



## **Needs Assessment Research Project**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Needs Assessment Research Project is to provide with Austin Area HIV Planning Council with information regarding Ryan White Part A service categories that frequently rank high in terms of consumer priority rankings but are typically not funded.

The Needs Assessment Sub-Committee has identified seven service categories for which more information is required:

- Linguistic Services
- Legal Services
- Child Care Services
- Home and Community Based Health Care
- Transportation Services
- Early Intervention Services
- Outreach
- Opt-out Testing

### **2. Objective**

To provide comprehensive information for each identified service category to enable the Needs Assessment Sub-committee to make informed decisions regarding the assessment of need for each service and resultant priority ranking.

In order to respond to this need for information, the staff of the HIV Planning Council is proposing to implement a research project as detailed in this document. This information is needed before the Needs Assessment Sub-Committee begins the needs assessment process for the upcoming needs assessment process in 2012.

### **3. Methodology**

The following methods will be utilized to obtain information:

- Service provider surveys
- Service provider interviews
- Consumer survey
- Consumer focus groups
- ARIES utilization and demographic data
- Internal and external research



**Ryan White Provider Survey:**

Each of the eight Ryan White Part A and MAI service providers will be asked to complete a written survey. The survey questions each provider will be asked to respond to is dependent upon the services they provide. Providers will be asked to assign responsibility for completion to the person(s) within the organization who are most knowledgeable about the needs of consumers and issues surrounding the specific service.

Service Provider	Linguistics	Legal	Child Care	Home Health	Trans	EIS	Outreach
David Powell	X	X	X	X	X		
Aids Services	X	X	X		X		
Wright House	X	X	X		X	X	X
Project Transitions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Integral Care	X	X	X		X		
Community Actions	X	X	X		X		
Waterloo	X	X	X		X		
Communicable Disease	X	X	X		X		

While it is understood that it is the prerogative of the Executive Director of each agency to determine who will be assigned to complete the surveys, the following are identified as primary contacts:

- AIDS Services of Austin
  - Paul Scott, Executive Director
  - Susan Campion, Deputy Director and manager for Capitol Area AIDS Legal Project
  - Erin Becnel, Director of Access Services
  - Jennifer Herrera, Director of Prevention
- Austin Travis County Integral Care
  - David Evans, Executive Director
- Community Action
  - Carole Belver, Executive Director
  - Linda Byers, Director of Clinic Services
- David Powell Community Health Center
  - Linda Blakeslee, Grants Manager
  - Deborah Lowndes, Clinic Administrator
- HHSD Communicable Disease Unit, COA
  - Rosalinda Castenada, Manager
- Project Transitions
  - Janice Morgan, Deputy Executive Director
  - Lisa Medina, Director of Client Services
- Waterloo Counseling Center
  - Jean Lyons, Executive Director
  - Rebecca Calhoun, Clinical Director

- The Wright House Wellness Center
  - Leah Graham, Executive Director
  - Michael Lassiter, Case Management Supervisor

Note: In order to ensure that service provider responses accurately represent the opinions and experiences of the agency, the objective will be to obtain survey responses from at least 25% of case managers for each participating agency. The assistance of the Administrative Agent will be sought to encourage service providers to support the project.

### **Ryan White Provider Interview**

Once responses to written surveys have been received and analyzed, a follow up interview will be conducted with the Director of each service provider. The purpose of the provider interviews is:

- Clarify any responses from the written survey that are unclear or which require additional discussion
- Obtain the perspective of the Director with regard to the service
- Provide the opportunity for the Director to share any additional thoughts or perspectives regarding the service area and/or needs of the consumers that may not have been identified though the scripted questions.

### **Other Provider Interview**

In addition to interviews with Ryan White service providers, interviews will also be completed with the following organizations:

- Capitol Area Metro – interview officials of Cap Metro to update status of the transition to new policies that are impacting persons with HIV/AIDS, including elimination of the Disability Fare Card, fee schedules and STS.
- Non-Ryan White medical providers who may have insight into the impact Home Health Care could have in reducing hospitalization. Interviews will be conducted with:
  - Brackenridge Hospital
  - Blackstock Family Health Center
  - Home Health providers who accept Medicaid
- Legal Aid Society – determine if Legal Aid is serving a portion of the legal needs of the HIV community.
- The Administrative Agent will also be interviewed to determine if additional insight is available based upon site visits completed by the Admin Agent in 2011.
- Test Texas Coalition will be interviewed to determine status of efforts to implement opt-out testing in the Austin area. Interviews will be conducted with Mary Chapman, Test Texas HIV Coalition Project Coordinator and Jenny McFarlane, HIV Test Coordinator with the Texas Department of

