

Staying Healthy Beyond HIV Medical Care

NC Positive Charge Initiative ★ www.NCcommunityAIDSfund.org

Resources for Access Coordinators – Tools

December 2011



HIV medical care is crucial, but it's not the only thing you need to do to stay healthy. Taking care of yourself in addition to getting HIV medical care will keep you healthier and happier. Sometimes you might not be able to get someone into care because there isn't a medical provider taking patients, they can't pay for medical care (or medications), they're not ready to be in medical care, or some other reason. We can still support them being healthy and help them prepare for when medical care is available or they are ready to go.

Other Health Care

Even if HIV care or medications are not available, other health care providers might be able to take your clients. They can help clients stay healthy, monitor their overall health, and keep an eye on the HIV.

Primary Care ❖ Vaccines ❖ Take care of your colds or flu ❖ Get an annual check-up

Other Specialty Care ❖ Diabetes ❖ Hepatitis ❖ Heart disease ❖ High blood pressure ❖ Gynecology and family planning ❖ Dental Care

Mental health ❖ Talk with a mental health provider ❖ Find a rehab program that works for you

General Wellbeing

We all have to take care of ourselves everyday - it's not just HIV that makes us feel bad. These are things we all should be doing to stay healthy.

Eat well ❖ Lean meats ❖ Vegetables ❖ Fruits ❖ Limit the unhealthy snack foods like chips, cookies, and candy ❖ Eat meals with your family or friends ❖ Eat meals at the table, not in front of the TV

Exercise ❖ Move around each day ❖ Take a walk ❖ Stretch ❖ Play tag with your children ❖ Clean the house

Healthy habits ❖ Stop smoking or cut down on smoking ❖ Stop drinking or cut down on drinking

Reduce stress ❖ Sit quietly ❖ Listen to music ❖ Take a bath ❖ Read ❖ Pat your dog ❖ Pray ❖ Get plenty of sleep

Social Supports

Social support systems help us get over problems, keep us upbeat and happy, remind us why we want to be healthy, and help us when we feel down.

Build up a network of people who you can talk with about your concerns ❖ Attend AA or NA meetings regularly ❖ Attend a support group

More ideas to support your clients

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Social Supports (continued)

Build up a network of people you have fun with ❖Spend time with your friends ❖Go to church
❖Eat dinner with your family or friends and talk ❖Find a group to play cards with ❖Join a bowling team

Be active in your community ❖Socialize with your neighbors ❖Walk around the block ❖Sing in the choir ❖Help out a neighbor

Take care of other things in your life

It's hard to focus on medical care when other things in our life are not right.

Manage your money ❖Make a monthly budget and stick to it

Stable, safe, comfortable housing

Healthy relationships ❖Be safe - use safer sex practices ❖Talk with your partner about happy things and things that trouble you ❖Do fun things together to build a strong relationship

Healthy families ❖Do homework with your children and talk with their teachers ❖Do fun activities together like playing games or cooking dinner

Get ready for medical care

Whether someone wants to be in care but it's not available or if someone's not sure they want to be in care, preparing for medical care can help someone when they do get it to adhere better.

Write down the questions you have for your medical care provider

Learn more about HIV

Think about how you feel about medications ❖Do you want to take them? ❖Would they fit into your life?

Think about what you want to get out of your medical care

Think about how you will get to appointments

As an Access Coordinator you can...

- ✓ Model good health and self-care.
- ✓ Attend your medical appointments and adhere to your medications.
- ✓ Talk with your client about the importance of regular health care and the benefit of a low viral load and high CD4 count.
- ✓ Set healthy goals with your client (cut down on the number of cigarettes they smoke daily, attend AA meetings every other day, get the flu vaccine...) and make a plan for how they will accomplish their goals (What support or skills do they already have to achieve their goals? What do they need?) Help your client identify all the of the skills and assets they have to help them succeed when they are ready for medical care.
- ✓ Help your client think about why it's important *for them* to live a healthy life (for their family, their children, their church, their sobriety, their community...).
- ✓ Keep your client's needs first but remember that our goal is get people into HIV medical care and our activities should advance that goal.