What One Thing Would Help Women With HIV Stay in Care?

March 10, 2016

A new survey of 180 women living with HIV identifies the challenges they face in connecting to HIV care. A report of the findings was released by the Positive Women's Network–USA (PWN-USA) on Thursday, March 10, to coincide with National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NWGHAAD).

The hope is that the information gathered from the PWN-USA survey will help inform medical care and service delivery for women living with the virus. Most (67 percent) of the respondents were black, and "significant numbers" were low-income and unstably housed.

When asked the question "What one thing would help you stay in care?" respondents answered:

25%	Transportation
18%	Case management
17%	Connection with other women living with HIV
11%	Access to HIV specialist
10%	Evening and weekend clinic hours
7%	Other
6%	Assistance paying for insurance
6%	Assistance paying for medication

Breaking the information down further, the report also notes:

> 50% of respondents who had missed a medical appointment in the past year cited transportation as the reason.
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> 32% of respondents had missed filling a prescription for HIV medications in the past year. Primary reasons were: lack of transportation (24%), copay cost (15%), and pharmacy hours (11%).

50% of participants who reported needing child care services on site at their medical provider did not receive those services.

17% of respondents had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

64.9% had been diagnosed with depression.

Nearly two-thirds (64.6%) of respondents reported that they would like to see someone for counseling or therapy. Of those, 59% were able to access therapy as needed. Others reported that cost, lack of coverage, lack of available services or waitlists for services presented a barrier.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations, such as expanding the sexual and reproductive health care services throughout the Ryan White Program, enhancing the availability of mental health services and instituting trauma-informed practices.

For more about the report, click here.

And to read a POZ opinion piece about trauma-informed practices, click here.

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