



WestCAP WORDS

WESTERN COLORADO AIDS PROJECT

805 Main Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501
(970) 243-2437 or 1-800-765-8594

October-November 2010

“There are endless possibilities in every present moment...”

Important Numbers:

WestCAP:
(970) 243-2437
1-800-765-8594

website:
www.westcap.info

ADAP program:
1-866-499-2879

HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Service:
1-800-448-0440

CDC National Hotline:
800-342-2437 (English);
800-344-SIDA (en español); 800-243-7889
(for people who have a hearing impairment)

Western Colorado HIV Specialty Care Clinic:
Lucy Graham: 255-1735, or
toll-free @ 866/448-8383

Office Hours
are
Monday-Friday,
8:30 AM-5:00 PM.

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STRATEGY, VISION.....THE FUTURE



Strategy can be the most elusive and most difficult for anyone to contemplate, especially an agency delivering services. It almost requires a crystal ball in order to develop a good strategy. Strategy is something we all use to navigate through day-to-day events as well as tougher decisions about life. It is something that agencies need to think about in order to continue providing effective services and make the most difference when delivering care. Strategy requires questions to be answered such as where does our agency need to be, how do we want to get there, what path should we take, and so on. A strategic plan needs to have achievable, long-term goals while meeting the needs of clients. Sounds challenging, doesn't it?

In July, the White House developed the “National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States” which lists three primary goals. These are: “1) reducing the number of people who become infected with HIV, 2) increasing access to care and optimizing health outcomes for people living with HIV, and 3) reducing HIV-related health disparities.” (The full document can be found at www.WhiteHouse.gov/ONAP.) There is also a Federal Implementation Plan that outlines the steps to achieve these goals (accessed at the same website). Although this is a national strategy with steps the government needs to take, it is clear that it is the job of all the sectors to work together in order to create effective programs. The challenge that remains is *how* that will happen.

The National HIV/AIDS Strategy goals are in line with goals WestCAP has been working towards since its inception. These continue to be our goals and as WestCAP looks at moving forward, strategizing about our future, there is a lot to take into consideration in trying to achieve those goals. Today's environment seems to be steadily changing and shifting. Health care reform, legislative changes, different funding initiatives, budget issues, and community needs all play a role in how we answer those questions. The traditional model of strategic planning requires a three-year plan with action steps toward those goals but, when things change so steadily, is this the best approach? It seems that when one strategy is put in place, inevitably something shifts, a new consideration pops up, and the response needs to change to address the new concern.

Without a crystal ball, maybe the best strategy is to be ready to respond. Maybe the strategic questions need to be considered daily. Agencies need to constantly assess what is happening on all levels from the government, funding, and the community. and just be ready. WestCAP will continue with this approach as well as looking broader- and longer-term. We will continue to talk to funders, the community. and our clients to assess our long-term goals and to determine that we are meeting current needs. And we will continue to ask that all sectors become a partner with WestCAP when planning the future of HIV care and prevention.

So, what is the future for HIV care and prevention? Without that crystal ball, it is difficult to predict, but WestCAP promises to be at those discussions, listening to the community and making sure our clients remain our primary focus.

Mary Beth Luedtke, Executive Director

CLIENT SERVICES & OTHER NEWS

CASE MANAGEMENT TIDBITS

Heads Up: The client holiday party is coming up. If you are interested in volunteering to help coordinate this event, please contact your Case Manager.

Thank You!: We had a good response for the client Questionnaire and Survey. Results were given at the annual Priority Setting meeting that was held on September 20th. If you are interested in getting a copy of the results, please talk with your Case Manager.

Big Changes: As we all know, the world of HIV is ever changing. Right now it often seems like we are riding a roller coaster. The economy, increase in clientele, and changes in health care reform are driving many anticipated upcoming changes for everyone. WestCAP Case Managers will try our best to keep you informed of relevant changes.

Need Help Getting Your Meds?: Costs of medical prescriptions are expensive – especially for HIV. If you are having difficulty paying for your medications or co-pays, please talk with your Case Manager. There are many programs available to assist you. If the medication you are prescribed is no longer available on the ADAP formulary, there may be Prescription Assistance Programs available to assist you. WestCAP also continues to administer an Insurance Assistance Program to help cover the cost of HIV medications.