State Health Services. A separate report will be written for this issue. The interview will address the following questions:

- What is the status of efforts to implement opt-out testing within the TGA?
- Who is involved in efforts to implement opt-out testing?
- How can the Planning Council support these efforts?
- Which medical providers have implemented opt-out testing?
  - What factor(s) influenced these providers to implement opt-out testing?
  - Are statistics on opt-out testing available?
- Which medical providers have made a decision not to implement opt-out testing?
  - What factors drove the decision to implement testing?

### **Consumer Survey**

A consumer survey will be conducted with the assistance of Ryan White service providers. The scope of the consumer survey will include questions regarding the following services:

- Linguistic Services
- Legal Services
- Child Care Services
- Home and Community Based Health Care
- Transportation Services

Consumer surveys will be divided by topic. The transportation survey for consumers residing in Travis County will contain different questions from the Transportation Survey for the other four TGA counties in order to capture transportation issues impacting each group. Responses will be anonymous. Survey forms will only request a demographic profile of respondent (age, gender, children in household, etc.)

Once the English version of the client survey is finalized, a Spanish version will be developed.

Planning Council staff will schedule a fact to face meeting with the Director of each Ryan White service provider to introduce the Needs Assessment Research project and solicit the support of the Director in completion of the surveys. Additionally, Planning Council staff will attempt to identify additional non-profit locations where the survey can be distributed in order to expand the survey to capture a broader representation of PLWHA.

To have a 95% confidence interval that the sample size accurately reflects the population at least 354 consumers need to complete the consumer survey. To have a 90% confidence interval the sample size would require 255 consumers. (Note: Based upon Raosoft Sample Size Calculator). Recent surveys conducted with provider support have exceeded 400 consumers, so obtaining sufficient responses to meet or exceed the 95% confidence level appears to be achievable.

In the event survey responses fail to reach the numbers required to reach a 90% confidence level by the response due date, Planning Council staff will work with Directors to place volunteers in provider facilities to solicit consumers to complete surveys.

### **Consumer Focus Groups**

Consumer focus groups will be used to supplement information gained from the consumer surveys. The base objective will be to ask open ended questions that afford participants the opportunity to discuss transportation and child care in order to gain insight that may not be captured via scripted survey questions. Additionally, a core objective will be to include in the target group PLWHA who are not currently utilizing Ryan White services. By speaking with PLWHA who are not in consistent care we will be able to learn if child care and or transportation present barriers to medical care. The design for the focus groups will include the following:

- A total of six focus groups of eight to ten persons will be planned. A separate focus group will be planned for residents of each of the four rural TGA counties<sup>1</sup>. The questions for the rural groups will have transportation questions exploring their unique challenges. Conversely, the Travis County focus groups will focus on public transportation and the impacts of Cap Metro's policy changes.
- In addition to child care and transportation, additional focus group questions will be included in an effort to gain additional insight into any questions that remain unclear once surveys are analyzed.
- A Facilitator under contract to the City of Austin will be used to conduct the focus groups. If possible, facilitators will have experience working with the PLWHA community. Facilitator staff will be required to possess the prerequisite training and background to manage a focus group. Priority will be given to selecting facilitators who can facilitate a focus group in Spanish and English.

---

<sup>1</sup> Given the number of known PLWHA in Williamson, Bastrop, Caldwell and Hays, recruiting sufficient focus group participants will be a challenge. The alternatives include a single "rural" focus group or individual interviews.

