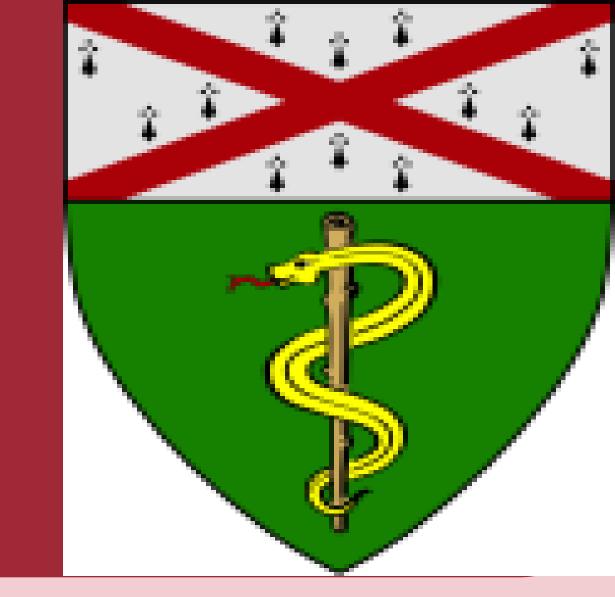


# Project C.O.A.C.H: Counseling Others about Contacts and exposures with HIV

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### BACKGROUND

- •Over 20% of HIV-infected people are unaware of their serostatus.
- Partner services (PS) notifies sexual and needle-sharing partners of exposure to disease.
- Rate of newly diagnosed HIV infections among tested partners ranges from 10-30%.
- Referral rates for PS are suboptimal.

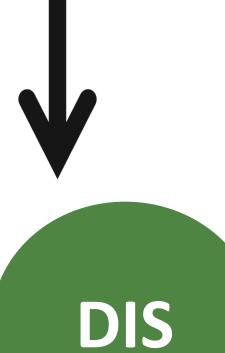
## IDEAL PS **PROCESS**

### METHODS AND SAMPLE

- In-depth interviews and focus groups guided by community-based participatory research principles.
- Multidisciplinary coding team using constant comparison method for qualitative data analysis.







Men who Have Sex with Men

> In-Depth Interview n=18

### Medical Case Managers

Focus Group n=14

Disease Intervention Specialists In-Depth Interview

n=7

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Why are referral rates of PS suboptimal?
- What are the perspectives and experiences with PS among:
  - Men who have Sex with Men (MSM);
  - Medical Case Managers (MCM);
  - Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS)?

### ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTATIONS

### Stigma and Fears of Rejection

"It's easier for me to talk about my drugs and drinking than to talk about being gay. I can talk about drinking and drugging all day."

### Managing Personal Judgment

"What works best for me is to remind myself that my common sense is different from someone else's... I have to kind of try to hold back judgment...that's the really hard part."

#### **Direct Personal Communication**

"[If] you talk down to them, of course, you're not going to get anywhere. If you talk above them, you're not going to get anywhere either."

#### FINDINGS

- Barriers to PS are multi-factorial:
- Trusting relationships across disciplines and with clients are fundamental but challenged by stigma associated with HIV and sexual orientation;
- Competing agendas of a vulnerable population (housing, food) deprioritize PS;
- Inadequate knowledge of PS and referral process among MSM, MCM and other health care providers.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### PROMOTE DISCLOSURE AND PS

 PS Awareness Campaign targeting MSM, MCM and health care providers;

 Support efforts to destigmatize HIV and homosexuality.

### FOSTER MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM APPROACH

 Integrate DIS into clinical services;

 Trainings on cultural competency, including interview skills for MSM.

