

# **Northeast Indiana Positive Resource Connection, INC.**

*Serving northeast Indiana since 1985*

*Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, Jay, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, Whitley*

**Report for the year ending December 31, 2017**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Northeast Indiana Positive Resource Connection, Inc. is to prevent new cases of HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis, and STDs and advance a compassionate and stigma-free community response.

## **STATEMENT OF CORE VALUES**

We believe that individuals who are HIV positive deserve compassionate and comprehensive assistance in living full and productive lives. We believe that with proper medical care and treatment, people with HIV can achieve an undetectable viral load even with several barriers in which they may face such as poverty. We believe that public knowledge about HIV, AIDS, Hepatitis and STDs can contribute to lower rates of infection, better understanding of the diseases, and less discrimination against those who are HIV positive. Finally, we believe that participation of diverse populations in all aspects of the organization improves the quality of service for everyone involved with the Positive Resource Connection.

## **PROGRAM SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In 2017, the Positive Resource Connection (PRC) addressed its strategic priorities by working to ensure those living with HIV had access to direct medical care and other supportive services for increased adherence to medical care and treatment; targeted populations heavily impacted by new HIV infection through prevention education and HIV testing; linked people diagnosed with HIV into care coordination services and medical care; and developed relationships with medical providers and other supportive service agencies for direct and indirect services. The Positive Resource Connection is contracted with the Indiana State Department of Health to provide HIV Services to individuals living with HIV, HIV and Hepatitis C testing targeting populations heavily impacted by new HIV infection, and a specialized support program for persons living with HIV who have substance use disorder. Because PRC is contracted with the state department of health, the agency serves eleven counties in northeast Indiana for HIV Services and twelve counties for HIV and Hepatitis C testing.

In 2017, the Positive Resource Connection completed Phase III of its marketing campaign targeting persons who inject drugs for HIV and Hepatitis C testing. PRC developed a video raising awareness about the importance of getting tested for HIV and Hepatitis C if someone is using needles as well as informing people about the benefits of engaging in HIV services if HIV positive. This video will be on PRC's website and shown to various organizations and groups throughout northeast Indiana.

The Positive Resource Connection and Parkview Hospital continued its partnership with the on-site medical clinic specifically for high risk clients who are not adhering to treatment and vulnerable to dropping out of care and treatment and for clients who are newly diagnosed or have re-engaged back into care and have not been prescribed antiretroviral therapy. The clinic time was expanded to once a week as opposed to twice a month. This clinic, which is housed at the Positive Resource Connection, not only expedites medical care and treatment from a few months to only a few weeks but breaks down transportation barriers for high risk clients not able to make traditional appointments; allows for quicker turnaround time of getting lab work so clients can start medication therapy for viral load suppression; and enables medical providers and care coordinators to monitor clients' adherence to medication protocols. In 2017, 35 HIV positive clients have accessed the clinic.

Through collaborations with Parkview Infectious Disease staff, PRC also offers an on-site PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) clinic for HIV negative individuals to receive medication that would prevent them from becoming

infected with HIV. Coupled with safer sex and/or needle sharing practices, this medication will greatly decrease HIV infection rates in northeast Indiana. In 2017, 54 individuals accessed PRC's PrEP clinic.

In 2017, through a grant from the Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis, the Positive Resource Connection was able to provide on-site mental health counseling for HIV positive clients. PRC partnered with Headwaters Counseling to provide counseling to clients three days a week who are struggling with issues of substance use, mental health issues such as depression, or psychosocial issues of living with HIV/AIDS. This service will increase adherence to medical care and treatment since mental health issues play a significant reason as to why some clients are not adhering to care and achieving an undetectable viral load.

The Syringe Services Program, which is overseen by the Fort Wayne-Allen County Health Department but housed at PRC's clinic once a week, has proven to be beneficial for persons who are injecting drugs. Since November 2016, a total of 949 individuals have visited the program with 310 new visits and 639 returning visits. A total of 39,940 needles have been distributed with 9,230 given out in first visit where no needles are exchanged and 30,710 needles have been distributed with used needles being brought back. Exchange rate of used needles being brought back after the initial visit is 99%.

The Syringe Services Program also offers auxiliary services including wound care, HIV and Hepatitis C testing and counseling, and drug and alcohol treatment. The Fort Wayne-Allen County Health Department partners with Aspin who provides an on-site Health Navigator to enroll individuals who are not insured into a health insurance plan and Clean Slate and Park Center who provide on-site treatment counseling for individuals wanting to receive help for their substance use issues.

In 2017, the Positive Resource Connection received funding from the Indiana State Department of Health for HIV Prevention and HIV Services. Through prevention dollars, PRC was able to expand HIV testing by hiring an additional full time HIV tester in northeast Indiana and received new funding to hire a Biomedical Prevention Coordinator to educate medical providers on prescribing PrEP to their patients, assist HIV negative individuals in accessing PrEP through PRC's clinic or their medical doctor, and locate HIV positive individuals who have dropped out of care and treatment and engage them back into medical care and HIV services for viral load suppression. The additional HIV tester and Biomedical Prevention Coordinator will begin in January 2018.

Through Ryan White Supplemental Funding through the state department of health, PRC can purchase cell phones to better connect with HIV positive clients when care coordinators are not in the office. Through these devices PRC can send text message reminders to clients on taking their medications or reminders for medical appointments, hold conference calls when care coordinators are not able to attend medical appointments, and be more accessible to clients when care coordinators are not in office. With care coordinators having more accessibility to clients, clients are more likely to stay engaged in care and adhere to treatment which promotes better health through viral load suppression.