- Questions will be open ended to the extent possible so that participants can state what is on their mind (in contrast to scripted questions which drive the scope and focus of responses).
- The focus groups will last no more than ninety minutes.
- Ryan White staff will conduct a training session to ensure that facilitators are familiar with issues important to PLWHA and the Ryan White program. The training will also ensure that all facilitators are following the same process and have clear and uniform understanding of objectives.
- Twenty dollar gift cards will be provided as an incentive to participate. Facilitators will keep a record of cards issued using documentation standards approved by the Administrative Agent.
- Lunch will also be provided as an incentive.
- Participants will be recruited via flyers posted at locations frequented by PLWHA and recruitment through Ryan White service providers. Criteria will be determined that ensure participants are appropriate candidates for the focus groups. Specifically, candidates responding to child care questions should have responsibility for children and candidates for the rural county focus groups should reside in the county for which the focus group is being conducted.
- Participation shall be anonymous. Participants will be assigned an identifier associated with their base demographics. An identifier which worked well for focus groups used for previous needs assessment was to assign each participant the name of a state.
- HIV staff will receive a written report from the facilitators with results in a pre-defined format. A soft copy will be provided to enable staff to export data for statistical summary.
- The need for an interpreter, child care (while participating) and transportation will be determined based upon screening.
- If necessary, door-to-door transportation will be provided in order to enable participation.
- Child care will be provided in order to enable participation. Participants will be allowed to bring their children to the group session if required to enable their participation. (Open question – can lunch be provided to children and/or another adult who may accompany the participant?).

### **ARIES Data**

Updated demographic data will be requested from ARIES for the grant year ending 02/28/2012. This will provide the most current profile of consumers utilizing Ryan White Part A and MAI services.

Additionally, updated utilization data will be requested from ARIES for transportation (the only service for which utilization data is available).

Service providers are required to complete ARIES data entry within 30 days of the close of the grant year. Updated reports will be requested from the Administrative Agent on 03/01/2012. Reports should be available in time to include in the Need Assessment Project report.

### **Internal and External Research**

Additional insight into the targeted service categories may be available to supplement understanding regarding these (targeted) services. Research will include the following:

- Contact regional Ryan White Planning Councils to determine if they are funding Home Health Care and/or Home and Community Based Health Care. (Note: At least two Texas EMAs' are funding this service). For those that are funding this service, obtain any reports or insight the EMA has regarding cost benefit and/or medical benefits realized by avoiding hospitalization or improving continuity of care. Based upon initial indications, funding for Home Health may be intertwined with hospice service.
- Determine if HRSA has reports or analysis regarding the cost benefit and/or proven outcomes resulting from funding Home Health Care.
- Determine if Department of State Health Services has reports or analysis regarding the cost benefit and/or proven outcomes resulting from funding Home Health Care.
- Part B perspective – It is anticipated that Part B will be participating in the Needs Assessment Project by providing resources and assisting with rural surveys and focus groups. Part B will provide any relevant information they have available regarding each of the targeted services.
- Austin TGA archives – research historical records regarding funding for the targeted services and any evaluation of the needs for these services that may have been conducted in the past.

### **4. Timeline**

- a. Start Date – The Needs Assessment Research Project will begin as soon as the Needs Assessment Sub-Committee has reviewed the project plan and given approval to move forward. It is expected that the project plan will be reviewed during a joint meeting of the Needs Assessment and Care Strategy Sub-Committees on January 4, 2012. Once approved, the research project can begin in early January 2012.
- b. Completion Date – The Needs Assessment Research Project will be completed no later than April 24, 2012. In addition to submission of the written report, PowerPoint presentations will be provided to the Needs Assessment Subcommittee and (if requested) the Executive Committee.



c. Monthly Progress Reports – A progress report will be provided to the Chairs of the Needs Assessment and Care Strategy Sub-Committees monthly. The report will provide an overall status and report on any issues impacting the research project. The report will be presented during the scheduled monthly sub-committee meetings.

d. Milestones

- i. December 23, 2011 – complete project plan submitted to the Chair of the Needs Assessment Sub-Committee
- ii. January 04, 2012 – Plan reviewed by joint sub-committees
- iii. January 06, 2011 – Revisions (if any) and approval to proceed
- iv. January 23, 2012 status report
- v. February 10, 2012 provider and consumer surveys received
- vi. February 28, 2012 status report
- vii. February 27, 2012 focus groups completed
- viii. March 02, 2012 Service Provider Surveys completed
- ix. March 27, 2012 status report
- x. April 12, 2012 draft report
- xi. April 24, 2012 Report presentations
- xii. May 1, 2012 Report completed

