

HIV Early Intervention Services

Georgia's HIV Early Intervention Services (EIS) program is made possible by Federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant funds set aside for the delivery of HIV Early Intervention and Prevention Services.

Support for HIV Early Intervention Services Workers

HIV Early Intervention Services (EIS) is a program of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities / Division of Addictive Diseases. The program is managed, on behalf of the Division, by Imagine Hope, Inc., which supports EIS workers by providing:

- Annual training events
- The newsletter, *HIV Risk Reduction*
- A *Quarterly Report* on HIV EIS activities statewide
- The website www.hiveis.com
- Technical assistance by phone and email

What is HIV EIS?

HIV EIS counselors are based in substance abuse (SA) treatment sites and in opioid treatment centers throughout the state of Georgia. In publicly funded SA facilities, the position of HIV EIS counselor is funded by a set-aside in the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant; it is generally a full-time position and may be shared by more than one staff person. EIS workers provide HIV training for staff members, and offering the following free services to consumers:

- HIV/STD prevention education groups
- HIV prevention counseling
- HIV pre-test counseling, HIV testing, and HIV post-test counseling
- Referral of all HIV-positive consumers for medical/social services, whether newly or previously diagnosed.

In order to work more effectively, counselors are asked to build support for their program within their own facility, form a collaborative relationship with Public Health, and establish ties with the community at large. Recognizing the need to end the discrimination and secrecy that feeds this epidemic, counselors also routinely participate in health fairs, speak at schools, present at churches, give interviews to the press, and collaborate with other agencies around HIV/AIDS events like National HIV Testing Day, which falls on June 27 each year.

Before testing can begin

We encourage new EIS workers to contact their local and/or District Public Health Office and to visit in person to introduce themselves. Collaboration with Public Health is a critical aspect of the program. In particular, when a consumer tests positive for HIV, it is crucial that EIS workers be familiar with the resources available and the procedure for referring consumers for the necessary medical and social services.

Required training

Prior to conducting HIV counseling or testing, each new counselor is required to attend a CDC-approved HIV prevention counseling course. Each year, Imagine Hope, Inc. provides one or more deliveries of this

workshop. EIS supervisors and workers are notified by email as soon as these workshops are scheduled, so we encourage you to provide us with current email addresses.

Reporting requirements

For every HIV test conducted, EIS workers are required to submit an HIV Testing Report (aka bubble sheet). They also submit a quarterly Field Report to Imagine Hope, Inc. describing their activities during the quarter.

Drawing from those Field Reports, an 8-page *Quarterly Report* on HIV EIS activities statewide is produced. In each *Quarterly*, a handful of exemplary HIV EIS sites are featured. Copies of the *Report* are mailed to the Division of Addictive Disease, to Regional Coordinators, and to HIV EIS workers. E-mail versions are sent to CSB Directors as well. If you would like to receive the *Quarterly Report*, please send your email address to Winona Holloway, winona@imaginehope.com.

Available to you – newsletter and website

As an HIV EIS supervisor, you are entitled to receive e-mail copies of our quarterly newsletter, *HIV Risk Reduction*. Simply notify us of your email address and we will put you on our mailing list.

Current and back issues of the newsletter are also available on the website, www.hiveis.com, on a variety of topics including:

- HIV and Black men who have sex with men
- HIV in rural Georgia
- The truth about HIV/AIDS and the corrections system.

The HIV EIS website is designed to help counselors stay abreast of the latest trends in the interrelated and ever-changing fields of HIV and substance abuse treatment and prevention. It offers links to informative sites, copies of necessary forms, and a section specifically for new counselors.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Yours truly,
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