

Colorado Community Health Network: Making Connections and Partnering on HIV and STD Education in Colorado

This issue brief is part of a series developed to orient FQHC and Ryan White providers and to help them develop partnerships to build HIV prevention and care capacity in their communities. Additional resources are available at www.hivclinician.org.

The Colorado Community Health Network (CCHN) is an association representing 18 community health centers (CHCs) at 147 sites across the state. The network's mission includes offering resources to help FQHCs provide high quality care. Two years ago CCHN, [regional](#) and [local](#) AIDS Education and Training Centers, and the [Denver Prevention Training Center](#) began building relationships to share educational resources on HIV and other sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention, screening, and treatment with Colorado's FQHCs.

Tips for Developing HIV Resource Information Sharing Partnerships

- **Build relationships over time**
- **Stay connected with standing meetings (bi-annual or quarterly), phone calls, and emails**
- **Plan to monitor and evaluate the partnership and outcomes**

Today, CCHN serves as a filter and portal, identifying resources most relevant to busy federally qualified health center (FQHC) clinicians focused on primary care, and facilitating HIV and STD information sharing.

The network's [website](#) provides links to training materials from the other organizations. CCHN's monthly electronic newsletter and bimonthly email blasts update FQHCs on available training programs for HIV and STD screening and prevention. CCHN coordinates forums, seminars, and visits where HIV physician experts present directly to FQHC medical directors at their health centers.

CCHN has also partnered with Ryan White-funded FQHCs to take the opportunities afforded by national meetings to showcase best practices, helping one, for example prepare an abstract highlighting the FQHC's integration of oral health and HIV care into the medical home model of care.

Tips for Ryan White Providers/AIDS Education and Training Centers/Prevention Training Centers

- Contact your [state Primary Care Association](#) to connect with FQHCs in your state
- Offer resources in formats easily accessible to busy clinicians, e.g., recorded webinars and online tools
- Develop flexible clinical training programs that limit time away from the FQHC, e.g., onsite mentoring or teleconference consultations

The partnership was driven in part by health care reform and the national push for the development of patient-centered medical homes (PCMHs), says Jessica Sanchez, RN, MS, FNP, chief quality officer at CCHN.

CCHN also is strengthening its relationship with the state health department which provides county level data on sexually transmitted diseases to help FQHCs developing PCMH models of care determine populations in their service areas who may be at risk for HIV. The resource sharing activities, for which CCHN receives no additional funding, fit well within CCHN's existing clinical quality improvement work, Sanchez says.

Key CCHN staff and members of the other organizations stay connected through phone calls, emails, and quarterly in-person meetings. Relationship building has been key to the success of the partnerships between the organizations, which are now more aware of what each offers and how each operates. "It's been a two-way learning process," says Sanchez, who hopes to begin documenting specific outcomes from the partnership.

For More Information

[Colorado Community Health Network](#)

Tips for Primary Care Associations and FQHCs

- Identify your regional and [state AIDS Education and Training Center](#) and [Prevention Training Center](#)
- Consider Prevention Training Centers as a resource for STD and HIV prevention tools
- Consider AIDS Education Training Centers as a resource for HIV care and treatment information. Integrate HIV education into your work focused on other special populations, e.g., the elderly, migrant and seasonal farm workers, residents of public housing, and individuals who are homeless
- Share your HIV-related successes and best practices at national meetings and other forums

This brief is part of a series developed by the HIV Medicine Association, National Association of Community Health Centers and the Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition to help build partnerships between FQHCs and Ryan White-funded providers. The project is supported with grants from MAC AIDS Fund and Janssen Pharmaceuticals.