## 5. Work Plan

Activity	Task	Start	Completion
RW Provider Survey	Finalize questions	01/04/12	01/06/12
	Send out letter of notification	01/06/12	01/06/12
	Phone follow up to Directors	01/12/12	01/12/12
	Submit	01/10/12	01/10/12
	Return		02/10/12
	Follow up	02/13/12	02/17/12
RW provider interview	Identify open questions	02/20/12	02/24/12
	Schedule and conduct	02/27/12	03/02/12
Other provider interview	Capitol Metro	01/18/12	01/21/12
	Medical providers	01/24/12	01/28/12
	Home health providers	01/31/12	02/04/12
	Legal Aid	02/07/12	02/11/12
	Finalize questions	01/04/12	01/06/12
	Draft flyer	01/04/12	01/04/12
Consumer survey	Spanish translation	01/04/12	01/06/12
	Submit to service providers	01/10/12	01/10/12
	Return		02/10/12
	Follow up	02/13/12	02/17/12
Consumer focus groups	Finalize planning		01/07/12
	Facilitator contract		01/16/12
	Facilitator training	01/19/12	01/19/12
	Release invitations	01/10/12	01/10/12
	Recruitment	01/11/12	02/20/12
	Screen applicants	01/11/12	02/20/12
	Conduct FG 1	02/22/12	02/22/12
	Conduct FG 2	02/24/12	02/24/12
	Conduct FG 3	02/27/12	02/27/12
	Receive facilitator report		03/02/12
Research		01/03/12	03/26/12
Project status reports	January		01/24/12
	February		02/28/12
	March		03/27/12
Written report	Draft and comments	02/27/12	04/13/12
	Final	04/24/12	05/04/12
Report presentation	Needs Assessment sub-com	04/24/12	04/24/12
	Executive	05/01/12	05/01/12

## 6. Deliverables

The following deliverables will be completed and submitted to the Needs Assessment Sub-committee for review and approval:

- Project work plan
- Ryan White service provider survey questions

- Ryan White service provider interview questions
- Consumer survey
- Focus Group Plan
- Focus group questions
- Report of Focus Group findings
- Opt out testing report
- Written report of project findings
- Power Point presentation of findings

## 7. Resources

The Health Planner will be the primary resource responsible for completion of tasks. Other Austin TGA Planning Council staff will be available to assist as required. The manager for Part B has offered the assistance of the Planner. It is anticipated that the Part B Planner will provide assistance specifically for those tasks and activities involving Hays, Bastrop, Caldwell and Williamson counties. Additionally, the HIV Planning Council office plans to recruit an intern to begin in early 2012. It is anticipated that assistance with the Needs Assessment project will be a primary assignment for the intern.

## 8. Budget

Costs are incurred to facilitate focus groups. The following costs are anticipated:

Task or service	Projected Cost
Facilitator for focus groups (3 FTE)	
Training and orientation (4 hrs @ \$50 X 3)	\$600
Conduct sessions (6 hrs @ \$50 X 6)	\$1,800
Draft report of findings (4 hrs @ \$50 X 6)	\$1,200
Gift cards (60 cards of \$20 each)	\$1,200
Meal for focus group (60 meals @ \$15)	\$900
Child care (\$8 hr x 15 children x 2 hrs)	\$240
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,940</b>

Note: Transportation costs are not included but could be required to enable focus group participants to meet. A translator may also be required if focus group participants who do not speak English are selected as participants. The need for those services will be determined based upon the screening process.

This cost is anticipated to be incurred and charged to the Ryan White Part A budget for the grant year ending 02/28/2012. It is essential that costs not be incurred after 03/01/2012 as the Ryan White grant for the next year is unknown.

## 9. Open Issues

The following issues have been identified and are pending resolution:

- Budget validation – A request has been submitted to the Administrative Agent to determine if the Ryan White Part A Administrative Budget will support the budget proposed in section 8 above.
- Need for a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) – Determine if an MOU between the HIV Planning Council and each participating service provider is appropriate in order to define support, expectations and responsibilities of each party.
- Consent Forms – Determine if the City of Austin requires each consumer who completes a survey and/or participates in a focus group to sign a consent form addressing confidentiality and use of statistical data and/or consumer comments in published results.

### **10. Sample questionnaires and interview questions**

Attached are drafts of the following:

- Service Provider survey
- Service Provider interview questions
- Consumer surveys
- Focus group questions