

Effective Utilization of Consumer Advocates: The Peer Approach to HIV Care and Social Support

Joan M. Duggan, MD

Jamie Dowling, PhD

*The University of Toledo Medical Center
Ryan White Program Parts C & D*

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, the participant will be able to:

1. Participants will be able to explain the importance employing consumer advocates in their Ryan White Program.
2. Participants will be able to describe various roles the consumer advocate can hold within the program.
3. Participants will be able to determine how a consumer advocate can fill holes or gaps in service within their program.

Obtaining CME/CE Credit

If you would like to receive continuing education credit for this activity, please visit:

<http://ryanwhite.cds.pesgce.com>

Consumer Advocates

- Also referred to as Patient Navigators, Patient Advocates, etc.
- Serve a crucial role in a successful, comprehensive Ryan White Program.
- Lend a personalized, empathetic shoulder to patients who are newly diagnosed or are in need of social support.
- This type of support can vary greatly from that given by social work/case managers and therapists.
- Providing patients with a support system including individuals who have had stories similar to theirs helps them to feel understood and that they are not alone.

The Role of a Consumer Advocate

- Providing patients with a support system including individuals who have had stories similar to theirs helps them to feel understood and that they are not alone.
- In addition, Consumer Advocates can provide staff and leadership with another perspective, that of the consumer – important in making decisions that impact patients and their HIV care
- Furthermore, employing consumer advocates helps to enhance the patient experience in a variety of ways, from having staff in this role make patient appointment reminder calls (with a familiar voice), helping to facilitate support groups, and serving on committees such as the Quality Committee.

How we utilize Consumer Advocates

Three part-time (20-25 hours/week) positions

Diverse backgrounds among the three Consumers

- One white female, mid-60s, heterosexual
- One black male, mid-50s, MSM
- One Hispanic gender fluid/non-binary

Required qualifications:

Education/experience/licensing:

- Experience in living with HIV infection.
- High School Education or Equivalent

Communication and other skills:

- Excellent communication skills on a one on one and classroom basis
- Excellent interpersonal skills

Core competencies and educational file requirements:

- Completion of “Counseling Persons at Risk for HIV Infection”
- Institutional safety and health requirements
- Completion of HIV Counseling and Testing training during the first year of employment.

Our “One-Stop Shop” Model



General Summary

The Consumer Advocate shall act as a liaison between Ryan White consumers and staff through outreach, education and HIV community participation.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities

Rank (List in order of importance)	List of Job Duties (Start each duty with an action verb such as “operate,” “repair,” “perform,” “manage,” or “coordinate,” etc.)	Percent of Time
1.	Practice: Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Provide individual patient outreach to problem solve around access to care and disclosure.b. Provide psychosocial support on a one-on-one basis for Ryan White clients.c. Assist in coordination of support groups and other group meetings.d. Participate in support groups.e. Make support group and appointment reminder calls.f. Participate in HIV testing and awareness events in the community.g. Other duties as assigned	75%
2.	Education <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. One-on-one patient education.2. Community education through the classroom, health fairs and community events.	15%
3.	Community and Institutional Committee Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Attend CAB meetings.b. Serve on the CQM committee actively supporting and participating in program continuous quality improvement planning, activities and evaluation.c. Serve on the Retention Committeed. Attend monthly staff meetings.e. Attend Ryan White Quarterly Meetings.	10%
	TOTAL	100%

Examples of how Consumers have improved care...

Consumers are engrained into our Program

- Support Group logistics and planning
- Patient calls— appointment reminders, VLS calls, medical transportation, support group and other event reminder calls
- Crisis intervention in clinic
- New patients—at one of first visits they see a Consumer Advocate
- Part of committees— 340B Steering, Quality, Retention, Holiday and Pride planning, CAB
- Visiting patients who are admitted to our hospital
- Medication adherence “counseling” and barrier problem solving
- HIV testing and counseling
- Prevention for Positives
- Retention/Re-engagement in care

Outreach

Consumer advocacy is a key component of the Outreach arm of the UTMC Ryan White Program.

Consumers:

- provide community education through HIV/AIDS testing and awareness events
- provide individual outreach to consumers to problem solve around access to care and disclosure
- assist with programs such as state-funded Healthy Relationships
- speak to local classrooms, organizations, agencies, and HIV-related events

Other Consumer Involvement

Consumer involvement is part of a formal, well-documented process for consumers to participate in HIV quality management program activities, including a consumer advisory committee with regular meetings, consumer surveys, interviews, focus groups and consumer training/skills building. Consumer activities are discussed below.

A Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) consists of an average of seven consumer members. The CAB includes two additional non-voting members - the Ryan White Program Manager and a Case Manager from UTMHC. The CAB provides guidance to and reviews the local Ryan White programs and acts as a liaison for consumer concerns. CAB activities include:

- Participation in West Ohio AIDS Task Force's Healing Weekend: a weekend-long retreat which focused on education and empowerment of PLWHA.
- Meetings held quarterly throughout the year which address consumer questions, comments, and concerns are addressed at meetings.
- Three consumers currently attend the CQI Committee and one consumer sits on the 340B Board. All have provided valuable input and leadership.

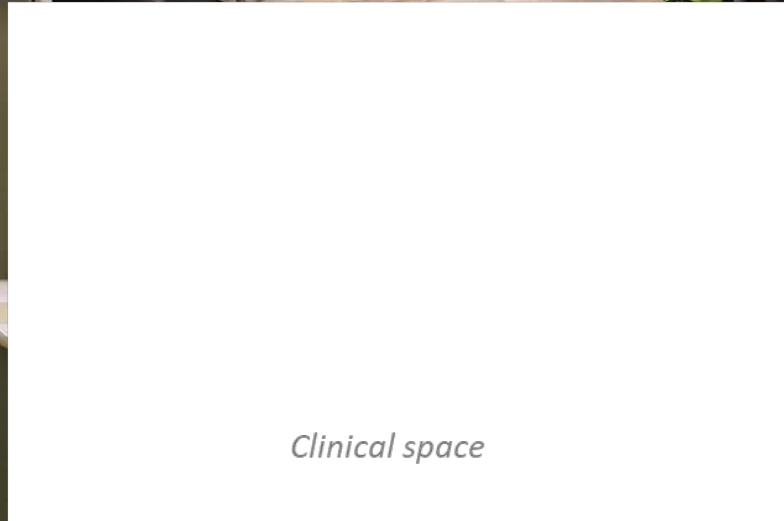
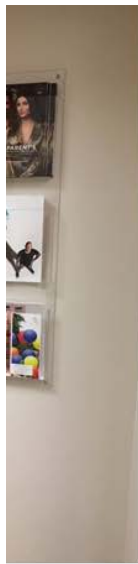
Other Consumer Involvement

Consumers also participate in six active support groups which meet monthly:

- Men
- Men's Breakfast Club
- Women
- Mixed (Men and Women)
- Substance Abuse
- Nexus Group which is for clients who have personality disorders that do not fit into another group.

*All support groups are attended by at least one Consumer Advocate.

In addition to employing three consumers part-time as Advocates, we also employ a consumer as a Data Entry Clerk, and a consumer as a LSW.



Clinical space

