

# PROJECT CONNECT (CLIENT-ORIENTED NEW PATIENT NAVIGATION TO ENCOURAGE CONNECTION TO TREATMENT)

Evidence-Informed for Linkage to HIV Care

## INTERVENTION DESCRIPTION

### Goal of Intervention

- Improve linkage to HIV care

### Target Population

Recently diagnosed HIV clinic patients\*

### Brief Description

*Project CONNECT* is an intervention where recently diagnosed HIV patients have a scheduled orientation visit within 5 days of their initial call to the clinic. During the orientation visit, the Project Connect facilitator builds rapport with the new patient. The patient has a semi-structured interview, completes a psychosocial questionnaire, and undergoes baseline laboratory testing. The information gathered through the screening is used for prompting referrals to substance abuse, mental health, and other ancillary services, and facilitating rapid institution of prophylactic medications when necessary.

### Intervention Duration

- 1-hour orientation visit\*

### Intervention Setting

- HIV clinic

### Deliverer

- Facilitator/social worker

## INTERVENTION PACKAGE INFORMATION

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## EVALUATION STUDY AND RESULTS

### Study Location Information

The original evaluation was conducted in Birmingham, Alabama.

### Recruitment Settings

- HIV clinic

### Eligibility Criteria

New clinic patients who called to establish HIV care at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) 1917 Clinic.

### Study Sample

The Project CONNECT participants (n = 361) are characterized by the following:

- *56% racial minority; 44% white\**
- *76% Male; 24% Female\**
- *Mean age of 40 years\**

### Comparison

- Data from the Project CONNECT period (n = 361) between January 2007 and June 2008 were compared to data from the Pre-CONNECT period (n = 522) between 2004 and 2006 at the UAB 1917 Clinic.

### Relevant Outcomes Measured

- Linkage to HIV care was defined as attending a primary HIV provider visit within 6 months of the orientation visit.

### Significant Findings on Relevant Outcomes

- A significantly greater percentage of the participants receiving the Project CONNECT intervention attended a primary HIV provider visit within 6 months of orientation visit compared to the participants from the pre-CONNECT period (81% vs. 69%,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### Strengths

- The study used a serial cross-sectional design with comparable clinic samples.
- The study sample was  $\geq 100$ .

### Considerations

- None

**\*Information obtained from the author**

## REFERENCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Mugavero, M. J. (2008). [Improving engagement in HIV care: What can we do?](#) *Topics in HIV Medicine*, 16, 156-161.

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