

Community Approaches to Reducing STDs (CARS): 2011-2014 Highlights

PS11-1114 (Phase 1)

Awardees

Richmond City Health Department (RCHD)
Sentient Research (Los Angeles, CA)
University of Texas Health Science Center
Youth Outreach Adolescent Community Awareness Program (YOACAP)

Case Highlight

Richmond City Health Department

During the project period, RCHD aimed to address STD disparities among African Americans, teens and young adults. Four new community resource centers were established in Richmond City in areas with high STD morbidity, as well as high poverty and crime. Two of the four centers were located within low-income housing areas and provided STD screenings and other clinical services. They hired community advocates, members of the housing communities, to work in the housing community to promote service and provide referrals for medical and social services. Due to the golden ticket initiative, small monetary incentives for testing referrals, the number of males screened at centers increased more than 50%. Resource Center STD/HIV positivity rates averaged 12.5% over the project period.

Over 1,300 people were screened at community events, drop-in center and university events and yielded an STD/HIV positivity rate of 17.6%. RCHD effectively utilized their Community Advisory Board (CAB) to prioritize community resource centers within housing communities, community events and school screenings to improve healthcare access and address STD disparities.

Key social determinants of health

- Access to healthcare
- Education
- Employment
- Incarceration

Program activities

- Opened STD screening and clinical resource centers in low-income public housing communities
- Conducted STD/HIV testing via mobile unit in high morbidity neighborhoods and hosted health fairs
- Partnered with adolescent health partners to offer screenings at local high school
- Offered GED, literacy, computer and SAT prep classes
- Provided job readiness trainings

Successes

- Engaged interactive CABs comprised of at-risk populations
- Increased STD screening at resource centers in low-income public housing communities by over 25%
- Established rent and utility-free wellness center in public housing development
- Provided 1,093 referrals for social determinants of health (education, employment and incarceration) within target communities

Facilitators

- Effective community engagement techniques
- Relationships with local housing authority
- Strategic partnerships with local universities, health departments and clinical providers

Lessons Learned

- Maintain frequent, regular contact with partners and CAB
- Ensure that Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) are specific, identifying key deliverables
- Address programmatic challenges and make adjustments in a timely manner