Medicare D: It's that time of year again! Time to renew your Medicare D plan. If you need help choosing a plan or reviewing your existing plan, please contact your Case Manager or a SHIP counselor (Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program) or go online. SHIP: 1-800-696-7213 or SHIP@dora.state.co.us Medicare: 1-800-633-4227 or www.medicare.gov

Make An Appointment: If you need to meet with a Case Manager, please call ahead for an appointment. We cover 22 counties and are often in meetings, on the phone, or out of the office. We want to be able to dedicate our time to assist you and may not be available without an appointment.

Confidentiality: A gentle reminder to be respectful of any other people that you may see while in the WestCAP office. They may be a client, here for a test, here for supplies, or for some other reason. It is important that we all keep confidentiality at the forefront of our minds when visiting the office. Thank you!

Clinic: Slots for medical appointments are filling up quickly these days. Please make an appointment as soon as the need arises or as soon as possible for your quarterly visit. Preventative care leads to healthy living.

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go."

—Dr. Seuss (*Oh, the Places You'll Go!*)

CHILI'S® IS PROUD TO SUPPORT Western Colorado AIDS Project

With each flyer presented on Western Colorado AIDS Project Night, Chili's will donate 10% of the sales you bring in to your organization. Let us do the cooking and support Western Colorado AIDS Project at the same time!

Western Colorado AIDS Project Night is:
Wednesday October 20th, 2010
from 11am to 10pm

Chili's logo with a red chili pepper and the text "PEPPER UP SOME MORE".

Give Back Night flyer required with each check to receive credit for the sale. Sale cannot be included in donation amount without flyer. Offer only valid on the date and location stated above. Donations will not be given on sales made prior to or past this date.

Here is a great way to support WestCAP! Present this coupon/flyer to your server at Chili's (584 24 ½ Road, Grand Junction—near Mesa Mall) on October 20th for lunch or dinner and 10% of your bill will be donated back to WestCAP! This is a fun way to help WestCAP while enjoying a relaxing meal out! See you there!

CLIENT SERVICES

How does smoking tobacco affect the HIV + person?

Smoking tobacco is adverse to anyone's health, but specifically in the following ways to the HIV+ person:

- Studies have found that HIV+ people are more likely to develop lung cancer when compared to the general population.
--Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Cigarette smoking increases the likelihood of getting thrush, oral hairy leukoplakia, PCP pneumonia, and MAC (mycobacterium avium complex), all of which if acquired will increase the progression to AIDS. The MAC bacteria was found in tobacco, cigarette papers, and filters in four of the major brands of cigarettes. This bacteria (MAC) survives the smoking process!
--Los Angeles AIDS Project

Reasons to Quit:

- Save thousands of dollars per year!
 - Save 15-20% on most health insurance premium (<http://ehealthinsurance.com/health101/smoking-health-insurance-premiums/>)
 - Have few colds and a stronger immune system.
 - Younger, fresher looking skin.
- And many, many more...

Quit Tips:

- Set a quit date: some people pick a special date.
- Make a commitment to quit: some people make a contract with themselves
- Prepare to quit: get rid of ashtrays and whatever you use when you smoke
- Plan for withdrawals and any cravings: nicotine replacement etc...
- Maintenance-stay smoke free: be aware of triggers and prepare for them

Check out the [Colorado Quitline](#) website to get information and free materials to help you in your effort to stop smoking.

—Jenny Vargas, Client Services Advisor

BOOK AND SOUP

During the fall months I find it rather enjoyable to sit down to a good book and some warm soup so I decided to change up the Dinner and a Movie section. A book I, recently read and found to be a rather fast enjoyable read was [The Meaning of Matthew](#) by Judy Shepard.

Today, the name Matthew Shepard is synonymous with gay rights, but before his 1998 murder, Matthew was a son. Judy Shepard, (Matthew Shepard's mother) writes of her loss, memories of Matthew, and the event that changed the meaning of Matthew. The book follows the Shepard family in the days immediately after the crime, Judy and her husband's travel to see their son, Judy's memories of Matthew throughout his life, the response from strangers across America, and the struggles navigating Matthew's murderers' trials. Judy Shepard discusses how she handled the loss, why she became a gay rights activist, and challenges and rewards of raising a gay child in America. I enjoyed the book because not only did it review portions of Matthew's death many already knew, but puts Matthew in a new light and shows us the man before his untimely death. Additionally, it shows how people rise to the challenge when placed in an overwhelming situation. There are several places to get the book, from purchasing it at a local bookstore, on-line, or going to your local library. If your library doesn't have it, ask how you can get a copy.

