

UNIVERSAL AGENCY STANDARDS OF CARE

The agency shall ensure that both its paid and volunteer staff, as appropriate, who provide direct-care services shall possess:

1. knowledge of the HIV/AIDS disease process, HIV prevention strategies, the effects of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses and co-morbidities on patients, the psychosocial effects of HIV/AIDS on patients, and current strategies for management of HIV/AIDS;
2. the knowledge, skills, experience necessary to carry out required responsibilities, as described in the written job description for paid staff and be able to provide any necessary licensure and/or training as required by any regulatory board or organization;
3. cultural competency, effective listening and communication skills for working with those affected by the HIV epidemic;
4. knowledge of community and referral sources for client care;
5. the skills necessary to work with HIV/AIDS care providers, medical professionals, and/or other interdisciplinary personnel, as necessary.
6. a criminal background check, when feasible, on any potential staff member or volunteer who will be providing direct care to vulnerable populations (e.g., children), in order to provide the agency additional information in making employment decisions. The agency shall ensure that such criminal background checks are performed, as required, by licensure standards.
7. Knowledge of the Ryan White HIV Treatment Modernization Act, the funding process, and the administrative mechanism.

The agency shall provide its staff and volunteers:

8. an initial in-service orientation and training, including HIV Workplace Guidelines and AIDS awareness training;
9. training on the roles and responsibilities of their positions;
10. ongoing, qualified supervision;
11. training in cultural competency, at minimum annually;
12. the opportunity for licensed and credentialed staff to take relevant courses to earn CEU's to meet licensure requirements;
13. periodic staff development to improve staff's skills which includes training regarding the continuum of care for HIV+ persons and the importance of client confidentiality.

The agency:

14. shall provide an orientation for clients, including confidentiality to inform clients of their rights, obligations and realistic expectations of service;
15. shall develop the following instruments, and utilize them as indicated below:
 - a. a patient Bill of Rights which will be distributed to each client and posted in areas where direct client services are provided. The Bill or Rights will take into account state and federal laws protecting the rights of the patient;
 - b. with a document containing all Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements and standards, as applicable; including
 - i. a written policy regarding patients' entitlement to confidentiality will be distributed to each client and posted where direct client services are provided;
 - ii. a "consent to treatment" form (if applicable), signed by the client (or registered legal guardian) and maintained in each client's record;
 - iii. a "release of information" and Management Information Systems (e.g.: ARIES) forms, will be signed by the client (or registered legal guardian) prior to release of any information about the client will be maintained in appropriate files and a copy provided to the client;
 - iv. clearly defined and written eligibility requirements, including written application, criteria for acceptance / rejection, ranking criteria for eligible applicants when waiting lists exist, and a written policy regarding transfer, discharge, or termination of services;
 - v. a written client resolution process outlining grievance procedures a client is to follow in order to resolve issues related to services or agency concerns; and
 - vi. written policies and procedures to ensure that incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of clients, staff and volunteers are reported to the proper authorities;
16. shall monitor complaints to resolve issues in a timely manner;
17. shall maintain client files in a locked and secured area.
18. shall, except where grant funds may be specifically restricted (e.g., Minority AIDS Initiative funds), provide its services to eligible persons living with HIV/AIDS regardless of age, gender, race, color, religious preference, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, political affiliation, or inability to pay, to the extent resources allow;
19. shall ensure that clients/consumers receive from all staff members effective, understandable, and respectful care that is provided in a manner compatible with their cultural beliefs and practices and their preferred language.

20. shall provide assistance for handicapped persons to access its facility;
21. shall ensure that agency's and program's hours of operation do not create a barrier for clients' access to care.
22. shall provide information, including hours of operation and emergency contact, twenty-four (24) hours a day (e.g., voice mail message system, website, printed materials, etc.);
23. shall maintain a safe and secure environment for staff and clients. Agencies shall provide clients with written policy on appropriate behavior while accessing services. Agencies reserve the right to take appropriate actions for criminal and/or abusive behavior;
24. shall maintain written emergency procedures, including a posted evacuation plan, and how 911 calls should be handled and by whom;
25. shall provide a smoke and drug free environment.
26. shall conduct an intake and assessment for each client, including completing the Administrative Agency approved Intake Form as part of this procedure, unless it is able to access a completed Intake Form from another agency where the client has received services;
27. shall provide oversight of service delivery by qualified, professional staff and/or supervisor(s), as required by state law or licensure; and,
28. shall promote, support, and empower the client's involvement in his/her own care process.
29. shall provide a referral mechanism for delivery of care and support services to its clients;
30. shall develop and maintain linkages with other service providers to ensure that clients' needs within the continuum of care are coordinated.
31. shall develop and maintain a Quality Management Program;
32. shall conduct an annual client satisfaction survey to identify program areas that are in need of improvement. The agency will maintain documentation that information collected during this process has been shared and reviewed with consumers, appropriate staff, management and Board members of the agency;
33. shall measure client outcomes to monitor value and effectiveness of the program, as defined by the agency's contract;
34. shall maintain detailed records in accordance with Administrative Agency requirements and routinely enter data into the MIS (ARIES) as required by the grant.