



## Top Takeaways from the Red Ribbon Campaign Session 3:

### Lessons from “Sharing the Ribbon: Best Practices from the Frontlines”

#### Adhering to the Ending the Epidemic (EHE) Initiative Model

First Nations Community Healthsource Inc. (FNCH) strives to eliminate HIV/AIDS in Indian Country by following the CDC's science-based strategies of *Diagnose, Treat, Prevent and Respond*. FNCH aims to screen patients as early as possible for HIV by providing Free Rapid HIV testing and Counseling to patients. To prevent the transmission of HIV to others, FNCH offers pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and syringe services programs (SSPs) amongst many other interventions at their various clinics around the Albuquerque area. FNCH aims to treat HIV positive patients to reach viral suppression by offering a variety of treatments across their numerous clinics. Finally, FNCH aims to respond to the requires UIO participation in various efforts at the state level.

#### 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.

#### Provision of Prevention Services

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.

#### Provision of Case Management Services

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.

#### Provision of Harm Reduction Services

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.