Chili Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1-1/2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 envelope (1-3/4 ounces) chili seasoning mix
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 can (15 ounces) kidney beans, undrained
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar

Preparation:

Heat oil in a large, heavy skillet or pot. Cook ground beef and onions over medium heat until it is no longer pink. Stir in chili seasoning mix, then add remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes.

—Crystal Luce, Client Services Advisor

CLIENT SERVICES

YOUR ROLE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

When this country's political system was created, the forefathers wanted to make sure that the people had a voice: voting. (Though at the time "the people" consisted of property-owning males, times have changed and more people than ever have the chance to participate in the political process). As we get closer to the November elections, most likely you've seen the political ads and maybe attended a rally. So why does voting matter? It's easy to get cynical about voting, especially in national elections where many have been faced with barriers to voting, had their votes discounted, or simply haven't found a candidate who speaks to them or their issues. However, the U.S. President, those who represent us in the U.S. Congress, and in Colorado's State Government can have a huge impact on our lives and those we care for. Several legislative measures, with potential consequences for those infected and affected by HIV, have been created. From the Ryan White Care Act, to the Federal Health Insurance reform act, without legislators in support of those acts, those legislative bills may not have passed. And though we see the potential changes, often there is a feeling that there is little we can do to change legislation or make our voices heard. However, voting is one of the most important ways you can make clear what matters to you and your loved ones.

So where to begin? First, know the laws when it comes to voting. In Colorado, if you are currently serving a sentence for a felony, including parole, you are not allowed to vote. If you have completed your sentence, including parole, or only been jailed for a misdemeanor, then you are eligible to vote. Second, register to vote. Contact your local County Clerk and Recorder's office or go to <http://www.register-vote.com/> and mail in your voter registration material. Voter registration is due 29 days prior to the election, so for the general election in 2010 registration is due by October 2, 2010. Third, get informed. However you choose to vote, know the candidates' platforms on the issues you care about, including HIV/AIDS. One place to check is AIDSVote (www.aidsvote.org). This website defines what the next President must do to address the AIDS pandemic. Additionally, the League of Women Voters and other organizations will send out information about the candidates and voting issues on the ballots. Fourth, vote. Several places have early elections starting October 18th and going through October 29th. The general election is November 2, 2010. Find out if you have a polling location (this can be done at your local County Clerk and Recorder's office) so that the day you vote, there aren't any surprises. When you go to vote, make sure that you bring a form of identification with you; otherwise they will not allow you to vote. If you have any questions about voting, contact either your local County Clerk and Recorder's office or the Colorado Secretary of State's office <http://www.sos.state.co.us/>. Finally, even if your candidate doesn't get elected, stay informed on what your representative is doing. You can also write letters to your representatives and inform them of the issues and how they affect you.

Many of you who read this article already plan to vote (you may have even made a decision on your candidate and how you are voting on amendments) and may feel this article is "preaching to the choir." If this is true for you, you can still make a difference by helping others exercise their right to vote. How you choose to vote or not vote in the upcoming election could change how we are impacted by our government when it comes to HIV care and prevention. Let your voice be heard and participate in the political process.

—Crystal Luce, Client Services Advisor

DONATE ON-LINE!

Beginning October 1st, WestCAP will have an option for our supporters to donate easily and securely through the Web! Visit our website at www.westcap.info and check out how easy it is! And, thank you for your support!!

PREVENTION

HPV VACCINE – NOW AVAILABLE FOR MEN

In May 2010, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the HPV vaccine Gardasil for men aged 8 to 26. HPV vaccines have been available for women aged 8 to 26 since 2006.

What is HPV?

A human papillomavirus (HPV) is a member of the papillomavirus family of viruses that is capable of infecting humans. There are over 100 types of HPV, and 30- to 40-ish of them are sexually-transmitted.

What can HPV do to humans?

Some strains of HPV cause genital warts. The two most common strains of genital warts are HPV-6 and HPV-11. These HPV strains are quite benign. The worst-case scenario is having unsightly warts.

Some strains of HPV can cause oral, anal, penile, and cervical cancer. The two most common strains of HPV linked to cancer are HPV-16 and HPV-18. The worst-case scenario is being diagnosed with cancer.

Can someone be tested for HPV?

Warts on the genitalia can be biopsied to determine whether HPV-6 or HPV-11 are present. If they are, the warts themselves can be frozen off by a doctor or clinic. These warts will not turn into cancer.

