

REPORT ON PERSONS WITH HIV
WHO ARE NOT ACCESSING MEDICAL CARE

A SURVEY OF PERSONS WHO ARE
“OUT-OF-CARE”
FOR
THE GREATER HARTFORD RYAN WHITE
TITLE I PLANNING COUNCIL

APRIL 15, 2005

Background

Between November 2004 and January 2005, two outreach workers contacted and interviewed persons with HIV who are not receiving medical care. The outreach workers met with these survey respondents in homeless shelters, on streets in the North and South ends of Hartford, in supermarkets, restaurants, and city parks. The persons interviewed were asked to fill out, or respond to questions, in a survey to gather information about their service needs and reasons why they are not accessing medical care. Seventy surveys were completed. Factors which characterize the persons who were interviewed include: a) current or recent homelessness; b) active drug use; c) recent release from prison; and d) reliance on emergency rooms for health care.

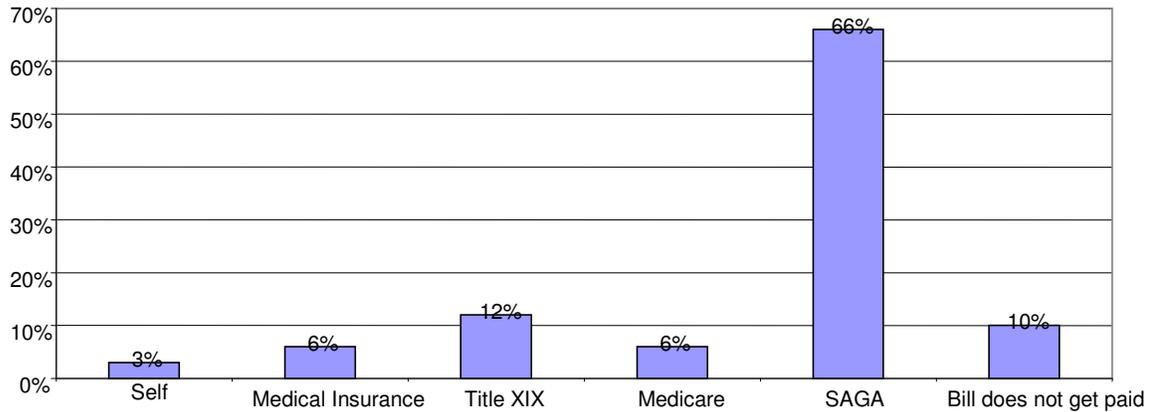
- GENDER: Sixty-three percent of survey respondents were male; 37 percent were female; and none were transgender.
- TOWN: Ninety-seven percent were from Hartford; 3 percent from East Hartford.
- AGE: Three percent were between 20 and 29 years of age; 20 percent were 30 to 39; 32 percent were 40 to 49; 36 percent were 50 to 59; and 9 percent were 60 to 69.
- RACE/ETHNICITY: Fifty-five percent were Latino; 32 percent were black; 12 percent were white; and 1 percent Native American.
- LANGUAGE PREFERENCE: Fifty percent would prefer to receive services in English; 47 percent prefer Spanish; and 3 percent are comfortable with English or Spanish.
- INCOME: Forty-three percent have no income; of these 1/3 receive between \$100 and \$150 per month in food stamps; 34 percent have incomes below \$200 per month; 9 percent between \$300 and \$400; 14 percent between \$500 and \$600; and 3 percent between \$800 and \$1000.
- BENEFITS AND SOURCE OF INCOME: Fifty-nine percent rely on state assistance; fifteen percent get SSI (Supplemental Security Income); 5 percent get Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); 3 percent have private disability insurance; 5 percent get paid for work.
- Sixty-nine percent said they were currently homeless or had been homeless at some point in the previous 12 months.

- Thirty-eight percent said they had been incarcerated at some time during the past 12 months.
- Fifty-two percent had been in a drug treatment program in the past 12 months.
- Ninety percent are actively using one or more illegal drugs; 60 percent are using injection drugs, primarily heroin.
- Forty-eight percent list IDU as the mode of transmission for their HIV; 39 percent heterosexual sex; 2 percent MSM; and 2 percent FSF.

