



# Using Dental Case Managers to Retain Patients in Care

John Graves, Anne McDonald, Celeste Lemay, Stan Cooper, Cleiber Silva

Harbor Health Services, Incorporated  
University of Massachusetts Medical School

## INITIAL RETENTION PLANS

Established HIV Oral Health Collaborative Model including:

- ❖ Medical Case Managers Cape Cod Healthcare-IDCS
- ❖ AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod
- ❖ Nantucket AIDS Network
- ❖ Dental Providers - Mid-Upper Cape Community Dental Clinic
- ❖ Dental Case Managers (DCM)

Utilize Dental Case Managers to:

- ❖ Schedule Appointments and Conduct Intake
- ❖ Provide Follow-up to Referring Agency
- ❖ Ensure Patients are Retained in Care

Rationale:

- ❖ Collaborative Models of Care are cost effective and improve patient care
- ❖ HIV Medical Case Managers have been found effective in connecting individuals & keeping in medical care.
- ❖ Similar model using DCMs should also be effective

## ADJUSTMENTS MADE TO PLANS

Continue to work with partners to follow-up with patients who no-show or have been lost to follow-up. Accomplished by:

- ❖ Attending monthly meeting with Medical Case Managers
- ❖ Attending AIDS Support Group Meetings
- ❖ Contacting Medical Case Managers individually

DCMs continue to be the primary individuals responsible for following up with patients and study participants

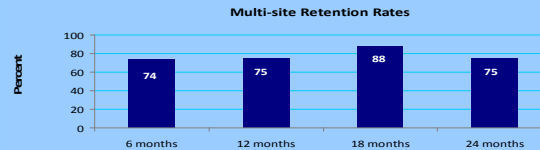
- ❖ Conference calls for networking & problem solving

## RETENTION RATES

Aug-06, HHSI was providing dental services to **60** registered patients living with HIV/AIDS on Cape Cod

As of April 1, 2010, HHSI is providing dental services to **322** registered patients living with HIV/AIDS on Cape Cod

## RETENTION RATES-Continued



## RETENTION SUCCESS-Case Study

Sam 48 yr old, White male, HIV + for 17 years. Became a dental patient due to outreach by DCM.

In 8-09, Sam was referred to a periodontist. Recommended treatment included distal wedge procedures in 2 quadrants. A MassHealth periodontist was located (off Cape) and appointments scheduled.

### Problems Encountered by Sam:

1. Experiencing personal issues including very sick parent, financial and transportation problems
2. Reported periodontist informed him that all gum issues were the result of bruxism. Was angry with dental clinic as he had never been informed about this problem
3. Was upset that he couldn't see the evaluating periodontist. Periodontal practice referred to experienced staff turnover and Sam believed that this indicated poor quality of care
4. Sam wanted to discontinue relationship.

### DCM Interventions:

1. Called collaborators to address personal issues/gain insight
2. Met/spoke with Sam and partner 19 times in 4 months
3. Called perio practice to explore staff losses. Result of family issues of the staff, not quality of care. Info shared with Sam
4. Connected Sam to transportation
5. Called periodontist to discuss Sam's belief regarding bruxism. Clarified did not cause gum issues. DCM shared info with Sam

Through repeated contacts, constantly making himself available, providing emotional support, and allowing Sam to vent, treatment plan was completed. Sam is satisfied and continues to receive dental care at MUCCHC.

## RETENTION CHALLENGES

### Staff Turnover

#### *Dental Case Managers*

- ❖ DCM at MUCCHC left position in part due to burnout.
- ❖ Position remained open for 5 months affecting both recruitment and retention
- ❖ Second DCM at MUCCHC left position. Had difficulties with retention strategies and minimal supervision until new Project Coordinator was hired.

#### *Project Coordinator*

- ❖ Project Coordinator resigned in November 2008
- ❖ Position remained open for 5 months
- ❖ DCMs did not have a direct resource for retention problem solving while position was open

### Seasonal Population

- ❖ Target population on Cape often leave during winter months to seek employment in warmer environments
- ❖ Unable to follow-up with individuals if out of state

### Economic Downturn

- ❖ High Unemployment (14%) exacerbates seasonal loss
- ❖ Impacts transportation, housing, cell phone contact and patients' economic stability

## NEXT STEPS

### Strategies for Improving Retention

Continue regularly scheduled conference calls

- ❖ With Dental Case Manager, Project Coordinator, and Project Evaluator
- ❖ Allows discussion of strategies for overcoming issues and barriers to retention.
- ❖ Also used to provide support and networking in an effort to decrease the possibility of role burn-out and staff loss
- ❖ Allows review of monthly tracking reports sent to the team by the data coordinator