

Successes and Challenges of Implementing Workforce and Vocational Rehabilitation Services within an HIV/AIDS Service Delivery Framework



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Objectives

- Explore some of the challenges to accessing services
- Examine approaches that have been successful
- Discuss ways to help more people living with HIV/AIDS get the services they need.
- Highlight initiation of workforce services in the planning, implementation, and process evaluation stages

Gay Men's Health Crisis

Mission

GMHC is the world's first and leading provider of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and advocacy. Building on decades of dedication and expertise, we understand the reality of HIV/AIDS and empower a healthy life for all. GMHC fights to end the AIDS epidemic and uplift the lives of all affected.

Programming

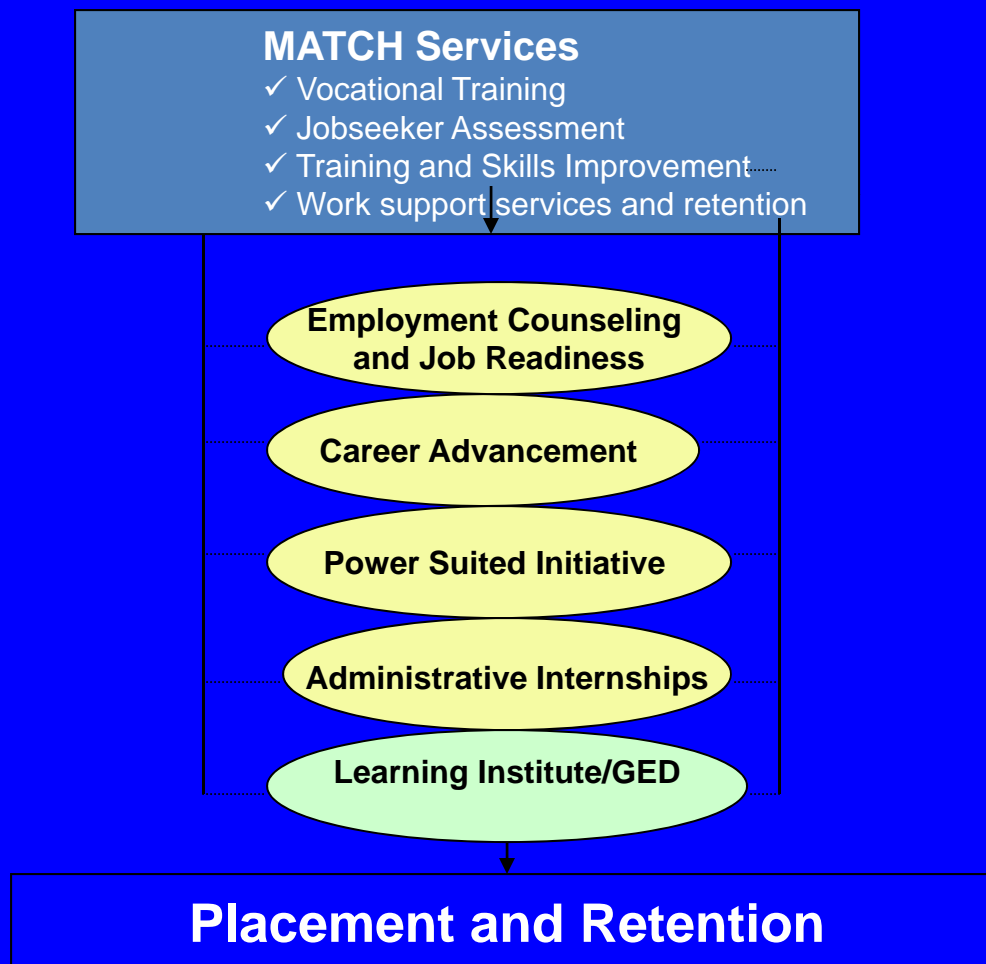
GMHC provides a myriad of comprehensive and specialized services, including:

- Client advocacy and care coordination
- Workforce development (MATCH Program)
- Mental health, wellness and nutrition assistance.
- Income supports and benefits
- Legal services.

