

ORGANIZING THE HIV FRONTLINE WORKER COMMUNITY

Authored by the members of the San Francisco HIV Frontline Organizing Group (SF HIV FOG)

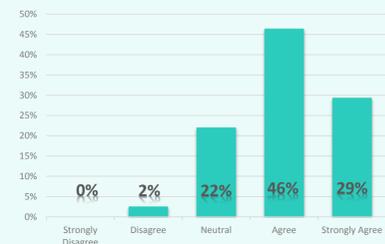
BACKGROUND

May, 2015, HIV frontline workers in San Francisco met to ask:

How have systems changes brought on by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) impacted workers and clients?

Forming SF HIV FOG, workers began to organize around four core concerns:

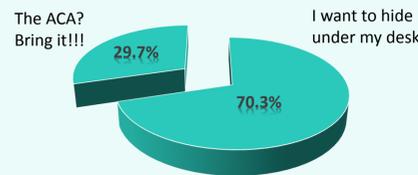
1. Transition into the ACA impacted client care



During the last 12 months [of ACA implementation] navigating benefits has had a negative impact on clients' overall wellbeing

2. Workers were not properly prepared to navigate clients through ACA implementation

Whenever someone asks me about the ACA, I feel like...



3. Workers want capacity-building regarding: insurance and benefits, PrEP, mental health and substance use, housing, transgender care, burn-out prevention, long-term survivors, and other frontline worker-focused issues

4. SF HIV Worker retention is not adequately addressed

- Top four barriers to continuing as frontline HIV worker:
1. Heavy workload
 2. Low salary
 3. Lack of training opportunities
 4. Lack of professional development

PURPOSE

SF HIV FOG is a grassroots, worker-run, collaboration between community-based, HIV service organizations and the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

Goals

- Improve inter-agency collaboration
- Better retain clients in care
- Maintain workers in the workforce
- Support professional development
- Educate frontline workforce

Participants

- Social Workers
- Healthcare Attorneys
- Behavioral Health Clinicians
- Care Navigators
- Benefits Workers

STRATEGIES



FINDINGS

Best Practices for HIV Frontline Worker Organizing

- Partner with local Getting to Zero efforts, HIV planning council, health department, AIDS Education Training Center, and other HIV service organizations
- Utilize needs assessments and training feedback to inform leadership about frontline workers' needs
- Facilitate and stimulate cross-agency networking
- Establish a steering committee, backbone agency and funding to support organizing work
- Allocate work time for frontline workers to participate in steering committee and attend trainings; support grassroots, worker-driven focus
- Establish a listserv to disseminate information to workers
- Provide food at trainings

Challenges in Organizing Efforts

- Achieving diversity in steering committee
- Maintaining time commitment of steering committee members
- Frontline worker turnover
- Broad range of training needs and skill levels

Across all SF HIV FOG events, attendees reported

- Trainings are useful to daily practice (4.4; scale of 1 to 5)
- Knowledge of content increased 20%

CONCLUSIONS

Through an active listserv of 300+ members, face-to-face trainings and the other strategies, SF HIV FOG's community organizing efforts have had a positive effect on frontline workers' practice. Further evaluation is needed to understand the impact on worker retention, quality of service delivery, and citywide Getting to Zero efforts.