

Our Quarterly Newsletter



Summer 2016
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PRIMARY LEADERS IN HEALTH AWARDS

By Marissa Conrad, Development Director



The Primary Leaders in Health Care Dinner was held on Tuesday, May 17 at Forte in Des Moines. We had a crowd of just over 200 joining PHC leadership and staff. Zachary Mannheimer emceed the program and was joined by Polk County Supervisor, Angela Connolly, as she led fundraising efforts.

Primary Health Care CEO, Kelly Huntsman, presented Senator Matt McCoy with the 2016 Primary Leader in Health Award for his advocacy for low income central Iowans and the LGBT community. PHC was honored to acknowledge his steadfast efforts.

We unveiled a new video, “Serving our Patients, Strengthening our Community”. Thanks to Applied Arts & Technology for their expertise in making the video a reality! To view the video, visit phciowa.org.

The night was capped off by the generosity of our friends and community partners. The Polk County Board of Supervisors provided a \$20,000 match to all contributions. We sailed past that number by almost \$20,000! It was a successful night supporting Primary Health Care! If you were not able to be there, please plan on joining us in 2017!

NEED TO TALK
TO YOUR NURSE
CARE OR CASE
MANAGER?

Remember:
515-248-1595
is the number
to call.

WAYS TO GIVE

There are many ways to help support the mission of The Project of Primary Health Care.

Your gift helps sustain The Project’s unique programs and services offered to those living with HIV/AIDS as well as the ongoing education and outreach for prevention and treatment options.

Make an IMPACT by pursuing one of the giving opportunities outlined below. We are grateful for your support!

EMPLOYER MATCH

Many employers will match charitable gifts made by their employees. Check with your human resources department to see if this is an option for you!

HONOR AND MEMORIALS

Give a gift that gives back and honor someone dear to you. Honoring or memorializing someone special is meaningful way to celebrate his/her life.

LEGACY GIFT

There are many ways to include The Project in your estate. To learn more about the tax benefits as well as the impact this gift has on sustaining The Project long term, please contact our development director.

ONLINE GIVING

A one-time gift or a recurring donation can be set up through our website or via development director. Monthly, quarterly or annually, you can determine the best timing for your situation.

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Many employers will help you set up an automatic payroll deduction. This can be a gift that is given directly to The Project or through other work place programs like the United Way of Central Iowa. Many employers still have The Project listed as “AIDS Project of Central Iowa” so you may need to look for us that way.

CONTACT

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DIRECTOR’S NOTE

by Greg Gross, Program Director



This month’s newsletter shares some highlights of Pride and tips on disclosing to various people in your life that you are living with HIV. I wanted to be honest and share a story with you about my own struggle with HIV stigma and coming out related to PrEP(Truvada) to prevent HIV.

I waited a few days before filling my prescription. I was afraid of what the staff might think of me, how they might judge me, and how I might have to explain why I was taking Truvada. When I took in the prescription to the pharmacy, I was hyper-aware of any looks or expressions that might be judging me. The pharmacist came out to talk to me about my script. She started with “this is an anti-retroviral medication to help manage HIV infection...” and then I jumped in, “I’m actually taking the medication to prevent HIV, known as pre-exposure prophylaxis.” She seemed caught off guard and quickly went over some potential side effects and asked if I had any questions.

Why did I jump in so quickly? Sure, I wanted to educate her on patients taking Truvada as PrEP. But, was I worried she’d think I was living with HIV? If I’m honest with myself, I probably WAS worried. I assumed she might have some notions of what people living with HIV are like and I wanted to distance myself from those stereotypes. I’m surprised by my reaction. I thought I’d gotten past my shame and stigma about HIV status.

To be clear, I believe there’s no reason to be ashamed of living with HIV.

But when I think back on this now, I know that the belief that I’d “gotten past” my shame and stigma shows just how much I don’t understand about what living with HIV is like. It must be a daily task to combat HIV stigma in my own life and the community and to understand the courage people living with HIV show by being out and proud every day and by continuing to come out to doctors, pharmacists, counselors, lawyers, friends, family, co-workers, etc.

The shootings in Orlando are a glaring reminder of the work left to do for the LGBT community. Our sense of safety and justice is shaken. All the past memories and traumas of violence, harassment, abuse, and feelings of being unsafe are dredged back into the present moment.

How this all comes together for me is under the theme of Pride. Pride in who we are. Pride in the identities that are part of what makes us whole. If it’s gay, bisexual, lesbian, transgender, living with HIV or not, on PrEP or not – whatever it is. If we’re out and proud about these identities, we make ourselves and our communities more visible. We refuse to be afraid and back away from others who may judge or try to shame us.