MATCH Mission

The mission of the Moving Ahead Toward Career Horizons (MATCH) Program at GMHC is to encourage and assist men and women in their efforts to succeed in the workplace. We offer comprehensive vocational training, placement assistance and retention services to ensure successful transition to work. With enhanced skills, self esteem, and confidence built by the program, participants are motivated to retain employment and achieve greater financial independence and autonomy.

What MATCH Services Look Like:



Challenges

- Clients are afraid of losing their benefits
- Clients are unable to keep appointments because of numerous doctor/benefit appointments
- Engagement is harder due to client not being used to a rigorous and rigid schedule

Outcomes: Addressing Challenges

How MATCH addressed the challenges:

- Work with internal client advocacy program to provide insight on what considerations should be made before engaging in work
- Work with clients with established medical regimen and mental health care
- Go over labs with clients to ensure that their current goals are realistic

Services at MATCH

- Life Coaching
- GED and College Prep Coursework
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Career Advancement Training
- Access to Legal Assistance
- Access to Client Advocacy
- Incentivized Program Model
- Job Placement and Follow Up for 2 Years

How to Start Your Own Workforce Development Department

- Work with local HIV organizations, requesting that they consider going for state funding to support workforce development in their agency
- Create a small workforce networking group to gauge interest of clients in returning to work
- Link up to established workforce agencies to establish support for your ideas
- Create work group on social networking website that provides information on job openings

Linking with Local Voc Rehab Orgs

- Contact your local vocational rehabilitation organization to express interest
- Attend open forum meetings to identify where the current training or hiring markets are leading
- Express interest in training services that lead to viable employment

History

- Jefferson Comprehensive Care System, Inc.



JCCSI Services

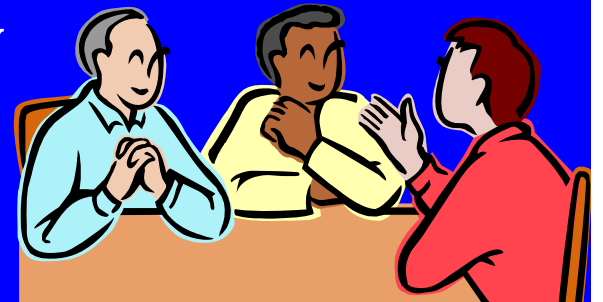
- **Primary Health Care**
- **Obstetrics/Gynecology**
- **Pediatrics**
- **Treatment/Patient Education**
- **Medication Assistance**
- **Mental Health**
- **Substance Abuse**
- **Medical/Case Management**
- ***Transitional Case Management to Inmates**
- **Nutrition**



***Service Offered Offsite at the AR Department of Corrections**

JCCSI Services Cont.

- Oral Health
- Laboratory
- X-Ray
- HIV Counseling and Testing
- Support Group
- Family Support Specialist
- Subspecialty Referrals
- Smoking Cessation
- Vocational Rehabilitation Eligibility



Why Integrate Vocational Rehabilitation Services with HIV

- Improved life expectancy
- Work provides meaning, purpose, and identity.
- Work is the single most normative experience.
- Work plays a vital role in creating a sense of worth and self-esteem and diminishing stigma.
- Reduces boredom and isolation.
- Supplements income by working part-time.



Source: Eric Ciasullo and Karen Escovitz, Gay Men Health Crisis, March/April 2004

Pathway to Initiate Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Arkansas

- National Working Positive Coalition Involvement
- Los Angeles and San Francisco study suggest that many PLWHA have interest in employment.
- 1 out of 3 unemployed/disabled PLWHA had a desire to enter/re-enter employment within 6 to 18 mths.