HEALTH STATUS

- All of the respondents had tested positive for HIV.
- Forty percent had tested positive within the past 4 years; 45 percent in the 1990's; and 15 percent in the 1980's.
- Seventy-four percent have Hepatitis C; 9 percent Hepatitis B; 7 percent Hepatitis A; 13 percent have had other STI's; 13 percent Tuberculosis; and 11 percent have had mental health problems.
- Seventy-three percent use the emergency room for medical care; 21 percent a community health center; and 6 percent a private doctor.
- Thirty-six percent get help from an outreach worker when they need medical care; thirty percent rely on family or friends; 19 percent get help from the staff at homeless shelters; and 16 percent from their case manager.
- Figure 1 shows that State Assistance is the primary health care payer.

Figure 1: WHO PAYS FOR HEALTH CARE

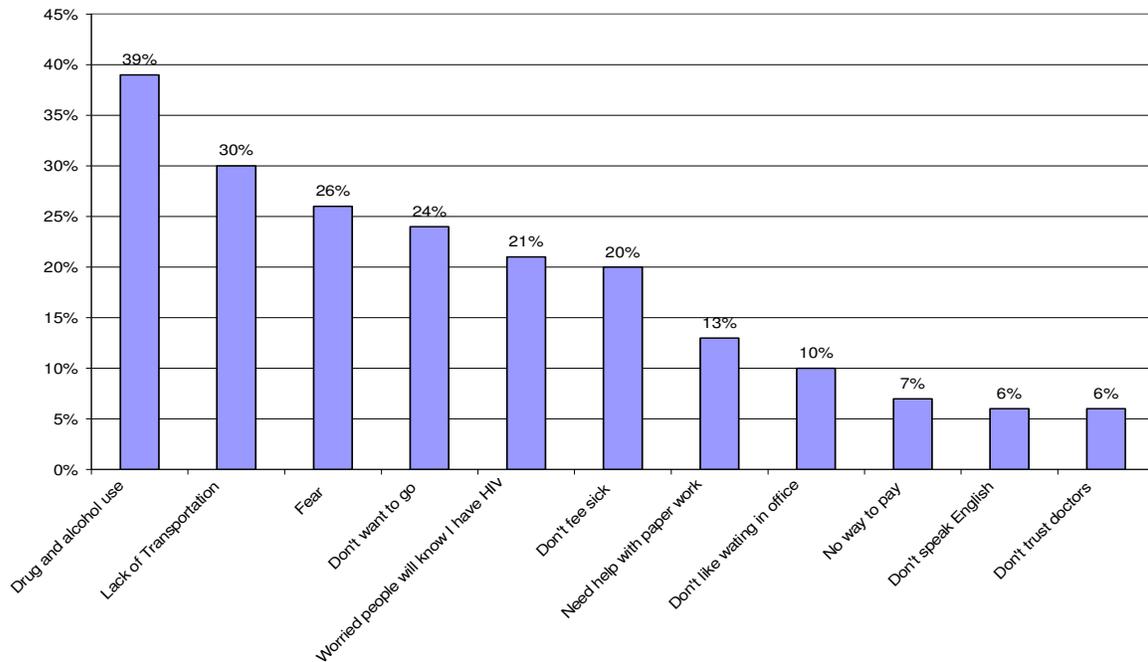


BARRIERS AND ACCESS TO CARE

1. Drug and alcohol use is the foremost reason persons out of care are not getting medical care for HIV. Just under a third of those surveyed said lack of transportation keeps them from getting care. One quarter said they are either afraid to or have no interest in accessing medical care for their HIV infection. About a fifth of the sample said they do not get care because they do not feel sick or are worried that people will find out that they have HIV.

