



HIV/AIDS Stigma is Not Over...

*A National Initiative:
Scaling Up Community-Based Strategies*



HIV/AIDS
ANTI-STIGMA INITIATIVE

Since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic over 25 years ago, stigma and discrimination have been major obstacles to effective prevention and care. The effect of stigma on people's ability to access HIV testing, counseling, care, treatment, and prevention messages varies from setting to setting; when present, stigma creates an environment where people may avoid HIV/AIDS-related services. HIV/AIDS stigma is compounded by other social prejudices based on race, ethnicity, gender, sex, immigration status, sexual orientation, and misconceptions of drug use and addiction.

A Framework for Addressing HIV/AIDS-Related Stigma in the United States

Even though education and awareness of HIV/AIDS has risen dramatically in the United States since the beginning of the epidemic, surveys show that the general public still has less empathy for individuals who acquire HIV infection through certain modes of transmission, i.e., sex and/or injecting drugs. The Academy for Educational Development Center on AIDS & Community Health (COACH), with support from the Ford Foundation, is implementing the next phase of our **National HIV/AIDS Anti-Stigma Initiative** to protect the human and social assets of those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The Initiative, which began in 2003, created a comprehensive framework to address HIV/AIDS-related stigma. That framework incorporates assistance to community-based and national organizations to implement anti-stigma projects; provision of technical assistance (TA); dissemination of research; and identification of avenues for sustainability.

Prior to the first phase of this Initiative, there was a growing body of research on HIV/AIDS-related stigma internationally, but little attention had been focused on creating models to address stigma in the U.S. Existing U.S.-based projects typically approached stigma as a side effect of another issue and remedied it by incorporating anti-stigma and discrimination activities into other HIV prevention programs. This Initiative deals with stigma directly: examining stigma's impact in the U.S. and capturing successful models that can be easily replicated by other national and community groups. Phase I of the Initiative, supported micro-level, individual-based models

implemented in five (5) communities (full descriptions are available at www.hivaidsstigma.org).

Phase II strives to change social discourse and practices by eliminating stereotypes, prejudices, and social inequalities that perpetuate HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination in our communities and nationally (see back page for descriptions of the five funded projects).

Program Development, Research, Technical Assistance, & Sustainability—The **programmatic component** awards grants to community-based and national organizations for projects addressing HIV/AIDS-related stigma; evaluates these projects; and documents lessons learned. The **research and dissemination component** includes linking grantees with researchers in the field, hosting HIV/AIDS-related anti-stigma symposia, continually conducting literature reviews of pertinent articles—domestically and internationally—on HIV/AIDS-related stigma; maintaining the Anti-Stigma Website (www.hivaidsstigma.org) with tools and resources, and publishing articles in key peer-reviewed HIV/AIDS, public health, or social science journals. The **TA component** includes assessing and addressing the funded organizations' TA needs. Through both phases of this Initiative, COACH has delivered TA related to: Monitoring and Evaluation; Curriculum Development, Packaging and Dissemination; Capacity-building and Infrastructure; and Health Communications/Social Marketing.

The sustainability component of this Initiative is essential to increase the number and types of HIV/AIDS-related anti-stigma models implemented in the U.S. Activities include, but are not limited to: the production of a film documenting various anti-stigma approaches; and a comprehensive search for foundations, private donors, and federal agencies interested in supporting anti-stigma projects locally and nationally. Generous support from the Ford Foundation has provided a strong start to work in the arena of stigma reduction. However, additional support is necessary to continue these efforts as the long-term goal of funding and researching promising approaches is to facilitate their replication by other national and community organizations in the U.S., and potentially to partners internationally.

Visit our website at www.hivaidsstigma.org

Summaries of the Phase II HIV/AIDS Anti-Stigma Initiative Projects

AIDS Survival Project (ASP), founded in Atlanta, GA, offers vital tools and support people living with HIV/AIDS need to lead healthy, productive lives. With funding from AED, ASP's anti-stigma project expands their THRIVE! Weekend program. The purpose of THRIVE! is to reduce HIV/AIDS-related stigma as a barrier to prevention, care, and treatment in two rural areas of Georgia. ASP's anti-stigma project has three main components: training; web-based technical assistance and a toolkit for rural communities to build their capacity to implement THRIVE!; and a Public Awareness Campaign to build support and engender community awareness about HIV/AIDS and the need for testing and prevention services.

Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center (A&PI Wellness Center) is the oldest HIV services organization targeting Asian and Pacific Islander communities. A&PI Wellness Center has a long history of developing and executing successful media campaigns focused on HIV/AIDS anti-stigma and discrimination, anti-homophobia, and sexual diversity. With funding from AED, A&PI Wellness Center is developing TALK AIDS, a national, bilingual social marketing campaign targeting Chinese Americans between 18-34 years old. TALK AIDS uses influential AP&I celebrities to influence candid discussions around discrimination, "saving face", and HIV/AIDS stigma. The main components of the campaign are to: produce one or two provocative national PSAs featuring well-known A&PI celebrities; develop a replication package of campaign materials, processes, and evaluation methods; produce a journal manuscript on the impact media and influential people can have in Chinese American communities across the US; and replicate the TALK AIDS campaign in other communities, particularly limited-English speaking communities.

Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) is a not-for-profit, volunteer-supported, community-based organization committed to national leadership in the fight against AIDS. GMHC's mission is to reduce the spread of HIV disease, help people with HIV maintain and improve their health and independence, and keep the prevention, treatment, and cure of HIV an urgent priority. With funding from AED, GMHC is developing the Anti-Stigma Awareness Program (ASAP), an HIV/AIDS anti-stigma awareness campaign that involves community members in the creation and dissemination of social marketing campaigns, and is designed to reduce stigma against

men who have sex men (MSM) of color, HIV-positive MSM, and transgender women. The end product of the campaign will be a population-based model approach which will include recruitment, a training curriculum, workshops, focus groups, the development, production, and dissemination of campaign materials for each of the three target communities, and evaluation of the project to facilitate its replication by other organizations.

Harm Reduction Coalition (HRC) is a national advocacy and capacity-building organization founded in 1993 that promotes the health and dignity of individuals and communities impacted by drug use. HRC advances policies and projects that help people address the adverse effects of drug use including overdose, HIV, Hepatitis C, addiction, and incarceration. With funding from AED, HRC's Syringe Exchange Communication Project aims to reframe the debate on syringe exchange in order to reduce stigma toward injection drug users (IDUs) and the practice of syringe exchange. HRC is pursuing media strategies and outreach efforts primarily through print and web media. The approach is to develop effective and diverse messages for targeted audiences; produce materials for education and advocacy, based on those messages; and organize and educate target audiences including key policymakers and media outlets.

National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States providing a Latino perspective in five key areas – assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. NCLR works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans through its network of nearly 300 affiliated CBOs. With funding from AED, NCLR is developing Salud es Cultura: Protegete, a national HIV prevention project to reduce stigma and HIV risk among U.S. Latinos. The main components of Salud es Cultura: Protegete are to (1) reduce HIV/AIDS-related stigma within Latino communities through a portable promotores (peer education) project designed to provide accurate and culturally appropriate HIV prevention and outreach information; (2) engage promotores infected or affected by HIV in the development and testing; (3) evaluate the project's effectiveness; and (4) disseminate the full kit to 100 promotores at no fewer than 16 CBOs seeking to develop HIV/AIDS peer education projects targeting Latinos.