

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

This report presents major results from an evaluation of the service system for adolescents with HIV disease, and those at-high-risk-for-HIV infection. The results summarized indicate the type and quantity of HIV-related service slots for youth in the cities where HRSA SPNS Program Adolescent Care Projects exist, the barriers to receiving services, and, whether providers agree on the design of accessible and relevant HIV services for youth. In addition, it compares the data collected between Wave 1 (baseline) and Wave 2 follow-up.

The baseline data collected from the participating service providers suggest several general conclusions about the service system and the service needs of adolescents with HIV disease, as well as those at-high-risk-for-HIV infection. Service providers' responses in the Service Provider Survey and the Service Resources Interview suggest that they do not feel the service system is operating as effectively as possible. This is expressed in their disagreement with statements such as, "the service system is meeting the needs of HIV-positive and high-risk-for-HIV youth" and that, "the city/region has sufficient capacity to meet the treatment needs of HIV-infected youth." Specific examples of this are agreement among providers that there is a lack of services for young women and ethnic and cultural minorities. In addition, barriers to services that could increase the effectiveness of programs, such as lack of funding and the feeling that youth are unaware of agency services, impact the service delivery system.

Possible suggestions for improvements are revealed in the service providers' agreement with the statements that there should be better methods of communication regarding the availability of services, and between agencies and organizations, as well as improved coordination of services. Cross-training among agencies would do much to improve coordination, as well as communication. Service professionals appear to need more specific education on issues related to adolescents and HIV.

Service providers assigned high priority to street education/prevention programs, residential drug treatment, and long-term housing services as areas that should receive new or additional public funds. Less importance was placed on emergency medical services, infrastructure development, and provider training (this, despite the fact that training was mentioned as an important element in providing effective services). Many providers mentioned "other" programs to receive new or additional funds and these included independent living programs, peer support, and research.

The Service Resources Interview also provided information about the agencies' capacity for service delivery. The results from this interview indicate that the services most likely to expand in the next six months are drug abuse treatment and general social services. Overall, the major barrier to increasing service capacity is a lack of funding. Barriers that are moderately large problems are that youth do not know about the services, the interagency network may be disorganized, lack of transportation, and lack

of required ancillary services. Issues related to staff-client interactions were not cited as barriers to service expansion.

In comparing the data across Wave 1 (baseline) and Wave 2, there were few changes noted. There were no significant differences in the types of agencies interviewed or the types of agency activities, the types of services provided, or whether agencies charge a fee for services. However, barriers to service expansion increased from Wave 1 to Wave 2 for long-term housing, long-term drug treatment, HIV outpatient medical services, and HIV clinical trials. There was also an increase in awareness that the city is a recipient of Ryan White CARE Act Title I funds. The likelihood of increasing pharmacy services and case management decreased between Wave 1 and Wave 2. Over time, continuing analysis will allow the projects to determine whether their efforts result in changes in infrastructure in the service network for HIV-positive and at-risk youth.