

STD Prevention Training Centers: Supporting the STD Workforce

STD Prevention
**SUCCESS
STORIES**

Health care providers who treat STDs have a tough job. Fortunately, there's a strong network in place to support them in their work.

The National Network of STD Clinical Prevention Training Centers (NNPTC) provides training for health care providers with the goal of building STD and HIV prevention knowledge and capacity. Comprised of eight regional and seven national prevention training centers (PTCs), the NNPTC is funded by CDC and was created in partnership with state and local health departments and universities.

PTCs offer many different types of courses, including clinical lab experience, grand rounds, on-site, and web-based courses.

Every year, PTCs:

Train
25,000
professionals

Teach
500
courses

Facilitate
650
one-on-one
clinical assistance
sessions

PTCs are critical to building a strong STD prevention workforce. Here are two stories of PTCs whose innovative projects have gone above and beyond to meet the needs of providers.



Applying Anthropology to STD Research in St. Louis

Syphilis rates have been on the rise in recent years, with most cases concentrated in men who have sex with men (MSM) — especially those who are living with HIV. Since people with syphilis are more likely to get HIV, preventing syphilis can also help prevent HIV.

To address this problem, CDC challenged the St. Louis HIV/STD Prevention Training Center to get creative. Medical Director Brad Stoner knew this was a great opportunity to apply his training in medical anthropology. “Anthropology gives us the opportunity to step back and look at the community — things like social networks and cultural factors affect disease risk.”

To learn more about strategies men were using to prevent HIV and syphilis, Stoner and his team interviewed MSM. What they learned surprised them.

When choosing sexual partners in a community at high risk for HIV, men were taking a more nuanced approach than the research team anticipated. The team expected to hear about sex partner selection based on HIV status (in order to prevent getting or spreading it), but Stoner says it went beyond whether people had HIV or didn't. “They had much finer gradations of dividing partners into groups” — those who were using condoms or taking medication to reduce their HIV risk, for example.

These insights are already helping the St. Louis PTC improve patient care. They've added eight new questions to their clinical intake forms, opening the door for more direct and specific conversations about preventing syphilis and HIV.

“We need to do something different to change this trend,” Stoner says.

Stoner and his team hope this knowledge will help other PTCs and practices improve their standard of care. Nontraditional research like this, he believes, is critical to stopping syphilis.



Connecting Providers with STD Experts in Denver

According to John Fitch from the Denver PTC, “PTCs are the best kept secret in STD treatment and training.” Like all PTCs, the Denver PTC offers training for health care providers on the latest topics in STD prevention — but Fitch's team wanted to extend their expertise beyond typical training opportunities.

Denver PTC has always provided consultations to providers across the region on difficult STD questions. At first, it was on an informal basis, via email or phone. But following repeated enthusiastic feedback to the service, staff at the National Technological Innovation Center — housed at the Denver PTC — decided to pilot a more formalized online system. That's when the STD Clinical Consultation Network (STDCCN) was born.

And they didn't stop there. Denver PTC recently expanded STDCCN to all the PTCs nationwide so that, as Fitch says, “no matter where a clinician is, they can ask a question and get expert advice.” The transition has proven successful — the STDCCN received 450 consultations in its first year alone.

“No matter where a clinician is, they can ask a question and get expert advice, says Fitch.”

Now, the National Technological Innovation Center is working on building a mobile app that will allow any provider to request a consultation and access other useful information like the STD treatment guidelines and registration for continuing education courses.

“Our job is to make their jobs easier,” says Teri Anderson, Denver PTC's Clinical Coordinator. And by getting expert advice into providers' hands, Denver PTC is doing just that.

Learn **MORE** at cdc.gov/std

- [STD Prevention Courses](#)
- [National Network of STD Clinical Prevention Training Centers](#)