Connected?: *Public Health, Supportive Services and Vocational/Employment Services for PLWHA* 

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# National Working Positive Coalition (NWPC)

#### Who we are:

Persons living with HIV/AIDS, service providers, educators and researchers in HIV and employment

#### Mission

- Promote research, development and implementation of effective practices in employment services
- Coordinate sharing and dissemination of this information
- Advocate for work options and opportunities for people living with HIV/AIDS



#### Overview

Discuss development of the NWPC Vocational Development and Employment Needs Survey

Provide snapshot of initial findings relating to

- Knowledge of VR services
- Workplace disclosure
- Impact of employment status on health and prevention

Discuss implications for vocational rehabilitation practice and research



#### Methods

Survey research methods were used to identify the vocational development and employment needs of individuals with HIV/AIDS

Funded by NIDRR Switzer Fellowship

Instrument development

- Revision of 2004 survey
- Focus groups different regions of country
- Review of literature
- Expert panel and pilot testing



#### Survey Format

- 12 page survey
  - Paper and internet formats (English & Spanish)
  - June 2008 through October 2009
  - Major sections of survey
    - Demographic information
    - Knowledge, use and satisfaction with VR services
    - Workplace issues (employed respondents)
    - Considering work issues (unemployed respondents)
    - Health status

Funded by NIDRR & NYS AIDS Institute



#### Recruitment

Developed collaborative relationships with national HIV/AIDS organizations Positive Women's Network National Minority AIDS Council TheBody.com AIDS Alliance Promoted survey at conferences Eligibility At least 18 years old and HIV+



### Sample Demographics

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
2,538 respondents	65%	34%
Mean Age:	46	46
■ Race:		
Black	30%	54%
White	43%	24%
■ Latino	18%	24%
Sexual Orientation:		
Heterosexual	28%	88%
■ Gay	65%	4%
<ul> <li>Bisexual</li> </ul>	7%	8%



#### Sample Demographics

	<u>Men</u>	Women
Earn \$15,000 per year or less	49%	68%
High school/GED or less	32%	48%
■ HIV status:		
■ HIV	64%	72%
■ AIDS	36%	28%
Employment status:		
Employed	33%	30%
Not working	67%	70%



Impact of HIV on Employment			
	<u>Men</u>	Women	
Employed when diagnosed	71%	50%	
Currently employed	33%	30%	
Never worked	3%	11%	



Knowledge of employment-related laws			
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	47%	35%	
Reasonable Accommodations	21%	14%	
Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	31%	26%	
- Markforce Investment Act (M/LA)	00/	<u> </u>	
Workforce Investment Act (WIA)	9%	9%	



#### Knowledge of employment services/incentives

	Men	<u>Women</u>
■ Services		
State Vocational Rehabilitation	31%	27%
One Stop Career Centers	16%	18%
Work Incentives		
Ticket to Work	23%	22%
Trial Work Period	23%	13%
Extended Medicare	11%	8%
No knowledge of laws, or incentives	26%	31%



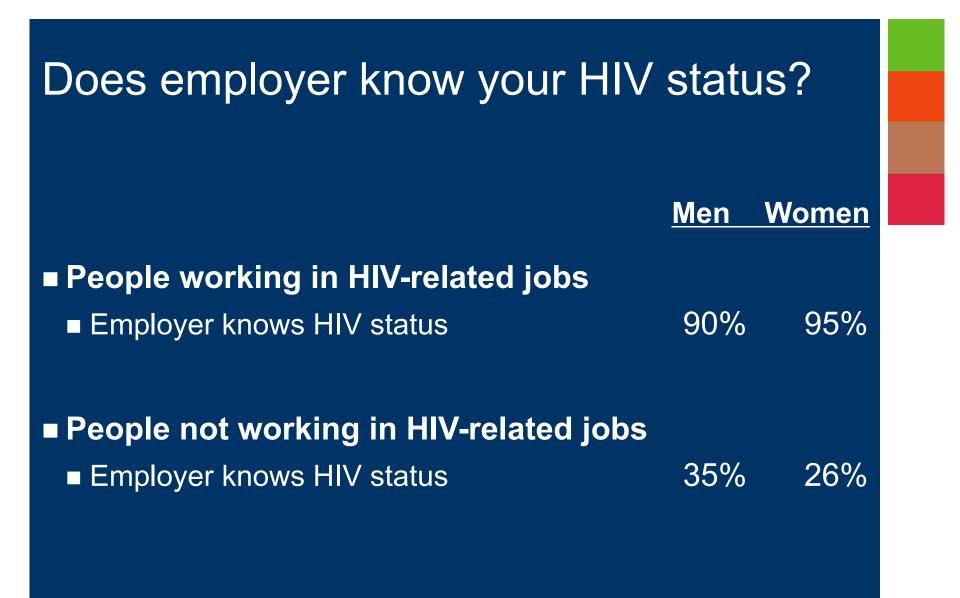
### **Employment Discrimination**

	Men	Women
No employment discrimination	44%	59%
Types of discrimination based on:		
■ HIV	21%	17%
■ Race	16%	12%
Sexual orientation	26%	3%
■ Age	15%	10%
Gender (female)	0%	13%
Incarceration	10%	9%
Disability	9%	7%
Ethnicity	7%	5%



