRP are near completion of the CHOICE website. Pilot testing of the site began in October 2007 and launch is currently planned for December 1, 2007. CHOICE will provide tools for local community planning and it will provide a menu of searchable prevention interventions with evidence based effectiveness.

**Satellite Syringe Exchange Activities**

The Satellite Syringe Exchange (SSE) Targeted Initiative funded for 2004 – 2007 has concluded. Recipients of these initiative funds are working with Office of AIDS to finalize a "Best Practices" Manual. OA was also accepted for and presented an SSE workshop at the 2007 HIV Prevention Leadership Summit in New Orleans.

**Office of AIDS**  
**November 2007 – Branch Updates**

The SSE Targeted Initiative funded for 2007 – 2010 has commenced its activities. The five awarded programs (Clean Needles Now / Public Health Foundation Enterprises, Inc; Family Health Centers of San Diego; HIV Education and Prevention Project of Alameda County; Safer Alternatives thru Networks and Education; Tenderloin Health / Homeless Youth Alliance) and OA had their first all-site meeting in July 2007 and a meeting in October to discuss evaluation activities.

**Data Dissemination Activities**

PRE has developed the first series of what will become semi-annual HIV Counseling & Testing summaries specific to populations of interest. A separate summary document will be disseminated for each of the following populations: men who have sex with men (MSM), injection drug-users (IDU), MSM/IDU, African-Americans, Latinos/as, women, transgender persons, and youth/young adults.

**CDC Indicator Data**

In 2006, the CDC assembled several workgroups to review their HIV Prevention Program Performance Indicators. OA and PRE were involved in several of these workgroups including the Surveillance/Overall HIV Infections group, Counseling and Testing Services group, and the Overall Indicators Review group. PRE also participated in the XPEMS workgroup.

OA and PRE have also been invited to be one of three agencies that will pilot the new HIV C&T data transfer processes and guidelines. PRE started the pilot in October beginning with the completion of a data crosswalk.

**2007 CDC HIV Prevention Conference**

In addition to the OA / CHRP panel presentation, PRE submitted four other abstracts all of which were accepted for presentation. These include:

- *Evaluating the Spectrum of HIV Prevention and Testing Services: Using Data to Enhance the Continuity of Care for Californians Accessing Publicly Funded Services.*
  - o Oral presentation
  - o OA Staff: Christine Dahlgren, Christopher Krawczyk
  - o Collaborators: UCSF/CAPS
  
- *HIV Prevention Services in California are Well Targeted to the Geography of the Epidemic.*
  - o Oral presentation
  - o OA Staff: Christine Dahlgren, Shanna Livermore, Valorie Eckert, Christopher Krawczyk
  - o Collaborators: UCSF/CAPS
  
- *The Relationship between Recent STI Diagnoses and HIV Positivity among non-IDU Women Accessing HIV Counseling and Testing.*
  - o Oral presentation

**Office of AIDS**  
**November 2007 – Branch Updates**

- OA Staff: Valorie Eckert, Christopher Krawczyk
- Collaborators: STD Control Branch
  
- *Formalizing the Role of Satellite Syringe Exchangers: The Ethical Challenges.*
  - Roundtable presentation
  - OA Staff: Shanna Livermore, Valorie Eckert

**Care Research and Evaluation Section**

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**AIDS Regional Information and Evaluation System (ARIES)**

ARIES is an internet-based HIV/AIDS client case management system that assists providers in coordinating the care of their HIV clients while producing state and federal mandated HIV care reports. The statewide installation of ARIES was successfully launched on July 17, 2006, and more providers are being migrated to ARIES each month. The Office has transitioned approximately 40 percent of our contracted HIV care providers over to ARIES. A Local Implementation Committee works directly with providers to prepare them for migration to ARIES and continues to offer technical assistance and quality assurance activities post-implementation of ARIES. This Committee is also currently working closely with the San Francisco EMA as they prepare for a spring 2008 implementation of ARIES.

The State of Nevada also evaluated ARIES and has decided to implement ARIES for its Ryan White data collection and reporting activities; implementation is currently underway.

As of October 8, 2007, the ARIES system contains more than 18,500 unduplicated clients associated with over 680,000 services. There are currently 102 providers with approximately 900 staff certified to use ARIES.

For further information, please contact the OA ARIES Project Lead, Susan Sabatier at [Susan.Sabatier@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:Susan.Sabatier@cdph.ca.gov).