



OC In+Care

Newsletter for providers serving people living with HIV/AIDS in Orange County

In the previous issue of the In+Care newsletter, we discussed the effects of the Affordable Care Act and its impact on people living with HIV disease (PLWHD). In this issue of the In+Care newsletter, we will be discussing the importance of maintaining clients in continuous HIV medical care¹, how different service providers can increase the percentage of those in care, and provide examples of quality improvement activities that help engage clients in care.

***Orange County Goal:
By 2015, 72% of individuals living with HIV/AIDS will visit their doctor at least once every six months.***

Beginning in August 2014, the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) will be taking a closer look at the medical visit frequency of PLWHD in Orange County. OCHCA

is interested in increasing the percentage of HIV-positive clients who are maintained in continuous medical care. It is important for patients to stay in continuous care and see their doctor(s) regularly because it may lead to suppressed viral loads and ultimately overall better health outcomes². In April 2014, the HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB) published quality management performance measures and **recommended that all individuals living with HIV disease should see their medical provider at least once every six months.**

Orange County has a goal to increase the percent of PLWHD who are in continuous HIV medical care. Currently 83% of HIV-positive clients in Ryan White-funded medical care are seeing their doctor regularly. Only 60% of all HIV-positive clients in Orange County are maintained in continuous care³. With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, more clients

will access medical care outside the Ryan White system; therefore, the goal is to increase the percentage of HIV-positive clients in continuous medical care for Orange County to 72% by the end of 2015.

The following table provides an overview of the percent in continuous care compared to the 2015 goal.

In Medical Care	Ryan White	All OC
2010	79%	N/A ⁴
2013	83%	60%
2015 (Goal)	84%	72%

Orange County-Wide Quality Improvement Goal

Maintenance in medical care is the primary goal of the Ryan White program and all services provided should help ensure HIV medical care adherence. In order to meet the 2015 goal for Orange County, all service providers should ask their clients “When was the last time you saw your doctor?” and “When is your next doctor’s appointment?” Whether you are a mental health

¹ Continuous care is defined as having at least two medical visits, at least three months apart, in a 12-month period.

² Cheever, Laura W., & Doshi, Rupali K., HIV Care Retention and the Goal of an AIDS-Free Generation. Medscape. Retrieved from: www.medscape.com/viewarticle/778617

³ OC HIV Case Registry as of December 2013

⁴ Baseline data for all PLWHD in 2010 is not comparable to 2013 midpoint or 2015 goal.

provider, or a case manager, food bank provider, or other service provider, you should be asking your clients about their medical care and help them make it to their medical appointments, as appropriate. This quality improvement activity intends to engage patients in HIV medical care from all points of access.

Providers are also encouraged to create their own quality improvement activities to increase retention in care. For example, medical providers can try different reminder alerts to remind clients of their appointment. Case managers may use a strength-based approach to assist clients in attending their next medical appointment.

It is very important to have a good relationship between case managers and doctors. A good relationship allows for better coordination of care between providers. A client's case manager and medical provider should be communicating about the client's care on a regular basis.

From PLWHD

Each client is unique and has different needs and different views of what they would like to see from their doctor. See "My Doctor is the Best Because" box for some of the things clients look for in a medical provider.

My Doctor is the Best Because:

"He lets me know the reality of my situation. He fits me in when I need something urgent."

- **Corey, positive for 9 years**

"She cares, she's my reg Dr. & my HIV Specialist, she'll always see me when I need to see her."

- **Wes, positive for 29 years**

"He seems to me to be concerned about my health and goes above and beyond to make sure I get the care I need."

- **John, positive for 7 years**

"She fight to keep in my best of health and just about my wellbeing and tries to get what I need with referrals and appointments that are hard to get."

- **Kelly, positive for 27 years**

"Dentist ... is very respectful to me and is very good."

- **Kelly, positive for 27 years**

"He is very knowledgeable about my HIV."

- **Gilbert, positive for 25 years**

How to engage PLWHD

- Ask them if there are any barriers to attending medical appointments. Link them to support services, if applicable.
- Acknowledge their personal strengths and help them apply it to their treatment plan.
- Show that you care about their general well-being.
- Listen to their concerns and respond to their questions.
- Encourage clients to ask questions.
- Create a quality improvement activity to retain clients in care.
- Use posters, brochures, reminder cards to help clients remember to attend their medical appointment.
- Explain how important it is to attend medical visits even if they are *feeling* healthy so they can monitor changes in their health, get their medications and review their CD4 and Viral Load.

Visit:

<http://ochealthinfo.com/phs/about/dcepi/hiv/libehiv>
for more information.

ORANGE COUNTY HIV QUALITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



OC In+Care is a project of the Orange County HIV Quality Management Committee. The HIV Quality Management Committee works to increase the quality of Ryan White services. For more information about the committee, please call (714) 834-8063. If you have feedback or topic suggestions for future newsletters, please contact Mindy He at Mhe@ochca.com.