Results for Employed Participants			
	<u>Men</u>	Women	
Employed	33%	30%	
Work related to HIV/AIDS	34%	57%	







#### Use of Job Accommodations

- 16% Change in work schedule
  - 9% Allow time for medications
  - 6% Change in job duties
  - 5% Allow to be close to bathroom
  - 3% Reassign to another position

42% None – have not requested any



#### Perceptions of work and health

#### Employer: ASO Not ASO

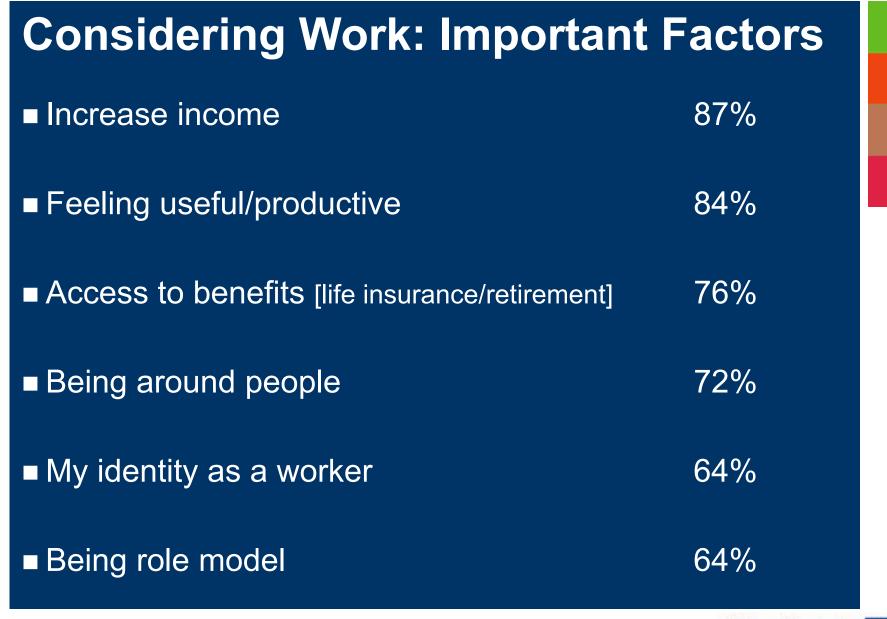
Being employed improved my outlook on the future 91% 76%
My health has interfered with my ability to work 27% 9%
Working negatively affected my health 11% 20%
Work interfered with my ability to take meds correctly 6% 12%

\*ASO = AIDS Service Organization



Results for Unemployed Participants			
	•		
	Men	<u>Women</u>	
Not working	1,092	593	
Varied perceptions of ability to work			
Able to work	43%	40%	
Not sure if could work	32%	28%	
Not able to work	25%	35%	







# Positive Outcome Expectations If I go to work... (Percent Agree)

	Men	Women
My outlook will improve	63%	61%
I'll be able to take meds correctly	49%	46%
My mental health will improve	50%	46%



#### Impact of Employment on Health Since my current job, my... (if previously unemployed)

		<u>Men</u>	Women
■ Self-care	increased	47%	56%
■ CD-4 count	increased	16%	22%
Med adherence	increased	17%	30%
Alcohol use	decreased	34%	33%
■ Drug use	decreased	34%	32%
Unprotected sex	decreased	31%	28%
Number of sex partners	decreased	35%	32%



# Negative Outcome Expectations/Barriers If I go to work...(Percent Agree)

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
I will lose my disability income benefits	46%	42%
I will face discrimination	34%	30%
I will not have health insurance	32%	32%
Others will find out I have HIV	30%	4%
My housing will be at risk	26%	26%
I need help to develop my job skills	54%	56%
No employment services in my area	57%	64%



#### Summary

HIV has had a dramatic impact on the employment and economic status of the respondents

Majority of the respondents reported perceived benefits associated with work

Respondents had very limited knowledge of vocational services, organizations or other related resources.
 Women had less awareness than men

About 25%-30% of the sample were not able to work, which suggests that work is not a healthy option for all



#### Summary

Respondents face high levels of discrimination and the majority do not report discrimination

 Employment is related to positive health and prevention outcomes for many
 Need to attend to those where outcomes are not positive

Many report ability to work and a need to increase their income as primary factor in considering work



#### Summary

Respondents report many barriers to employment and few supports to address these barriers

Employment is associated with positive health and prevention outcomes for many and negative outcomes for a substantial minority

- Reflects episodic nature of HIV for many
- Suggests need for intervention at points of work transition

Many unemployed respondents anticipate that employment would lead to improved health and reduced risk factors associated with HIV prevention



#### Limitations and Future Research

Initial descriptive findings

Need more sophisticated analysis to account for missing data and confounding influences

Volunteer sample

 More in-depth analysis will help to better understand factors that lead to different outcomes
 Ongoing findings will be posted on NWPC webpage: workingpositive.net



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