Women can be screened for cervical cancer through routine Pap smears of the cervix. If lab work reveals abnormal cells, further tests such as biopsies can identify cancerous cells that may be caused by HPV-16 or HPV-18.

Men have no equivalent to a Pap test, so HPV is usually not detected in men unless genital warts or cancerous growths are visible and can be biopsied.

How is HPV transmitted?

HPV is transmitted through vaginal, anal, or oral sex or simply through genital to genital contact. It is important to note that some people may have HPV without visible warts or growths and that they can transmit the virus to others without knowing.

Is there a cure for HPV?

No. No virus has a cure. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), however, the body's immune system clears HPV naturally within two years in 90% of cases.

How is the HPV vaccine administered?

The Gardasil HPV vaccine is designed to prevent HPV types 6, 11, 16, and 18. It is administered as three injections over a six-month period. The second and third doses are given two and six months after the first dose.

All men and women aged 8 to 26 can legally obtain HPV vaccines in the United States. They can be administered by a primary care physician or a clinic. People under the age of 18 may need parental consent at certain medical providers.

If they choose to, doctors or clinics may prescribe and administer HPV vaccines outside the FDA-approved age range of 8 to 26. This is called an "off-label" use of the drug, which simply means that clinical trials do not support the use of the vaccine in people over 26 years of age. This does not mean that the vaccine is not beneficial to people over 26.

Mesa County Health Department's Family Planning offers HPV vaccines to anyone between the ages of 19 and 26, in order to avoid parental consent issues.

Planned Parenthood offers the vaccine to anyone, without the need for parental consent. In WestCAP's service region, Planned Parenthood has clinics in Glenwood Springs, Durango, Cortez, and Granby.

The CDC has prepared an HPV fact sheet for men: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/hpv&men-fact-sheet.pdf>. Although it was published before the FDA approved the vaccine for men, it is still an excellent resource. [Sources: CDC, MCHD, Planned Parenthood]

—Scott Montgomery, Prevention & Resource Coordinator

PREVENTION

2010-2011 FLU SEASON

Who should be getting a flu shot?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone. Although there can be different flu viruses in circulation, the 2010-2011 flu shot is designed to protect against the three main flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season: an H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus, and the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season.

Last flu season (2009-2010) saw the emergence of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus (previously called “novel H1N1” or “swine flu”). This virus caused the first influenza pandemic (global outbreak of disease caused by a new flu virus) in more than 40 years. Therefore, this season’s flu vaccine includes some H1N1 protection.

How effective are flu shots?

The flu vaccines provide protection against the flu strains that officials expect to be in circulation. If the ones in circulation are actually the ones predicted, clinical trials have shown the vaccines to be between 70% and 90% effective among healthy adults. The antibodies made in response to vaccination still provide protection against different but related strains.

Is it too early to get a flu shot?

“It’s important to know that even though the vaccine is being offered earlier this year, it’s not going to wear off, and it’s not going to wane. It will provide you the same protection throughout the flu season,” Tamara Capp with the Mesa County Health Department said on August 31st during an interview with KREX-TV.

What are flu-related complications?

Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections, and ear infections are examples of flu-related complications.

Do some people have a higher risk of developing flu-related complications?

Yes. The CDC considers children under 5 years of age, adults 65 years or older, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems (such as people with HIV or cancer, or those on chronic steroids) to have a higher risk of developing flu-related complications. Also, last flu season, American Indians and Alaskan Natives seemed to be at higher risk of flu complications.

For a for a list of people at higher risk, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm.

Where can people get flu shots?

2010-2011 flu vaccines (Fluvirin) are currently available at Safeway, Walgreens, Rite-Aid, and the Mesa County Health Department. These flu shots are available without a prescription. People may also obtain flu shots from their primary care physicians.

For information about vaccine supply this season, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/vaxsupply.htm>.

What else can people do to protect themselves and others from getting the flu?

The CDC recommends that people take everyday preventive steps such as staying away from sick people and washing hands to reduce the spread of germs. They recommend that people who are sick with a fever stay home from work or school to prevent spreading influenza to others.

In addition to these CDC guidelines, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) recommends the following:

- Washing hands frequently with soap and water
- Covering sneezes and coughs with a tissue or inner elbow
- Avoiding others with respiratory illnesses
- Calling a health care provider about any flu-like symptoms

As of the time this article was written, there was no evidence of any outbreak of disease caused by a new flu virus such as last season’s H1N1.

[Sources: CDC, CDPHE, KREX-TV]

—Scott Montgomery, Prevention & Resource Coordinator