Through HIV Services in 2017, the care coordination department provided services to 438 individuals living with HIV and worked with them on adherence to medical care and treatment for viral load suppression and provided assistance to eliminate any barriers that may prohibit them from staying engaged in care and treatment. In 2017, clients accessed internal and external community resources that included health insurance, housing and utility assistance, food and nutrition, medical care and treatment, legal assistance, education, support groups, and counseling. Care coordination services are enhanced by a Spanish-speaking care coordinator, support specialist for clients with substance use issues, a housing coordinator to prevent homelessness among HIV positive individuals, and a Burmese interpreter who assists in eliminating language and cultural barriers to PRC's Burmese clients in accessing services. The Positive Resource Connection also owns and operates a 17-unit residential facility for persons living with HIV and offers one-bedroom and efficiency units all with full kitchen and baths. Through its care coordination program in 2017, 79% of clients

served through care coordination services achieved an undetectable viral load (very little HIV in the body) which is well above the national average of 35%.

Through Prevention Services, the outreach services department provided prevention education, awareness, outreach, and HIV testing and counseling to populations heavily impacted by new HIV infection, as well as the general public. Specific prevention programs targeted at-risk youth, women, African American and Latino men and women, Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), especially young gay men, substance users including people who inject drugs, and other at-risk and underserved populations in twelve counties in northeast Indiana. To raise awareness on the impact of HIV/STD infections and reduce stigma surrounding HIV, outreach staff participated in a number of health and community events and conducted street outreach as well as outreach on social dating sites targeting MSM. In 2017, more than 7,000 individuals in northeast Indiana gained new knowledge about HIV, AIDS, STDs, and viral Hepatitis. In 2017, the Positive Resource Connection also provided free HIV and Hepatitis C testing through rapid or conventional testing and conducted testing during HIV prevention educations, at special events, street outreach, in-house, and at various public testing sites throughout PRC's twelve county region. In 2017, the Positive Resource Connection conducted 1,330 HIV tests and 675 Hepatitis C tests.

In addition to care and support to those living with HIV and ongoing educational and HIV testing efforts, the Positive Resource Connection raised community awareness through public events like National Black HIV Awareness Day in February, National Day of Testing in June, National Gay Men's HIV Awareness Day in September, National Latino HIV Awareness Day in October, and World AIDS Day in December.

Volunteers worked alongside professional staff in assisting with office work, committee projects, and event planning. Volunteers played an important role in the Gregory Manifold Food Pantry by hosting pantry parties so people living with HIV could have access to more food and nutrition.

To raise funds for its programs and to increase awareness on HIV, the Positive Resource Connection sponsored the 21<sup>st</sup> annual AIDS Walk in May at Parkview Field and in October received funds raised by the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Gay and Lesbian Dinner Dance, for which the Positive Resource Connection was the fiscal agent and financial recipient of funds raised.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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### **AFFILIATIONS**

*HIV Care Coordination, Special Populations Support Program, and the HIV Testing program are supported by the Indiana State Department of Health. The Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS is a program through the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. The Positive Resource Connection is a Partner Agency of the United Way of Allen County.*

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2017**

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### **STAFF, 2017**

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Front Desk Assistance, Reggie Troutt  
Director of Client Services, Sara Seifert  
Care Coordinator, Megan Perry  
Care Coordinator, Seth Korman  
Care Coordinator, Meg Olivo  
Care Coordinator, Kellen Lewis  
Lead Care Coordinator, Kathleen Menefee  
Care Coordinator, Rachel Hansen

P/T Care Coordinator, Terry Taylor  
Housing Coordinator, Arien Dillon  
Addictions Specialist, Vanessa Hicks  
Comprehensive Coordinator, Niki Whitlock  
Director of Outreach Services, Kandace Kelly  
Education Coordinator, Barb McKee  
Community Outreach Coordinator, Timothy Price  
CTR Outreach Coordinator, Ken Redmon  
Prevention Outreach Coordinator, Patricia Veazy

### **DONORS & UNDERWRITERS, 2017**

#### **Operating / Event Support**

Foellinger Foundation  
Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne  
PHP Foundation  
Ian & Mimi Rolland Foundation  
Gay & Lesbian Dinner Dance  
80/20 Foundation  
St. Joseph Community Health Foundation

#### **Program for Clients**

Indiana State Department of Health  
The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis  
United Way of Allen County  
Waterfield Foundation  
MAC AIDS Fund  
Indiana Housing & Comm. Development Authority  
Broadway Care/Equity Fights AIDS  
Plymouth Congregational Church

#### **Capital / Asset / Capacity Building Support**

The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis  
Gilead Sciences  
K21 Health Foundation

#### **Syringe Services Program**

The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis

#### **Outreach / Prevention / Linkage to Care**

Lincoln Financial Group Foundation  
Community Action Group  
Parkview Community Health Improvement  
Maximus Foundation  
Fort Wayne Health & Education Foundation  
Indiana State Department of Health  
The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis  
PNC Foundation – English, Bonter, Mitchel  
K21 Health Foundation

***The Northeast Indiana Positive Resource Connection, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions to Positive Resource Connection are tax deductible to the full extent provided by law.***

***The fiscal year 2016 audit and 990 form, prepared by Haines, Isenbarger & Skiba, Certified Public Accountants, is available in the Positive Resource Connection's office and on the web site at [www.positiveresourceconnection.org](http://www.positiveresourceconnection.org).***