Process

Contacted Commissioner

Scheduled Meeting with Vocational Rehabilitation Director

Outlined Goals/Objectives

Disseminated Literature About Agency

Conducted a Follow-up Meeting

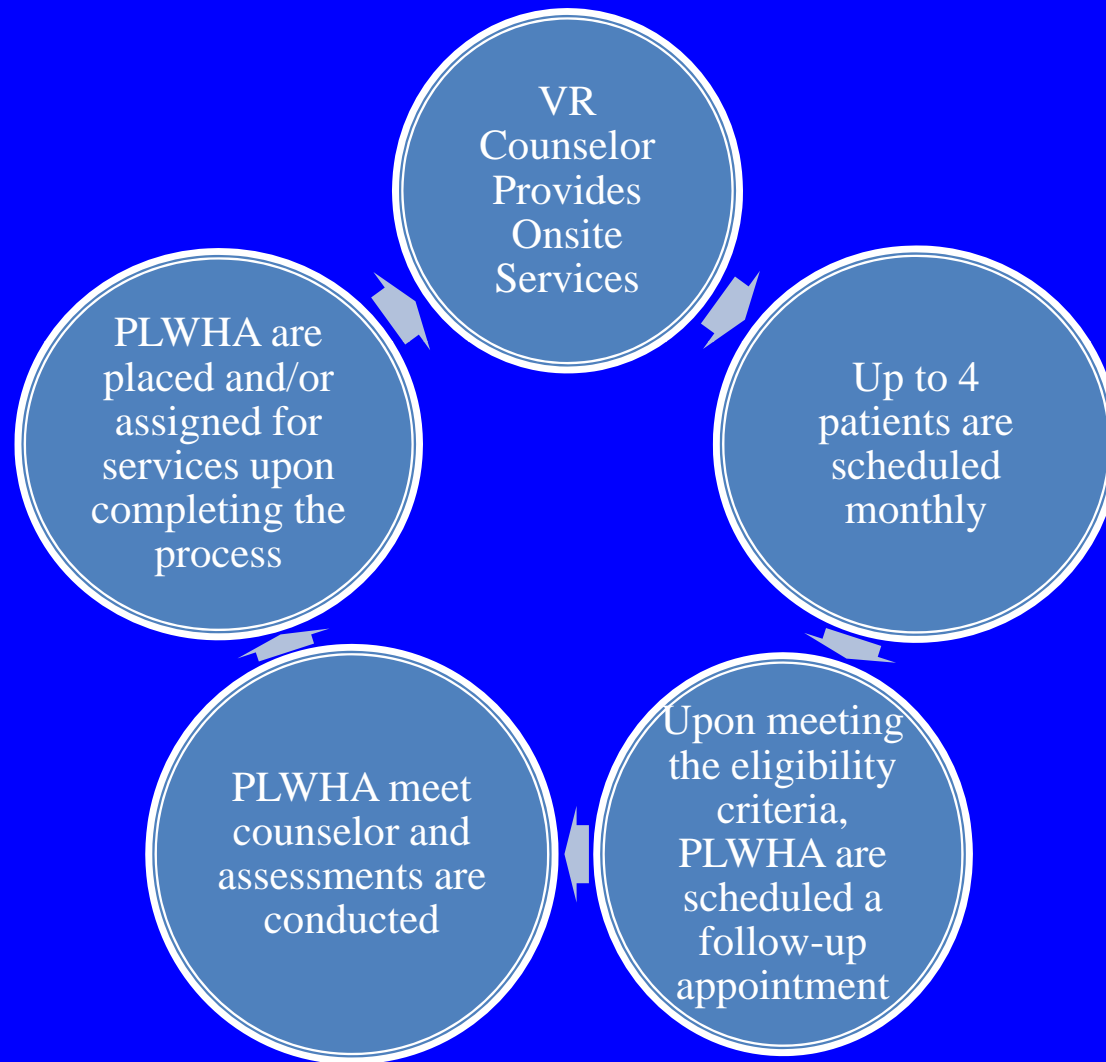
Established a Date to Start Services Onsite at Clinical Site

Provided Clinical Tour/Meet and Greet with Staff

Developed Flyers to Disseminate to Patients About Upcoming Available Service

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Started in April 2009

Arrangements





Progress to Date 1st year



- 48 patients have been referred for services
- 43 (90%) met their initial appointment
- 20 (47%) met their follow-up appointment
- 4 (20%) completed the entire process
- 2 (50%) PLWHA have been linked to employment
- Conducted 3 trainings
 - 2 HIV/AIDS trainings with VR staff
 - 1 VR training with HIV service providers

Feedback of Arkansas Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- What does Rehabilitation Services mean to you?

