

## **EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES STANDARDS OF CARE**

Early Intervention Services (EIS) is the provision of a combination of services. The elements of EIS often overlap with other service category descriptions. However, EIS is the combination of such services rather than a stand-alone service. RWHAP Part recipients should be aware of programmatic expectations that stipulate the allocation of funds into specific service categories.

RWHAP Parts A and B EIS services must include the following four components:

- Targeted HIV testing to help the unaware learn of their HIV status and receive referral to HIV care and treatment services if found to be HIV-infected
  - Recipients must coordinate these testing services with other HIV prevention and testing programs to avoid duplication of efforts
  - HIV testing paid for by EIS cannot supplant testing efforts paid for by other sources
- Referral services to improve HIV care and treatment services at key points of entry
- Access and linkage to HIV care and treatment services such as HIV Outpatient/Ambulatory Health Services, Medical Case Management, and Substance Abuse Care
- Outreach Services and Health Education/Risk Reduction related to HIV diagnosis

All four of the above components must be present, but Ryan White Part A and B funds can only be used for HIV Testing as necessary to supplement, not supplant, existing funding. Part A and B funds are used for HIV testing only where existing federal, state, and local funds are not adequate. If HIV testing is performed as part of EIS, no eligibility documentation is required.

### **GOAL**

The goal is to provide Early Intervention Services to link and retain clients in care (per HRSA Performance Standards) to achieve viral suppression by removing barriers to effective care for HIV clients by coordinating services, thus increasing the client's chances for a healthy, quality life. EIS is a team or program and not an individual staff person. EIS staff work for the Ryan White system and not an agency.

### **STANDARD OF CARE**

#### HIRING STANDARDS

- All agencies should abide by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Standards of Care requirements for hiring.

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- All paid EIS staff must possess, at minimum, a high school diploma or equivalent.
- EIS staff should reflect the community that the program proposes to serve.

### TRAINING STANDARDS

- All EIS staff should abide by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Standards of Care requirements for training.
- All EIS staff shall possess Texas DSHS current certification as an HIV Prevention counselor or advanced training/experience in the area of HIV infectious disease specialty.
- EIS staff should possess skills necessary to work with a variety of health care professionals, medical case managers, and interdisciplinary personnel.
- Staff should be trained in assessment of client needs in order to refer to case management, mental health services, substance abuse services, and other services.
- Within three (3) months of hire, EIS staff must visit all of their program's collaborating agencies (including those not funded through Ryan White and those not HIV-specific agencies).
- Within the first (3) months of hire, EIS staff must complete training that includes, at minimum, the following criteria:
  - HIV / AIDS Training
    - HIV Basics (i.e., getting tested, transmission, disease stages)
    - Understanding Labs (i.e., reading lab results, understanding lab values)
    - Medication and Side Effects (i.e., understanding drug resistance, side effects and the goals of medications)
    - Adherence (i.e., adherence strategies)
  - Communication Skills
    - Active Listening
    - Asking Tough Questions
    - Non-Verbal Communication
    - Responding to Conflict
    - Culture and Cultural Competency
  - Peer Role
    - Workplace Expectations (i.e., confidentiality, creating and setting boundaries, ethics, professional standards)
    - Disclosure (i.e., benefits and risks)

*\*Note that training may be provided by the agency, an outside agency, or online.*

## **EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES STANDARDS OF CARE**

### JOB PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- All EIS staff should abide by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Standards of Care requirements for job performance.
- EIS staff should develop a plan to link and retain clients in care in order to achieve viral suppression. The plan should identify client needs, resources, goals, and a planned course of action to meet immediate needs. EIS Staff should revise the plan as necessary.
- EIS staff must attend care coordination staff meetings related to their clients.
- EIS staff must facilitate the removal of Barriers to Care for clients providing assistance with impediments that prevent client access to or retention in care, including, but not limited to:
  - Providing or arranging translation services;
  - Providing or arranging transportation to medical and social service appointments;
  - Providing or arranging assistance with obtaining medications;
  - Providing referrals and follow up for clients to necessary community resources; and
  - Providing or arranging client advocacy to assist clients with applications to third-party payer resources (e.g., Medicare/Medicaid, SSDI, insurance).
- EIS staff must attempt to return clients to care after an agency review of client attendance at medical and other appointments by contacting clients via telephone, postal mail, home visits, or any other means available which may include referral to outreach services.
- EIS staff are encouraged to work in partnership with clients to develop and track health self-management goals in such critical areas as adherence, exercise, substance abuse, sexual risk management, nutrition, and oral health.

### REPORTING STANDARDS

- All EIS staff should abide by local requirements for reporting.