While coming out isn’t easy, your visibility makes a difference. Thank you for being you! Thanks for being proud of who you are.

With Pride,

Greg

PRIDE FEST 2016

By Jacob Linduski, Prevention Specialist

This Year’s Pride for us at The Project booth went by in more or less an amazingly fun and colorful blur. We had a blast with everyone who came out on Saturday to play our “Pie In The Face” game. Seven cans of whipped cream, lots of prizes, and so much laughter later we felt confident that we had done what we had come to do: help folks learn AND get their silly on.

Sunday saw a return of the “Pie In The Face” game (back by popular demand), and the addition of our Duck Pond HIV/STI/PrEP trivia game. Eight lucky folks got to walk away with some major



prizes with two \$50 gift cards to RAYGUN and six \$25 gift cards to STARBUCKS being given out to those lucky enough to find a silver or purple star on the bottom of their ducks.

Overall, we handed out more than 3500 loose condoms, 2000 safer sex kits, 1000 individual lubricants and tons and TONS of information, not to mention allowing access to free and confidential HIV and Syphilis testing throughout the entire weekend.

Not too shabby, if I do say so myself.

PHC COMMUNITY GARDEN

content and photos by Bery Engebretsen, MD; edited by Darla Krom

PHC’s Community Garden is the first phase of a Community Wellness Center, a vision of creating and proving an environment for our clients that is conducive to improving their wellness and health. The first phase is the Community Garden.

Future phases will include an expanded garden, a walking path around the property, and use of the recently remodeled Education Center for various wellness related activities including groups activities, Medicare and Medicaid wellness visits, and health education focused activities.



Six hardworking PHC Staff attended the initial gardening day.

The crew consisted of Jacob, Scarlett, Tonya, Ben, Darla and Bery. Three staff being from the The Project.

The community garden is only open to staff participation, at this time, but the goal is to invite community participation. This initial phase is designed for set up and planning for setbacks. The Community Garden is located at PHC’s East Side Clinic: 3509 E. 29th Street in Des Moines.



Here’s our number
(515) 248-1595 so
call us maybe.

HEALTH TIPS:

Before you begin your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist these question:

- What does each medicine do?
- How many times a day should I take my medicine?
- For how long should I take my medicine?
- Do I need to keep any of my medicines in the refrigerator?
- Should I take my medicine with or without food?
- Are there any foods or drinks I should not have while taking my medicine?
- Can I take my HIV medicines with other medicines?
- If I forget to take my medicine, what should I do?
- What are the side effects of each medicine?
- Is this medicine safe to take if I am pregnant?
- Should I bring my medicines to my next visit?

(adapted from MedicinePlus.gov)

TELLING OTHERS YOU ARE HIV POSTIVE

Deciding to tell others about your HIV status can be difficult. Read on for tips on who to tell and how to tell them.

The Benefits of Telling People You Are HIV Positive

When you tell the right people about your HIV status, you can:

- Get the support you need to take care of your health and well-being
- Keep your loved ones informed about issues that are important to you
- Reduce the chance of spreading HIV to others - through unprotected sex of any kind or when you share needles (if you use IV drugs)

Things to Keep in Mind

- Take it slow. Before you tell someone you have HIV, ask yourself is it a good idea to tell that person
- Make sure you are telling the right person for the right reason. If you tell everyone, you can cause problems you may not have thought about
- Think about how disclosing your HIV status will affect you and those around you. Some people will offer you love and support, while others may not be as understanding
- Remember that it’s your decision to make. You are in charge of your own health, and it’s your right to share your status with the people you choose

Telling Your Partner

If you have HIV, telling your partner(s) about your status is the right and responsible thing to do.

- Your partner(s) should get tested to find out if they are HIV positive.
- Always use a condom or dental dam for any kind of sex - oral, anal, or vaginal

If you are concern that your partner might hurt you if you disclose your HIV status, talk to your health care provider, case or nurse care manager.

Telling Your Family and Trusted Friends

It can be hard to tell your friends, family, children, or other family members that you are HIV positive. Here are some tips that may help:

- Think about the best time to tell people. You should pick a time when you can be alone with them and have a quiet talk
- Keep the talk as simple as possible
- Prepare yourself for their reactions - these include love and support as well as anger, sadness, or fear
- Let them know why you chose to share your status with them and much their support means to you
- Make sure they know not to tell others

Telling Your Boss at Work

- You are not required by law to tell your boss that you are HIV positive - as long as you can perform your job, it is against the law for your boss to discriminate against you because you have HIV
- You may think about telling your boss if HIV or your treatment affects how you do your job. If you do tell your boss, you may be able to work together to find ways for you to keep doing your job (fewer hours, more breaks, etc.)

