

HIV EDUCATION AND PREVENTION SERVICES BRANCH UPDATE June 2006

HIV COMMUNITY PREVENTION SECTION

**Contact: Gail Sanabria
(916) 449-5790**

The HIV Community Prevention Section (CPS) is finalizing their reviews of the FY 06/07 scope of works and budgets submitted by the local health jurisdictions for the third and final year of this contract period. We are still awaiting the final decision on the possibility of a \$5.6 million augmentation and will notify the local health jurisdictions as soon as the budget is signed and the decision is final.

The HIV Community Prevention Section and the Care Services Section continues working in coordination to host a Cross Branch Prevention with Positives conference to be held at the Ontario Hilton, October 4-6, 2006.

Staff from the Prevention Research and Evaluation Section is working with CPS staff on revisions to the current ELI system which will be rolled out in July 2007.

HIV COUNSELING, TESTING AND TRAINING SECTION

**Contact: Brian Lew
(916) 449-5538**

The Counseling, Testing and Training Section (CT&T) is continuing re-structuring work toward providing a new model for HIV counseling and testing. On May 17th, the Office of AIDS (OA) convened a Stakeholder's Meeting in Sacramento with representatives from several Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in attendance. The areas addressed included new counseling models, changes in reimbursement, and data collection requirements. Currently, working groups from meeting participants are being established to continue work from that meeting. Additionally, working groups within OA are meeting to continue this process and an overall work plan is being developed.

OA joined with the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation to conduct HIV counseling and testing in a mobile van along the route of the AIDS Lifecycle from June 3rd to 9th. Approximately 50 people were tested and more importantly, the colorful testing van provided a center for HIV education each day along the route. The 2006 AIDS Lifecycle raised almost \$ 8 million during its run from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

HIV PREVENTION POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT SECTION

**Contact: Laurel Cima
(916) 449-5812**

IDU-related activities

CDHS/OA is in the process of formalizing the recent funding to the Harm Reduction Coalition (HRC) contract to provide technical assistance and training around syringe exchange issues. Beginning July 2006, HRC will conduct a formal needs assessment, led by RAND researcher Ricky Bluthenthal. The purpose of the initiative is to help stabilize Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPS) in the state through providing needed TA and training, and to help LHJs and CBOs who wish to expand their HIV prevention and care services to include syringe exchange services.

The secondary syringe exchange high risk initiative is now entering its third year and has a new website at www.satelliteexchange.org. The program, which is funded in five counties, trains peers who are exchanging syringes for others, in HIV, hepatitis C and overdose prevention, as well as safer injection practices, so that they may pass on their skills and knowledge to the peers they work with. Response to the program from the secondary exchangers involved has been overwhelmingly positive.

On May 19, 2006, the HIV/AIDS Epidemiology Branch, and the HIV Education and Prevention Branch sponsored the Symposium on Substance Use, HIV and Public Health in California. The symposium brought together more than 50 researchers and program experts from across the state in the fields of substance use, injection drug use and HIV prevention. Presentations by Drs. Steffanie Strathdee (UCSC), Ricky Bluthenthal (RAND, CSU Dominguez Hills), Richard Garfein (UCSF), Cathy Reback (Friends Institute, VanNess Recovery House, UCLA), Alex Kral (RTI International), Grant Colfax (SFDPH), Juan Ruiz (CDHS/OA) and Kim Page-Shafer (UCSF) focused on recent research findings focused on topics including injection drug use along the border, methamphetamine use among MSM, transgenders, and women, and HIV risk and SEP use among IDUs.

Hepatitis C

On May 9th and 10th, 2006, Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) advocates from all over the state, came together to attend a conference titled, "HCV Disparities: A Call to Action."

One the first day presentations focused on delineating the scope and consequences of HCV disparities and developing approaches to overcome them. The following day began with briefings to legislative staff by Diana Sylvestre, Martha Saly, Alan Franciscus, and Glenn Backes.

The amount of legislative enthusiasm from this conference is promising. Dr. Diana Sylvestre of Oakland's OASIS clinic said: "We should try to organize ourselves so that our efforts are maximized, and our goal should be to interface with every single State legislator".

Southern California plans on hosting a similar conference with the same title on June 29, 2006.

For more information about these conferences or HCV Alliance, please contact Dr. Sylvestre at 510-834-5442.

African American HIV/AIDS Initiative

The African American HIV/AIDS Initiative is in its third year of implementation in the State of California. CDHS/OA elected to implement the recommendations set forth by the Statewide African American HIV/AIDS Advisory Board. In January, 2006, through a competitive bid process, the Center for AIDS Research and Educational Services, (CARES) and ETR and Associates was awarded a \$1.2 million grant. Over the next three years, ETR and CARES will address the disparity in HIV/AIDS services specific to African Americans by strengthening the infrastructure of providers, through training and technical assistance.

The Faith Based Statewide contract, funded since July 1999, will conclude June 30, 2006. This project was responsible for developing a faith based manual, which has been cited as a national model for collaboration between state health departments and faith based institutions. The Faith Based Advisory Board has been invited to submit recommendations to CDHS/OA for consideration for future programming and prospective initiatives. The goal will be to integrate the recommendations in the larger African American Scope of Work, slated to begin July 2006.

Finally, the African American HIV/AIDS Initiative is in communication with CHPG's MSM Task force specific to black Gay men. The goal is to develop concrete recommendations for DHS/OA to address the rising increase of infections among Black Gay Men in California.

Latino HIV Prevention Issues

The Latino HIV/AIDS Prevention Initiative, awarded to Project Concern International in January, 2006, is making its way through OA's contractual process. The scope of work has been approved, and OA is looking forward to PCI beginning a statewide Latino needs assessment this fall. The needs assessment will be followed by technical assistance and training, and finally an evaluation of it's work.

The Latino Advisory Board's (LAB) recommendations outlining statewide needs to address the growing HIV cases among Latinos should be publicly presented by this fall. The next meeting of the LAB is being planned for late this summer. The LAB will help establish a work plan for the next year.

OA staff attending a National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) Latino Advisory Committee meeting designed to help direct NASTAD's response to addressing HIV/AIDS in Latino communities. Participants will develop an agenda that reflects the ongoing and emerging public health concerns for Latinos in the continuum of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and access to treatment.

Perinatal

The Perinatal Project has surveyed 250 labor and delivery hospitals and results are expected later this month. Additionally, OA is anticipating implementation of it's rapid HIV testing in labor and delivery wards during the latter part of 2006.