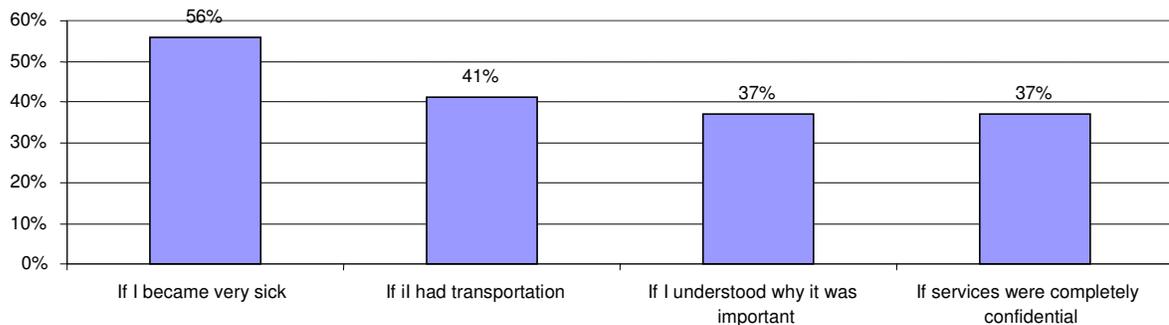
Language, cost, and mistrust of doctors are not preventing many individuals in this population from getting care. Only 6 percent of the sample said that "not speaking English prevented them from seeking care, and only seven percent said that the inability to pay was a barrier.

Figure 2. WHAT PREVENTS YOU FROM GETTING CARE



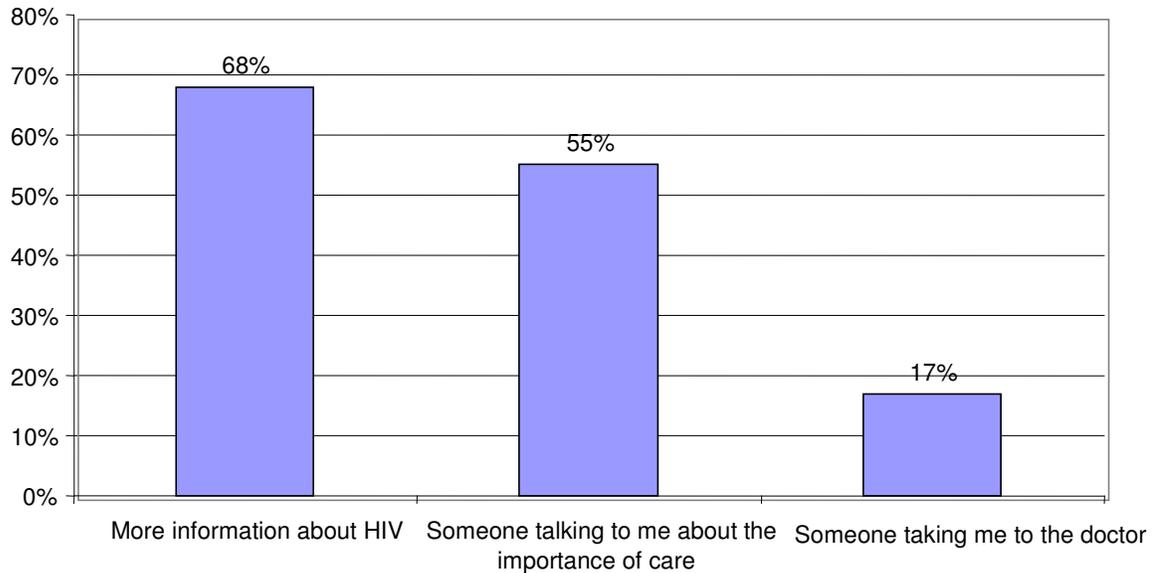
2) A substantial majority (56 percent) (see Figure 3) of the persons who completed the survey said they would want to get care if they became very sick. Forty-one percent said they would be more likely to get care if they had transportation. Thirty-seven percent said they would want to access care if they had a better understanding of why it is important or were certain that it was confidential.

Figure 3. WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU WANT TO GET CARE?



3) More than two thirds said more information about HIV would help them engage in care. More than fifty percent said “someone talking to them about the importance of care” would help them to seek medical care.

Figure 4: WHAT WOULD HELP YOU GET CARE?