(adapted from APositiveLife.com)

TAKING ATRIPLA THREE TIMES A WEEK
MAINTAINS UNDETECTABLE HIV VIRAL LOAD

by Warren Tong

Taking efavirenz/tenofovir/emtricitabine (Atripla) three days a week maintained an undetectable viral load for at least 24 weeks in people who were already virally suppressed for at least two years, according to a small, proof-of-concept study presented at ASM Microbe 2016 in Boston, Massachusetts.

BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS

The study, conducted in Spain, followed 61 individuals living with HIV (88.5% male and 11.5% female) who were stable on efavirenz/tenofovir/emtricitabine and had a viral load below 37 copies/mL for at least two years before study enrollment. All participants had a CD4 count above 350 at the start of the study, and none had previously documented virologic failure, though a single viral load blip between 50 and 200 copies/mL was allowed for study inclusion, according to lead study author Esteban Martinez, M.D., Ph.D.

Participants also had no evidence of resistance to efavirenz (Sustiva, Stocrin), tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF, Viread) or emtricitabine (FTC, Emtriva).

The volunteers were randomized to either continue taking efavirenz/tenofovir/emtricitabine once a day or reduce their regimen to three days a week (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays), about half in each group.

Viral load was measured at baseline, 12 weeks and 24 weeks, but more thoroughly for the three-day group at 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 weeks.

Most of the study cohort was male (89%); roughly two-thirds were Caucasian, while the rest of the volunteers were Hispanic; and three-quarters of the study participants were men who have sex with men. Mean age was roughly 48 years.

RESULTS

After 24 weeks, there were zero treatment failures in either study arm, and with 333 viral load tests in total, none were above 37 copies/mL, suggesting that taking antiretroviral therapy (at least in this case of efavirenz/tenofovir/emtricitabine) three

days a week could be a feasible option to maintain undetectable viral loads. Adherence was measured by standard questionnaire and pill counting, and the overall adherence rate was fine, according to Martinez. The researchers were worried the three-day group would not be able to adjust to the new schedule, and at times, patients missed one dose, but each of them managed to maintain the new schedule using smartphone calendars or other equivalents, he said.

Due to the outstanding results, the researchers asked the ethics committee to extend the study to three years, Martinez said. When asked about patient satisfaction, Martinez noted that all three-day patients were extremely satisfied and no one wanted to go back to once-daily dosing. In fact, participants in the control arm wanted to switch to three-day arm.

Data on participants' viral reservoirs were not included in the study poster presented at ASM Microbe 2016. However, Martinez noted that the reservoirs were measured using total and integrated DNA, and all patient reservoirs remained stable throughout the study.

When asked how applicable these results would be to current clinical care given the reduced use of efavirenz, Martinez stated that while the use of efavirenz is decreasing in first-world countries, it is still widely used in developing countries. At the very least, this confirms the potential for therapy doses to be farther apart than once a day, Martinez concluded.

(adapted from thebodypro.com)

BE THE BEST
VERSION OF YOU!
EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH A
SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL
GROUP.

WELLNESS
FOR WOMEN
September 2016

CONTACT
Anneke Gustafson at
515.248.1825 for more
information.

REMINDERS:

To schedule or cancel a clinic appointment or for health related questions, please call your nurse care manager:

Katie (515)248-1575

Margie (515)248-1574

Erin (515)248-1821

Theresa (515)248-1577

For refill requests, please call your pharmacy.

For ADAP or other supportive services issues, please call your case manager.

If you're unsure who to contact or would like more information about our program, please call our main number at (515)248-1595.

Our regular program hours are 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The Project of PHC
1200 University Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50314

Phone: 515-248-1595
E-mail: questions@phcinc.net



WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES



Conner Spinks is excited to begin her new position as HIV Prevention Specialist/CLEAR Counselor!

Conner has a broad range of professional experiences serving marginalized populations and is eager to be of service to those at risk of contracting HIV and those living with HIV.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

Do you need to speak to your Nurse Care or Case Manager?

If you do not have their direct line, the best way to contact them is by calling The Project's main number: **515-248-1595**.

This ensures that someone within the department will be able to assist you promptly, should your Nurse Care or Case Manager is unavailable.



THIS IS AVAILABLE ONLINE



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Just visit: **phctheproject.org/newsletter** for a digital copy of this issue as well as previous issues.

Read other interesting articles on our blog: **phctheproject.org/home/blog**.