

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM SURVEY- Infectious Disease

Contact Information

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Short Title: Syphilis reduction through intense strike team intervention in the Houston area

Program Location: Houston / Harris County / Texas

Objectives and Goals:

The mission is to protect and serve Houstonians in disease prevention. Traditionally, STD programs perform routine duties of partner services, education and outreach coordination in disease intervention. The Strike Team conducts these activities in a creative and innovative way, which teaches the DIS to be more case conscientious and supervisors to be assiduous in reaching disease intervention. The Strike Team concept was based upon the CDC Syphilis Elimination Rapid Response Team and the Incident Command Structure. It focuses on alternative STD program strategies that address the current trends and identified risk behaviors of affected and infected clients for prevention efforts.

Methods:

The Strike Team utilizes emergency preparedness and response principles of the federal National Incident Management Structure (NIMS). Objectives include:

1. Conduct weekly assurance case reviews on all cases submitted for closure
2. Identify possible training opportunities for DIS/Supervisor skill development
3. Ensure no missed opportunities exist
4. Achieve an 85% goal on the Funding Period STD Intervention Objectives (FPO)
5. Commence Strike activities when the FPO reaches a threshold of 65%

Each team member reviews cases ensuring that case classifications are correct, disease intervention has taken place and related screening opportunities are exhausted. Each case reviewed for DIS and Supervisory management improvement, training opportunities and prospects for community screenings.

Program Length:

September 2008 – March 2009

Number of target population reached by effort:

The target population is a snapshot of disease that is present in the Houston/Harris County area. These individuals are repeatedly exposed to STDs and HIV and we are there to provide an intervention that would benefit the communities at risk. 3,018 priority syphilis field records were reviewed by the Strike Team

Demographic Info:

A demographic breakout of all priority syphilis filed records reviewed by the Strike Team is as follows:

- Male: 1762
- Female: 1256
- Average age: 34
- White, Hispanic: 555
- White, non-Hispanic: 385
- Black, non-Hispanic: 1602
- Asian, non-Hispanic: 47
- American Indian: 6
- Race other/unknown: 423

Overall Cost:

The estimated cost of staff time to conduct Strike Team activities during the project period is \$42,000.00.

Funding Sources:

90 % Federal (CDC STD Prevention passed through Texas DSHS)
10 % Local
 percentages ARE estimates

Outcomes:

	August 2008	March 2009
New syphilis cases interviewed	83%	97%
New syphilis cases interviewed within 3 days of assignment	77%	86%
New syphilis cases with at least one partner receiving treatment	50%	71%
Patients needing follow-up for syphilis are examined within 7 days	71%	79%

Did you make any estimates regarding costs deferred, outbreaks averted or deaths prevented?

204 patients exposed to syphilis were given preventive treatment.

Additional Information:

As health programs strive to provide best practices and to make public health impact in the battle of eliminating STDs, HDHHS implemented a strategic system to improve STD services in the community. The value of using strategic systems and processes provides programs a heightened awareness of emerging trends in the community. This presents opportunities to develop and implement strategic

goals and objectives that ultimately result in offering clients with optimal services. Although the initial focus of the Strike Team process was for disease intervention and prevention through reaching our funding period objectives, the end result was that the STD program staff benefitted from this strategy through increased training and analytical skills building. The major public health issue that was addressed by the Strike Team concept was improvement of case management activities that directly affect the local and state disease rates of infectious syphilis and HIV. Having such strategy based upon the CDC syphilis elimination rapid response concept and the Incident Command Structure allowed the program and Strike Team members to readily outline strengths, weaknesses and barriers which traditionally would have been overlooked. This style of quality assurance oversight enhanced the STD/HIV program's readiness for any type of situation that could arise. The program now has key individuals in place and ready to be called for duty at moment's notice.

Future Plans:

The Strike Team now operates in a "stand down" mode since the HIV/STD and Viral Hepatitis Program has met the Funding Period Objectives and State objectives for the past six months; with operational plans in place to commence when necessary. HDHHS utilizes the City's general funds and has incorporated grant funds from CDC and Texas Department of State Health Services in order to sustain the program.