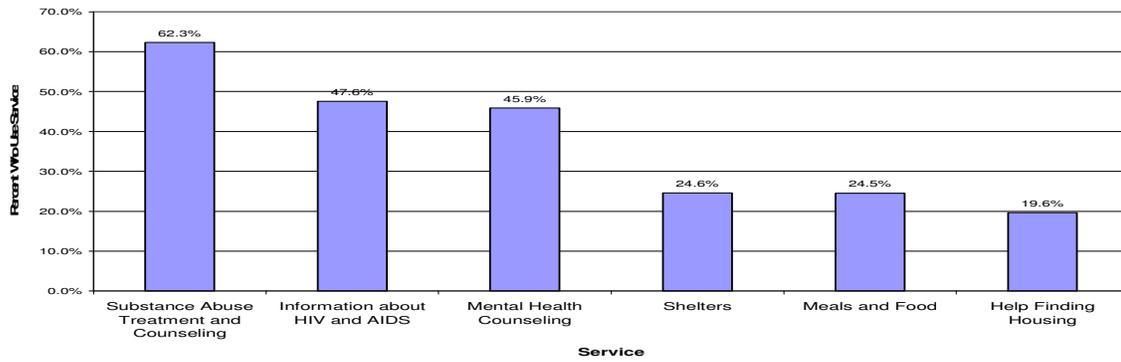


4) Persons out of care rely heavily on the emergency room for what medical attention they get. If they were to access care for HIV, forty three percent said they would go to the emergency room for care for HIV; 21 percent to a community health center; 16 percent to an HIV clinic and 10 percent to a private doctor.

SERVICE NEEDS

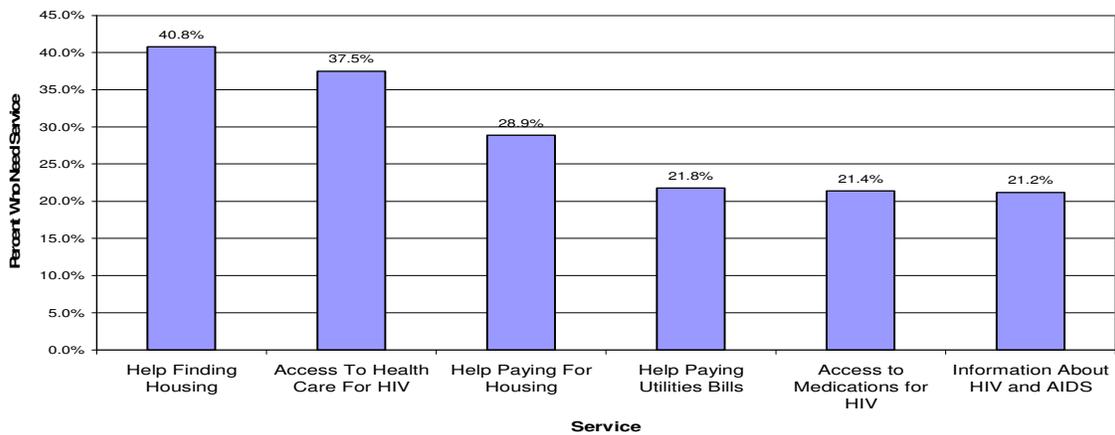
1) Persons out of care access substance abuse services and seek information about HIV. They also make use of mental health services, homeless shelters, food programs and help paying for housing.

Figure 5: SIX MOST WIDELY USED SERVICES



2) The six most important service needs of the persons who completed the out of care survey are:

Figure 6: SIX MOST NEEDED SERVICES



SURVEY OF PERSONS WHO ARE HIV POSITIVE, BUT WHO ARE NOT GETTING MEDICAL CARE FOR HIV

If you have been told that you have HIV or AIDS, but you are not taking special medications for HIV/AIDS and have not talked to a doctor about your HIV in more than a year, please answer the following questions.

1. What is your gender? (Check ONE) Female
 Male
 Transgender

2. What YEAR were you born? 19 ____ ____

3. What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself?

4. Which one of the following race or ethnicity groups would you say you are a members of?
Please check only ONE
 - White (non-Hispanic)
 - Black (non-Hispanic)
 - Hispanic Mixed Races
 - Hispanic White
 - Hispanic Black
 - Hispanic Indian
 - Hispanic Other Race
 - Hispanic Race Unknown
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Multiple Races
 - Other (please specify: _____)
 - Race Unknown

5. What is your sexual orientation? (Check ONE)
 - Gay
 - Lesbian
 - Heterosexual/straight
 - Transgendered

Bisexual

Not sure/don't know

6. What language(s) would you prefer to receive services in?

7. What town do you live in?

8. Have you been in jail or prison during the past 12 months?

Yes

No

9. Have you been homeless at any time in the past 12 months?

Yes

No

10. Below is a list of sources of money that some people receive. Please check ALL of the types of income you receive currently.

