

**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, 2020**

### **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 barriers 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 2020, 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 by 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, a specialized support program for persons living with HIV who have substance use disorder, and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Navigation Services. The agency serves eleven counties in northeast Indiana for HIV Services and twelve counties for HIV and Hepatitis C testing and PrEP Navigation Services.

The Positive Resource Connection and Parkview Hospital's Infectious Disease staff continued its partnership with the on-site specialized clinic specifically for high needs HIV positive 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, 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 2020, 10 HIV positive clients accessed the clinic.

In 2020, PRC received funds from the Indiana Department of Health to assist patients in accessing PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) and to enroll qualified patients on Unified which is the state's health insurance program for PrEP patients who are underinsured or uninsured. By implementing PrEP navigation services and continuing with the PrEP clinic through collaborations with Parkview Infectious Disease staff, more individuals in northeast Indiana have access to PrEP for the prevention of HIV which

will greatly reduce overall infection rates in northeast Indiana. In 2020, 149 individuals were enrolled in PrEP navigation services.

In 2020, the Positive Resource Connection continued providing on-site mental health counseling for HIV positive clients through tele-conference due to COVID-19. PRC partnered with Headwaters Counseling to provide counseling to clients one day a week who are struggling with issues of substance use, mental health issues such as depression, or psychosocial issues of living with HIV/AIDS. In 2018, PRC expanded mental health counselling for HIV positive clients and collaborated with Volunteers of America to assist in providing tele-med psychiatric services for persons needing additional counseling including medication therapy for their mental health issues. In 2020, 32 clients accessed on-site mental health counseling and/or tele-med psychiatric services.

In 2020, PRC updated its Clinical Quality Management Plan and met quarterly with consumers representing PRC's priority populations to look at trends in services, quality improvements for its programs, and gaps in services.

In July 2020, PRC expanded services and hired a full-time Viral Hepatitis Case Manager to assist and navigate individuals who are confirmed positive for Hepatitis C in accessing health insurance and medical care for the treatment of Hepatitis C. PRC is one of 5 agencies in the state chosen to implement this new program and worked with the Indiana Department of Corrections in navigating individuals recently released from prison who are Hepatitis C positive to assist them in their treatment of Hepatitis C until they are cured. This program serves all of the northeast and northwest counties in the in the state.

Also, in 2020, PRC was invited by the Indiana Department of Health to participate in the Community Health Improvement Initiative (CHII) to address HIV health disparities among young gay, bi-sexual, and other men who have sex with men. Through this initiative, PRC, other AIDS service organizations, and the state department of health are developing a coordinated response to address barriers that are preventing young men who have sex with men in accessing services if HIV positive, PrEP services if HIV negative, and getting tested so they are aware of their status.

Through HIV Services in 2020, the Non-Medical Case Management provided services to 413 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 2020, 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. Non-Medical Case Management services are enhanced by a Spanish-speaking case manager, support specialist for clients with substance use issues, a housing coordinator to prevent homelessness among HIV positive individuals, and a contracted Burmese interpreter who assists in eliminating language and cultural barriers to PRC's Burmese clients in accessing services. Through Non-Medical Case Management services in 2020, 94% of clients served achieved an undetectable viral load (very little HIV in the body).

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. In 2020, the Positive Resource Connection provided free HIV and Hepatitis C testing through rapid or conventional testing reaching 396 individuals for HIV testing and 89 individuals for Hepatitis C testing.

### **COVID-19**

COVID-19 did not have a significant impact on service/program delivery for the Non-Medical Case Management department even though all staff within the department had been working remotely for most of 2020. PRC notified the Indiana Department of Health in March 2020 and followed the state's protocols in ensuring that services to HIV positive individuals continued without interruption. During COVID, all HIV positive clients continued to receive internal assistance programs such as housing and utility assistance, transportation assistance through bus passes and Uber Health, medical financial assistance, and food vouchers; had access to external community referrals and Burmese interpretation services; and received perishable and non-perishable food items and hygiene products through PRC's internal food pantries. Primary care physicians and infectious disease doctors at Lutheran and Parkview saw clients via tele-med or in-person (once COVID restrictions were lifted) and case managers attend these appointments virtually so they could stay engaged in client's medical care and treatment plans. Case managers continued enrolling new clients in services and ensured that they received immediate medical care and treatment through Lutheran or Parkview. During the pandemic, PRC has continued and will continue to work with clients on adherence to medical treatment for viral load suppression and provide resources to create financial stability and independence. This includes assisting HIV positive clients in obtaining health care, insurance, lab work, and treatment; educating them on the importance of adherence; and providing internal programs and community referrals to eliminate barriers that may prevent them from staying in care such as poverty, substance use, or homelessness.

