Increasing Linkage, Engagement, and Retention in HIV Care

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There are no conflicts of interest or financial relationships to disclose.
Important Acronyms & Phrases

- LGBTQ- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer communities
- TWOC- Transgender Women of Color
- MSM/YMSM- (Young) Men who have Sex with Men
- SMARTEEE- Social Media App for Retention, Treatment, Engagement, and Education
- SPNS- Special Projects of National Significance
- Gap in Care- No medical visit in the last 6 months
- Newly Diagnosed- diagnosed within the last 12 months
- Virally Suppressed- A viral load of <200 copies/mL
- ADAP- AIDS Drug Assistance Program (Ryan White B)
Background

- **Howard Brown Health (HBH)**, the Midwest’s largest provider of LGBTQ health services, implemented the **SMARTEEE** intervention to engage clients living with HIV Through the **SPNS Social Media Initiative**

- HBH sought to improve engagement and retention in HIV medical care for at-risk populations by using Healthvana, a digital health app that delivers lab results, health information and direct messaging
Method

- Retention lists were generated identifying clients that had experienced a 6 month gap in HIV medical care
- Clients experiencing a gap in care were contacted and offered a medical visit
- Clients who identified as MSM or TWOC, and were newly diagnosed, not virally suppressed, or struggling with medication adherence were offered SMARTEE services via the app
- Clients not eligible for SMARTEE services Clients and struggling with appointment adherence were offered supportive retention services
Services Offered

**SMARTEE Services:**
- Direct messaging with staff via the app
- Access to lab results
- Supportive services
  - Ongoing medical case management
  - ADAP assistance
  - Referrals as needed

**Retention Services**
- Short-term supportive services
  - 6 month medical case management
  - ADAP assistance
  - Referrals as needed
Findings

Between 9/13/2016 and 5/31/2019…

**Successful & Attempted Contacts**
- **12,785** total successful and attempted contacts made
- **1,861** unique clients contacted
- **18** contacts per day on average
- **395** contacts per month on average
- **Successful Contacts** are defined as direct contact made with clients
- **Attempted Contacts** are defined as voicemails/emails/other messages made to engage clients

**HIV Medical Appointments and Office Visits**
- **1,020** HIV medical appointments scheduled
- **649** HIV medical appointments completed
- **639** unique clients scheduled appointments
- **502** unique clients completed appointments
- **609** non-medical office visits scheduled
- **482** non-medical office visits attended
Findings
Contacts & Attempts

- **SMARTEE Participants**
  - Successful Contacts: 3089 (49.85%)
  - Attempted Contacts: 310700% (50.15%)

- **Retention Clients**
  - Successful Contacts: 2884 (44%)
  - Attempted Contacts: 370500% (56%)
Findings
Medical Appointments & Office Visits

HIV Medical Appointments
- SMARTEE Participants: 662 (65%)
- Retention Clients: 358 (35%)

Office Visits
- SMARTEE Participants: 528 (87%)
- Retention Clients: 81 (13%)
Findings

Referrals & Resources

NOTE: Minimum of 2 bus cards were given per instance, equaling 500+ bus cards
The Digital Platform
Healthvana

• Engaging clients using a digital platform proved to be efficacious as **13,638 messages were exchanged with clients** during this time frame.

• These messages included:
  • Appointment reminders
  • Addressing client concerns
  • STI/HIV lab inquiries
  • Weekly messages that were motivational and educational
  • General queries related to HIV/STI treatment and symptoms
Lessons Learned

• Effectiveness required targeted, intentional and consistent outreach
  • 595 unique clients were contacted to participate in SMARTEE, with 115 completing enrollment
  • Average of 7 contacts per individual client
  • 64% of scheduled HIV medical appointments were completed
  • 79% of scheduled non-medical office visits were attended

• Successes illustrate the importance of innovative engagement efforts
  • Using a digital platform provided clients with unique accessibility to their care teams
  • Staff flexibility and availability proved to be crucial in providing services to clients at-risk of falling out of care
Conclusion

• This study has verified the need for a dedicated retention team to meet the needs of clients that are at greater risk of falling out of HIV medical care
• Furthermore, this study confirms that innovation is needed in engagement and retention efforts
• Standard retention approaches still have value, but are more impactful when integrated with intentional implementation strategies
• Program success correspondingly illustrates the possibilities of retention for other at risk populations that HBH serves
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