Pay or salary for full time or part time work

SSI (Supplemental Security Income)

SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)

Disability insurance check from previous employer

State Assistance Check

Other (Please specify)

11. How much money did you bring in from all above sources during the last month? _____

12. When were you diagnosed with HIV or AIDS? _____

13. If you feel sick, where do you go for care? (Check ONE)

Hospital Emergency Room

Community Health Center

Community Health Van

Private Doctor

Santaria

I never get medical care

Other

14. If you see a doctor, how is the medical care paid for? **(Please check ALL that apply)**

- I pay for it myself
- I have medical insurance
- I am on Title XIX (Medicaid)
- I am on Medicare
- I am on SAGA
- The bills doesn't get paid
- Other (Please specify _____)

15. How do you think you got HIV?

- Male to male sex
- Male to female sex
- Female to female sex
- Female to male sex
- Mother to Child
- Injecting drugs
- Don't Know
- Other:

16. What reasons best explain why you have not seen a doctor for your HIV infection? **(Please check ALL that apply)**

- I don't feel sick
- I don't want to go
- I don't trust doctors
- I am afraid to go
- I don't have any way to pay for it
- I don't have insurance
- I don't speak English
- I do not have transportation
- I don't have anyone to take care of my children
- I don't like waiting in a doctor's office
- My drug and alcohol use gets in the way of my getting medical care
- I need help with the paper work
- I am worried that people will find out that I have HIV or AIDS

17. What would make you want to get medical care for your HIV infection **(Please check ALL that apply.)**

- If I became very sick
- If I knew why it was important to get treated for HIV
- If the doctor or nurse spoke Spanish
- If services were completely confidential
- If I had transportation
- If I could walk to the doctors office
- There is nothing that would make me go to the doctor for my HIV

18. Where would you go if you decide you need or want medical care for your HIV? (Check ONE)

- To a private doctor
- To the emergency room
- To a community health center
- To an HIV clinic
- To an HIV counseling and testing site
- To a case manager
- To a social worker
- To an outreach worker
- To a substance abuse treatment clinic
- To a homeless shelter
- To the needle exchange van
- I don't know where to go
- Other (Please specify _____)

19. When you need health care, who are the people who help you get the care you need? (Please check ALL that apply.)

- Friend
- Family member
- Case manager
- Outreach worker
- Staff at the homeless shelter
- Staff at a substance abuse treatment center
- Other (Please specify: _____)

20. What would help you get care for your HIV? (Please check ALL that apply.)

- A person continually talking to me about HIV and the importance of medical care

- A person taking me to the doctor or hospital
- More information about HIV and AIDS
- Other (Please specify: _____)
- Nothing is going to make any difference

21. Have you ever been told you have any of the following medical problems? (Check ALL that apply)

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- Tuberculosis
- Psychiatric or Mental Health condition (including conditions such as Anxiety or Depression)
- STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) (e.g. Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia)
- Don't know
- Other: (Please specify _____)

22. Are you actively using any of the following drugs? (Check ALL that apply)

- Crack
- Heroin
- Crystal Meth
- Cocaine
- Marijuana
- Ecstasy
- Other (Please specify _____)

23. Have you been in a drug treatment program in the last year? Yes No

24. Are you sexually active? Yes No

25. Are you practicing safer sex (using condoms) with your sexual partners.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Below are a list of services. Please check the **three** services that you are currently using and the **three** that would help you the most if you could get them.

Services	Put a check by the three (3) that you use that are most important to you	Put a check by the three (3) that would make the biggest difference in your life if you could get them
Substance Abuse Treatment and Counseling		
Mental Health Counseling		
Information about HIV and AIDS		
Complementary Therapies such as Massage and Acupuncture		
Dental Care		
Support Groups		
Meals and Food		
Buddy Support		
Case Management		
Help Finding Housing		
Help Paying for Housing		
Access to Health Care for HIV		
Access to Medications for HIV		
Help with Legal Problems		
Job Training		
Nursing Home Care		
Help Paying Utilities Bills		
Supportive or Transitional Housing		
Shelters		
HIV Drop-In Centers		
NONE OF THE ABOVE		