For testing in 2020, COVID had an impact on the number of people reached through testing and education. PRC suspended all HIV and Hepatitis C testing in-house and in the community in late March 2020 and resumed in-house testing and testing at county health departments in July 2020. Due to the uptick in COVID cases in northeast Indiana, PRC suspended testing in October, November, and December 2020. This resulted in less people getting tested for HIV and Hepatitis C in 2020. For persons wanting tested for HIV and Hepatitis C during the suspension, persons were referred to the Fort Wayne-Allen County Health Department who was conducting testing on a limited basis or they were put on a list to be contacted once PRC resumes testing. PRC notified the Indiana Department of Health of the suspension and resumed testing in-house in 2021.

For PrEP, COVID-19 did not significantly impact or interrupt PrEP navigation services in 2020. Both PrEP navigators were able to work remotely and referred all patients to Quest Laboratories or the Fort Wayne-Allen County Health Department for needed lab work due to the suspension of in-house PrEP testing at PRC. Primary care physicians and infectious disease doctors were able to meet with patients virtually or teleconference and began seeing patients in office when COVID restrictions were lifted. PrEP patients continued to receive PrEP financial assistance and those who qualified were successfully enrolled in Unified once the state discontinued PrEP financial assistance in June 2020.

The specialized clinic for HIV positive and PrEP patients was suspended due to COVID in March and resumed in August 2020. The PrEP clinic was again suspended in October due to increase in COVID

cases but doctors continued seeing newly diagnosed HIV positive individuals. The clinic for PrEP resumed in 2021.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Northeast Indiana Positive Resource Connection, Inc. 260.744.1144  
525 Oxford Street 1.800.417.3085  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46806 Fax 260.745.0978  
[www.positiveresourceconnection.org](http://www.positiveresourceconnection.org) info@neiprc.org

### **AFFILIATIONS**

*Non-Medical Case Management, Special Populations Support Program, PrEP Navigation Services, Viral Hepatitis Case Management, and the HIV and Hepatitis C Testing program are supported by the Indiana 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, 2020**

Anne Simerman, <i>President</i> Steel Dynamics	Walgreens Pharmacy Rob Boyd
Sonya Snellenberger-Holm, <i>Vice President</i> NE Indiana Regional Partnership	3Rivers Federal Credit Union Bradford Ziebell
Gary Zwierzynski, <i>Treasurer</i> Parkview Health	JPM Chase Leonard Helfrich
Ken Shields, <i>Secretary</i> Parkview Health	Community Volunteer Kaitlyn Pozorski
Dr. Jason Bailey Parkview Hospital	Visiting Nurse and Hospice Kenson Dhanie
Karrington Craig Walgreens	Mike Thomas Associates Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow
Kevin Hunter Fort Wayne Police Department	Visiting Nurse and Hospice

### **STAFF, 2020**

Executive Director, Jeff Markley	Comprehensive Coordinator, Niki Whitlock
Front Desk Assistance, Dick Rison/Reggie Troutt	Director of Outreach Services, Kandace Kelly
Director of Client Services, Sara Seifert	HIV Testing Coordinator, Kyrie'
Case Manager, Megan Perry	Hernandezperterson
Case Manager, Vanessa Arroyo	Community Outreach Coordinator, Charity Storey
Case Manager, Meg Olivo	HIV Testing Coordinator, Ken Redmon
Case Manager, Lauren Walters	Prevention Outreach Coordinator, Patricia Veazy
Lead Case Manager, Kathleen Menefee	Biomedical Prevention Coordinator, Timothy Price
Case Manager, Rachel Hansen	PrEP Case Manager, Ricky Rice
Case Manager, Terry Taylor	Viral Hepatitis Case Manager, Carsan Cunningham
Housing Coordinator, Arien Dillon	
Addictions Specialist, Vanessa Hicks	

**DONORS & UNDERWRITERS, 2020**

*Operating / Event Support*

Foellinger Foundation  
Community Foundation of Greater Ft. Wayne  
Donald Wood & Dar Richardson Foundation  
Dinner Dance  
St. Joseph Community Health Foundation

*Programs for Clients*

The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis  
United Way of Allen County  
Waterfield Foundation  
MAC AIDS Fund  
Indiana Housing & Comm. Development Authority  
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS  
Indiana Department of Health  
3Rivers Foundation  
Plymouth Congregational Church

*Outreach / Prevention / Linkage to Care*

Indiana Department of Health  
Community Action Group  
Parkview Community Health Improvement  
Kuhne Foundation  
Ft. Wayne Health & Education Foundation  
PNC Foundation – English, Bonter, Mitchell  
The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis

*Syringe Services Program*

The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis

***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 2020 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).***