



# Centering Peer Health Navigators to Improve Care and Treatment for Black Women Living with HIV

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New Orleans, LA

**20**  
**22**

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**RYAN WHITE**  
**CONFERENCE**  
ON HIV CARE & TREATMENT

# Background

- In 2018, **Black women accounted for 57% of new HIV diagnoses among US women**, even though they made up only 13% of the US female population at that time.<sup>1</sup>
- **Black cisgender and transgender women have a disparate burden of stress-related disorders and co-morbid health conditions** that often contribute to poorer health outcomes, especially for those living with HIV.<sup>2</sup>
- Funded by HRSA's Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS) program, the **Institute of Women & Ethnic Studies (IWES)** aims to improve care and treatment services for cisgender and transgender **Black women living with HIV (BWLH)** in the Greater New Orleans region.
- IWES and Priority Health Care (PHC), a federally-qualified health center on the Westbank of New Orleans, are implementing and evaluating a bundled set of interventions focused on:
  1. **Enhancing patient navigation**
  2. **Increasing organizational capacity for trauma-informed care, including gender-affirming care**
  3. **Supportive services for intimate partner violence**
  4. **HIV stigma reduction**
- Interventions prioritize BWLH who have never entered care, have fallen out of care, or are at high risk of falling out of care.

# Methods

## Our Peer Health Navigators (PHNs):

- **Have lived experiences that align with the priority population** and/or have a history of strong working relationships with the priority population.
- **Receive extensive training** in patient navigation, motivational interviewing, gender-affirming care, trauma-informed approaches to care, stigma reduction, client-centered treatment plans, and program evaluation practices.
- **Lead recruitment, enrollment, support groups, and incentive management** to reduce the number of patient transfers so that care is coordinated
- **Implement evidence-informed interventions** that include monthly health and wellness navigation sessions, and peer support groups

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A local peer health navigation expert provided consultation and monthly mentorship sessions for our PHNs, which included processing the emotions and challenges of peer support, case load review and problem solving, and support with strategy for recruitment and enrollment.



# Patient Navigators Interventions



## THE ALEXIS PROJECT

a partnership between Priority Health Care and the Institute of Women & Ethnic Studies

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Black women of trans experience living with HIV in the Greater New Orleans area

### WHAT WILL THIS PROGRAM DO?

The program will connect you with a Peer Health Navigator who will support you through getting & staying in HIV care. She will also link you to affirming support services and resources that you identify as a priority.

### WILL I BE COMPENSATED?

Yes! You can earn up to \$350 by attending sessions with your Peer Health Navigator, getting routine STD screenings, and completing surveys.

### HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

Program activities will last for 18-months.

for more details

**Call Chasity!**

**(504) 509-5424**

**csmith@phc-no.org**

**Don't know your status?  
Come get tested for FREE at PHC!**



## GUIDE TO HEALING

a partnership between Priority Health Care and the Institute of Women & Ethnic Studies

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Black women living with HIV in the Greater New Orleans area

### WHAT WILL THIS PROGRAM DO?

- Connect you to a Health Navigator
- Offer Support Groups
- Link you to self-care and other supportive services that you identify as a priority

### WILL I BE COMPENSATED?

Yes! You can earn up to \$250 by attending sessions with your Health Navigator, getting routine STD screenings, and completing surveys.

### HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

Program activities will last for 6-8 months.

for more details

**Call Ari!**

**(504) 309-8114**

**adavis@phc-no.org**

**Don't know your status?  
Come get tested for FREE at PHC!**



# Centering Peer Health Navigators

## Discussion

By building trust and rapport with clients and creating space and opportunity for wellness that extends beyond HIV care and treatment, PHNs are instrumental in ensuring that interventions and approaches to service delivery are culturally-relevant and tailored to the needs of Black women living with HIV.

***“...We’re changing lives one at a time. I hope this brings you as much joy as it brought me.”***

Ari Davis  
Peer Health Navigator

## Future Considerations

To improve enrollment, engagement, and retention in program and HIV care, consider:

- making cell phones available to PHNs for ease of communication with participants
- making incentive options as flexible as possible to fit needs of the priority population
- improving access to gender-affirming health care by re-examining and revising:
  - Complete patient experience - from scheduling appointments, waiting room atmosphere, interactions with front desk staff and providers
  - Phrasing/Wording of paper and electronic intake form questions
  - How information (especially gender identity and preferred names) is recorded/displayed in EMR
  - Clinic Policies

# Centering Peer Health Navigators

## Selected References

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). CDC HIV Surveillance Report - Diagnoses of HIV Infection in the United States and Dependent Areas.

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/reports/surveillance/cdc-hiv-surveillance-report-2018-updated-vol-31.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation. (2020). Women and HIV in the United States. <https://www.kff.org/hiv/aids/fact-sheet/women-and-hiv-aids-in-the-united-states/>

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- Funding Agency, Health Resources & Services Administration
- Priority Health Care Implementation Team
- Our Guide to Healing & Alexis Project Participants
- Dietz: Mentor, Peer Health Navigator



# Thank You!

## Questions?

### Contact

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