



## Top Takeaways from the Red Ribbon Campaign Session 2: Lessons from “Broadening the Ribbon: Innovative Resources and Effective Strategies to Eliminate HIV/AIDS in Indian Country”

### HIV Prevention and Education Efforts at the State Level

Eliminating HIV/AIDS in Indian Country requires UIO participation in various efforts at the state level. Oklahoma City Indian Clinic (OKCIC) participates in many of these efforts, including a state HIV Taskforce that focuses on HIV policy change within member organizations. Other initiatives include contributing Native-specific inclusion language to the State EndHIV Plan Workgroup, creating Medicaid guidelines for providers, identifying communities of need through pinpointing areas with HIV provider shortages, and being a member of the Oklahoma HIV Prevention Co-Op.

### HIV Prevention and Education Efforts at the Clinic Level

UIO healthcare providers can significantly improve uptake of HIV services by making minor changes in the way HIV/AIDS care is presented to patients. Having an opt-out policy for HIV screening is one way to normalize the screening process, particularly when offered by knowledgeable providers. UIOs can also increase awareness of available HIV services by participating in local events and partnering with trusted local entities. Additionally, attending national conferences ensures clinics are well-informed of the most up-to-date interventions, treatments, and prevention strategies.

### Navigating HIV/AIDS Stigma

Navigating stigma around HIV/AIDS is extremely important, particularly for AI/AN communities. The NHAS has identified priority populations disproportionately impacted by HIV, which includes AI/AN men who have sex with men. By routinizing the screening process, patients do not feel singled out for HIV testing. Presenting HIV/AIDS information through social media, billboards, and bus stop ads are also highly effective in educating unique populations on the need for regular screening and what treatment options are available. Finally, providing information on HIV/AIDS at health fairs provides an opportunity for patients to learn about HIV/AIDS care options while feeling comfortable and empowered to proactively seek care without judgment.

### Safe, Accessible, Patient-Centered Care Environments

Creating a safe and trustworthy patient environment is important when providing HIV/AIDS services. Receiving designations such as Human Rights Campaign LGBTQ+ Health Equality Top Performer shows patients that the clinic staff and providers will be non-discriminatory and any services and support they receive will be completed safely, respectfully, and without judgement. Providing comprehensive clinical care is also highly effective. Being able to provide a clear pathway of care for patients by partnering with local entities to provide prevention specialist services, connections to case managers, and IDI providers/services builds trust and faith in the relationship with the patient.

### Comprehensive Approach

Ending the HIV epidemic requires a comprehensive approach. Advocating for policy change at the federal, state, and clinic levels is one step UIOs can take to assist in the fight to eliminate HIV/AIDS in Indian Country. Additionally, leveraging federal, state, and local partnerships to meet the needs of your unique communities is also a significant way to gain resources and funding opportunities to support those with HIV/AIDS.

### References:

Content Source: HIV.gov. Date last updated: June 15, H. I. V. (2022, June 15). Who is at risk for HIV? HIV.gov. Retrieved July 18, 2022, from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/about-hiv-and-aids/who-is-at-risk-for-hiv#:~:text=National%20HIV%2FAIDS%20Strategy%20Addresses%20HIV%20Risk&text=The%20NHAS%20identifies%20the%20following,Transgender%20women>

