

## **BERKS COUNTY OUTREACH SERVICES MODEL**

### **July 2010**

The primary goal of Intravenous Drug User (IDU) outreach services is to reduce the risk of HIV and other communicable diseases and to connect the IDU with drug and alcohol services. Several community-based agencies in Berks County perform this vital service to this high risk population. Most of these services are done so without Berks SCA funding, therefore, the Berks SCA has limited authority in mandating how these services are provided. Outreach activities in Berks County SCA are overseen by the Berks SCA's Drug and Alcohol Program Representative position. At a minimum of twice-yearly the Outreach providers are contacted to discuss the status of the services and if any changes to the program have occurred. The following are providers of IDU Outreach activities in Berks County:

**Berks Aids Network's (BAN)** targets IDUs by maintaining a continued presence in known intravenous drug user areas. BAN believes that their presence allows them to develop a positive relationship with the IDUs. BAN engages in door-to-door and street outreach activities in known high risk areas in Berks County, outreach to tattoo parlors, barber shops and beauty shops that they have reason to believe have high risk patrons in need of HIV and drug and alcohol services. Outreach activities provided by BAN focuses on educational interventions designed to increase awareness of the relationship between injection drug use and the risk for HIV/AIDS as well as other communicable diseases. Through the distribution of prevention/education materials, as well as the development of an individual risk-reduction plan, IDUs are provided with ways to help prevent risk taking behaviors. BAN's IDU outreach also provides information regarding chemical dependency treatment and encourages IDUs to access needed drug and alcohol services. All outreach clients are given contact information about BAN's services and the telephone number of Berks County's drug and alcohol central intake unit (TASC). BAN's outreach staff receives training from Department of Health approved trainers. The same neighborhoods are visited on a monthly basis to follow-up on prior contacts made in those neighborhoods. Areas of training for BAN Outreach workers includes: HIV/AIDS pre and post test counseling skills, HIV/AIDS risk reduction planning, HIV awareness and prevention counselor skills, basic addictions training, understanding of local community support services for IDUs, and how to help IDUs access appropriate drug and alcohol services. The IDU outreach workers also complete Red Cross emergency situation training. Supervision of outreach workers is provided by BAN's Prevention Service Manager who in turn reports to the director of HIV services.

**New Directions Treatment Services (NDTS)**, targets IDUs in known drug using areas. The primary purpose of this outreach is to engage clients in chemical dependency treatment. NDTS believes that their presence in these areas allows them to become familiar with IDUs and develop a rapport with the drug users on the street. NDTS is the SCA's contracted provider of methadone services as well as HIV/AIDS Early Intervention Pre/Post test and risk Reduction Counseling Services in Berks County. Through their "Latinos for a Healthy Community" program, NDTS engages in door-to-door and street outreach activities in known intravenous drug areas in Berks County.

NDTS outreach services include; educational interventions that focus on increasing awareness of the relationship between injection drug use and the risk for HIV/AIDS as well as other communicable diseases, the development and implementation of an individual risk-reduction plan focusing on ways to prevent risk taking behaviors, face-to-face HIV risk reduction counseling and the distribution of prevention/education materials. This Outreach also provides information and referral regarding chemical dependency treatment as well as encouragement to IDUs to access drug and alcohol services. Outreach services are provided in both English and Spanish. NDTS's Outreach staff also provides pre-treatment support group services for IDUs who have not yet availed themselves to chemical dependency treatment. NDTS outreach staff receive extensive training provided by Department of Health approved HIV/AIDS trainers. Areas of training for NDTS Outreach workers includes: HIV/AIDS pre and post test counseling skills, HIV/AIDS risk reduction planning, HIV awareness and prevention counselor skills and basic addictions training. NDTS outreach staff also receive in-house training specific to the availability of community support services for IDUs and how to help IDUs access appropriate drug and alcohol services. NDTS's outreach training protocol includes a team approach which pairs inexperienced staff with veteran outreach workers. This allows the new and/or less experienced outreach worker to develop a skill and comfort level in providing outreach services. Direct supervision of services is handled by the outreach supervisor who reports to the director of the "Latinos for a Healthy Community" program.

**Berks Counseling Center (BCC)** is contracted with the SCA to provide drug and alcohol and dual diagnosis treatment, intensive case management services, and HIV/AIDS Early Intervention programming. BCC provides direct community outreach to at risk populations via our satellite office at the Opportunity House (formerly Reading/Berks Emergency Shelter), a local homeless shelter in Reading, as well as through our MISS Program which provides outreach to pregnant and parenting chemically dependent women . BCC outreach includes interventions that are designed to increase awareness of the relationship between injection drug use and the risk for HIV/AIDS as well as other communicable diseases. BCC's outreach provides information regarding their vast array of drug and alcohol services and encourages IDUs to access drug and alcohol treatment as well as encouraging IDUs to engage in HIV/AIDS Early Intervention Services. These HIV/AIDS Early Intervention Services include HIV/AIDS pre and post test counseling and HIV/AIDS risk reduction planning. BCC has the ability to facilitate referral to our on site primary care physician's office - which offers medical treatment for HIV/AIDS. BCC also collaborates with other local agencies through participation in community health fairs and events to identify and engage potential clients. Distribution of information regarding BCC services are readily made available to all who participate in these local events. For clients self-identifying as having a chemical dependency disorder, an attempt is made to engage that individual into drug and alcohol treatment services. If client information is available, a follow-up telephone contact is attempted to engage the client into need drug and alcohol services. BCC uses its Intensive Case Management staff to conduct outreach services. All BCC Outreach staff complete the Department of Health's Case Management core training requirements. Direct supervision of BCC outreach workers is the responsibility of the Intensive Case Management Supervisor who reports to BCC's Deputy Director.