

The AIDS Network of Western New York, Inc. began as a small group of committed service providers discussing a relatively new disease and related care services in the 1980's. The unified group incorporated in 1991 as a not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation within the State of New York. Funding has been received since 1990 from the New York State Department of Health, AIDS Institute through Title II of the Ryan White CARE Act legislation; and through private donations. At the present time, funding comes solely from private donations and the AIDS Plus Fund.

The AIDS Network is here to help our community respond to AIDS and HIV infection. We do this not by providing service ourselves, but by coordinating and communicating with those who do. On our Board of Directors and working committees are persons infected with HIV/AIDS, the loved ones and caregivers who are affected by this disease, representatives of state and local governments, business partners and interested community members. Through this critical exchange of information our community learns about emerging needs, plans the resources to meet them and mutually supports our constituents.

Our mission is to actively develop, promote and advocate a community-based coordinated response to HIV/AIDS through a partnership of all people dedicated to HIV/AIDS issues. Our vision is to be a Network of representative membership and informed leaders who will prioritize regional needs, work at raising community awareness and collaborate to acquire resources to meet the needs of our community in response to HIV/AIDS.

Membership in the AIDS Network is open to any interested individual or agency.

The Women, Children and Young People Committee explores the special issues unique to this focused HIV/AIDS population, including housing, social concerns, education, prevention and awareness.

The goals of our collaborative effort are to: establish the connections between HIV and Homelessness; identify gaps in service; provide policy recommendations to address those gaps; educate the community, human service providers and policy makers on our findings; and promote enhanced communication and collaboration between the two fields (HIV and Homelessness). Because the WCYP work group focuses on women, children and young people, we will limit our discussion in this paper to the impact that HIV/AIDS and Homelessness has on these groups.

Why Focus on HIV?

Erie county HIV statistics: In 2012, about 1,866 people were identified living with HIV. (Youth Link WCHOB/Kaleida Health, Immunodeficiency Services, Evergreen Health Services).

Erie County expenditure on HIV: Between 1985 and 2011, about 1,301 people died of AIDS in Erie County, excluding Prisoners. In Erie County 1,871 people are currently identified as living with HIV, excluding prisoners. The average cost of HIV treatment per person for a year is \$23,000. This means that in one year we are looking at \$43,033,000 in HIV treatment in Erie County. Over a lifetime the cost of treatment for one person is about \$379,668. (CDC 2010 Data).

Teen STD, STI and Pregnancy: Western New York region has one of the highest teen (15-19 years) pregnancy rates in all of New York State. Teen sexually transmitted rates of infection remain the highest for chlamydia and gonorrhea. (NYSDH 2010 Data Set)

Why Focus on Homelessness?¹

While the homeless population decreased by 4% nationally, in 2013, the New York State homeless population increased 24% from 62,601 in 2011 to 77,430 between 2012 and 2013, the largest increase by far in the United States since 2007. Of those individuals 34,431 are families. Ten percent are chronically homeless and 9 percent are unsheltered.

Homeless Families and Youth²

In 2013, there were an estimated 5,754 people who experienced homelessness in Erie County. Families account for an estimated 1,746 people; 72 percent of the families are led by single mothers and **more than 28% (1,024) are children** under the age of 18.

The Link between HIV and Homelessness for Families and Youth : Poverty

60% of women being treated for HIV in New York State are caring for children. 65% of HIV positive women in the United States and in New York State are living in poverty. (HIV/lawandpolicy.org Woman and HIV Some NYS Facts)

The National Coalition for the Homeless estimates the percentage of homeless youth infected with HIV is approximately 5% nationally. **The National Coalition for the Homeless has suggested that HIV prevalence for homeless youth may be as much as 2 to 10 times higher than reported for non-homeless adolescents in the United States.**³

1. HUD 2013 National Point-in-Time Annual Homeless Assessment Report; 2. Erie County 2013 Annual Homeless Report, Homeless Alliance of WNY.; 3. National Coalition for the Homeless <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/youth.html>

Summary of Policy Recommendations

Thank You

The following agencies have dedicated time and resources to this project:



	Youth	Women	Families
Housing			
Incorporate stable housing as a critical element of HIV prevention and health care.	X	X	X
Provide more long term subsidized and affordable housing for youth, adults and families in Erie County.	X	X	X
Create sustainable housing and employment options.		X	X
Increase funding for utility and weatherization assistance programs.	X	X	X
Increase shelter placements for families, including single mothers with children.			X
Increase transitional and permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless adults including those living with HIV.		X	
Restore funding to youth shelters in Erie County.	X		
Provide permanent supportive housing for homeless youth under 25 especially youth without children and HIV+.	X		
Create a medical home for unaccompanied youth (age 18-25) with chronic illnesses including HIV/AIDS.	X		
Service Provision			
Increase HOPWA program funding for staff to administer funds and provide support to stabilize clients.		X	X
Engage providers and institutions in Erie County in a cross sector to prevent homelessness/HIV by addressing the socioeconomic issues that put youth and adults at risk.	X	X	X
Identify Focal Point of Contact at DSS for HIV clients.	x	x	x
Develop a coordinated entry system and common assessment tools linking individuals living with HIV to the services they need.	X	X	X
Continue providing education and develop an incentive campaign to encourage medical providers to incorporate HIV counseling and testing as part of routine medical care.	X	X	X
Formulate a communication plan between foster care and mental health providers and shelters, service providers and institutions for when youth identify as previously involved.	X		
Provide insurance options for unaccompanied homeless youth and support to help them obtain required documentation necessary to apply.	X		
Institutions and providers will be trained in Trauma Informed Care and other methods of servicing trauma survivors.	X	X	X
Increased training for shelter staff about servicing the LGBTQ community.	X	X	X
HIV/Homelessness education and cultural competency will be promoted as ongoing programming for all service providers and educators in the field.	X	X	X
Data Collection			
Collect data in a way that is conducive to informing HIV, housing and health care policy. Integrate local HIV,STD, STI and Pregnancy data collection into HMIS	X	X	X
Add HIV and Homelessness to the Erie County Community Health Assessment.	X	X	X
Education and Outreach			
Increase funding for Outreach Workers (Community Health Workers) to find youth/adults that are experiencing or are at highest risk for HIV/homelessness, build relationships with them, navigate and advocate for them to receive services.	X	X	X
Promote and enhance HIV/STD prevention interventions that support youth development and capacity building.	X		
Collaborate with middle , high schools and colleges to develop a comprehensive sex health education program.	x		x
A mobile van serving as a traveling clinic for homeless population with outreach component for homeless youth.	X	X	X