Common Themes

- Being rehabilitated from any alternating drugs so that a person can move forward and won't relapse.
- Behavior changes; jobs; skills
- Getting life on track from one mind frame to another, being able to perform better

Feedback

- How do you feel about being referred for rehabilitation services?

Common Themes

- I'm comfortable with the referral
 - Ok, I'm fine with coming
 - I have no problem with it

Arkansas Feedback

- How do you think you can benefit from being referred for rehabilitation services?

Common Themes

➤ Jobs

➤ Training

➤ Education



Arkansas Feedback



- How was your initial interview with the counselor?

Common Themes

- She was eager, aggressive-I feel she would have helped me find a job if I would have continued on.
- She questioned my skills; she made me feel hopeful; I feel that she could have helped me.
- Ok, she questioned my skills and abilities.
- She was helpful





Arkansas Feedback



- What makes it difficult for you to keep your appointments for assessments at the rehabilitation center?

Common Themes

- Transportation
- No phone-no permanent place to live
- Could not find the place for my first appointment
- I was 15 minutes late and I could not be seen.



Arkansas Feedback

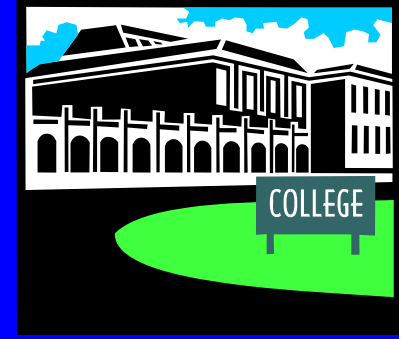
- What is your perception of the services you have received from Arkansas Vocational Rehabilitation services?

Common Themes

- Counselor was helpful
- Counselor was excited about my skills and abilities
- Counselor was excited about the referral and helping me.



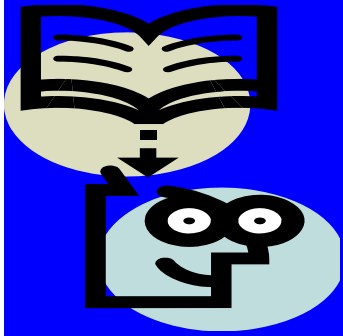
Arkansas Feedback



- What opportunities do you feel that Arkansas Vocational Rehabilitation should provide?

Common Themes

- Education
- Jobs
- Opportunities for a person to get back on their feet, valuable information



Arkansas Feedback

- How would you feel about having an opportunity to obtain employment, or return to school?

Common Themes

- Perfect
- Great
- Ready to work; I need to make some money



Arkansas Feedback



- What type of services have you received from vocational rehabilitation services?

Common Themes

- Met with counselor and got an appointment
- Appointment at the rehabilitation center
- Interview with counselor

HELP WANTED

Arkansas State University
Arkansas State University
Arkansas State University
Arkansas State University

Arkansas Feedback

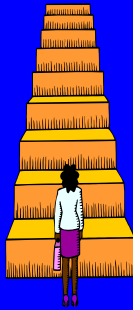
- How can vocational rehabilitation services better assist you?

Common Themes

- I need a job; employment-I am unemployed and struggling.
- Bus passes to get to the appointments
- I'm interested in sitting down with the counselor and discussing a career change or maybe returning to school.



Lessons Learned/Next Steps



- Important to establish and build trust
- Start with realistic goals in mind
- Do not be overcome with disappointment if the first attempt does not work
- Establish a win/win relationship
- Be willing to utilize a top/down and/or bottom up approach to navigate an entry point
- Offer continued HIV/AIDS and VR training

Resources for Technical Assistance

The National Working Positive Coalition (NWPC) can provide, or refer for technical assistance on topics related to HIV, employment and vocational rehabilitation:

National Working Positive Coalition

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Questions & Answers

