

CQII congratulates **Palm Beach County Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part A/Minority AIDS Initiative** (PBC RWHAP Part A/MAI) for their outstanding work in quality improvement (QI). We are honored to present them with CQII's 2024 Award for Measurable Improvements in HIV Care.

The PBC RWHAP Part A/MAI serves Florida's West Palm Beach Eligible Metropolitan Area, funding nine subrecipients for 16 service categories under Part A/MAI. Each of the nine agencies are unique in their services provided and the diverse populations each serves. From March 2023 to February 2024, the Identifying Disparities to Engage Action (IDEA) QI project was a hybrid systems-level and agency-level project. All subrecipients shared a universal goal: to identify the largest disparities of viral suppression (VS) among racial/ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, and/or age groups along the HIV care continuum for each agency. The PBC RWHAP clinical quality management program chose to focus on disparities due to observed worsening health outcomes across different demographic groups. For example, in the first quarter of calendar year 2023, Black/African Americans served by PBC RWHAP Part A/MAI had lower VS rates (85%) compared to Hispanic/Latinx (91%) and non-Hispanic White individuals (91%). These disparities were identified in an optimized report using client-level data. Both relative and absolute data were used to identify these disparities and areas for growth. Facilitated by the recipient's office, IDEA was tailored to the disparities and root causes found at each agency for an identified subpopulation, while also being designed to be applied more broadly to the entire population if successful. Some examples of these interventions include "Improving Retention in Care and VS in Black/African American Women" and "Improving Viral Load Suppression in EIS Clients through Use of Call-Back Systems."

QI Focus: Viral Suppression Disparities

The collaborative nature of this most recent QI project has led to positive outcomes among people with HIV across the systems of care. Inspired by their participation in CQII's create+equity and end+disparities Learning Collaboratives, this QI project has led to increased VS among HIV clients across the various systems of care. From its charter to its completion, IDEA has been shared with the Quality Management and Evaluation Committee of the HIV CARE Council, as well as their QI Workgroup, which includes staff and people with lived experience. As a result of their dedication and hard work that went into this initiative, 39 individuals with HIV reached VS by the end of this nine-month-long QIP. *"Each number is a person, an individual whose life has been improved,"* said Daisy Wiebe, PhD, MPH, the Quality Management Clinician at PBC. Palm Beach County's commitment to patients is incredibly salient, with every team member valuing each individual's lived experiences and contributions. PBC credits these accomplishments to their collaboration with subrecipients, reminding them that everyone is working towards one goal: the betterment of individuals health.

Engaging Clients in QI

To meaningfully involve people with HIV in their QI work, subrecipients employed a variety of strategies. One organization hosted an hour-long one-on-one session for clients in their project population that allowed them to have a safe space to express their concerns and address personal barriers in their care. Clients felt empowered in this approach and were able to receive education and assistance in addressing these barriers. Another organization hosted two town halls prior to starting their intervention and gave the community a chance to share their opinions on their care and best practices. From there, the clients had the opportunity to accept or decline their willing participation in an intervention that was based on their needs. Central to their success, the team details establishing trust, with Chris Irizarry, MPA, Chief Executive Officer FoundCare, Inc. (one of the nine subrecipients), emphasizing the need to keep promises made: *“Show the client you truly care; show the proof so they don’t lose belief. It’s hard to believe in things after a lifetime of difficulties.”*

For groups beginning their QI journey, PBC recommends stepping away from macro-level perspectives and giving personalized feedback to individuals. Additionally, PBC stressed the importance of the QI toolkit, sharing that subrecipients found its use enjoyable, rewarding, and easy to complete. The QI toolkit stresses the importance of several interventions, such as having regular project checkpoints and meeting one-on-one with subrecipients, to ultimately guide and inform a QI project. Reflecting on the success of these initiatives, Lilia Perez, BS, Director of RWHAP FoundCare, Inc, emphasized, *“It’s about the work being done, it’s about the client’s well-being. That’s priceless.”*



Pictured, from left to right:

Daisy Krakowiak Wiebe, PhD, MPH, Quality Management Clinician, Palm Beach County Ryan White Part A/MAI

Brad Barnes, Live Well Center Manager, Program & Quality Manager, The Poverello Center

Jasmine Parrish, MPH, BSN, RN, Quality Management Clinician, Palm Beach County Ryan White Part A/MAI

Jenn Kuretski, DNP, APRN, FNP-C, AAHIVS, Director of Research and Education, Midway Specialty Care Center, West Palm Beach

Ashnika Ali, MBS, Senior Program Manager, Health Council of Southeast Florida

Courtney Wise, BS, HIV/AIDS QI/Data Analyst, Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County

Neka Mackay, MSW, Ryan White Quality Management Coordinator, Compass Community Center, Inc.

Neil Walker, Ryan White Quality Improvement Manager, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF)

Lilia Perez, BS, Director of Ryan White Program, FoundCare, Inc.

Jeanice Petit-Frere, MS, Program and Linkage Coordinator, Monarch Health Services, Inc.

Kathleen Morakis, MSW, Non-Medical Case Manager, Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc.

Not pictured:

Sandra Lazarus, MBA, Belle Glade Site Supervisor, FoundCare, Inc.

Cinthya Acosta, AA, Ryan White Program Manager, FoundCare, Inc.

Nancy Aubourg, BA, Boynton Beach Site Supervisor, FoundCare, Inc.

Sandra Powery Moses, JD, Supervising Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc.

Marcy Classe, Paralegal, Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc.

Marsharee Chronicle, MSW, Director of Programs, Health Council of Southeast Florida

William Staten, DDS, Dentist, Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County

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