

# NoFLAC News

**Newsletter of the NW Florida AIDS Consortium**

**Fall 2010**



## HOORAY FOR FALL!

Finally we've gotten a welcome break from the heat of Summer. The air-conditioning is off and we can throw open the windows to air out the house. The air has a different smell that stirs memories of childhood and the upcoming Fall holidays. A few crisp cold days and evenings and our appetites begin turning to refreshing apple cider, steaming pots of Chili and home made soup. Soon Thanksgiving will be upon us and we'll plan feasts with family and friends. Fall is a dreamy time of reflection upon the year so far. Just as Spring promises renewal, Fall brings thoughts of the time of harvest and reaping the results of the year's efforts.

2010 has brought with it new projects that have passed the planning and startup phase and are now in place to better serve PLWHAs in Northwest Florida. Inside, you'll find a discussion of new projects and activities, what has challenged our community and how we are responding.

## STATE OF THE AIDS DRUG ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ADAP) CRISIS

"I support this program and will strongly advocate for it on the state and federal level. The current and future patients in Florida's ADAP deserve nothing less from me and everyone involved in the program. Currently, the ADAP crisis continues to grow among Southern States. In fact, **Southerners make up 93% of the individuals on the ADAP waiting lists in the U.S.**"

- Ana Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H. Florida State Surgeon General

Number of people on ADAP waiting lists in Southern States: **Florida: 1,796**, Louisiana: 439, Georgia: 553, North Carolina: 36, Kentucky: 227, South Carolina: 148.



Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is **critical** that ADAP clients pick up their medications and attend scheduled appointments in order to avoid losing program eligibility, interrupting treatment and going on the waiting list. Individuals who are on the wait list can obtain their medications through pharmaceutical patient assistance programs (PAPs). Individuals can contact their physician or case manager for more information on how to obtain medications through these programs. All individuals who are not currently on ADAP but are eligible for the program should make sure they have completed their waitlist eligibility appointment with ADAP which is a requirement to obtain medications through PAPs.

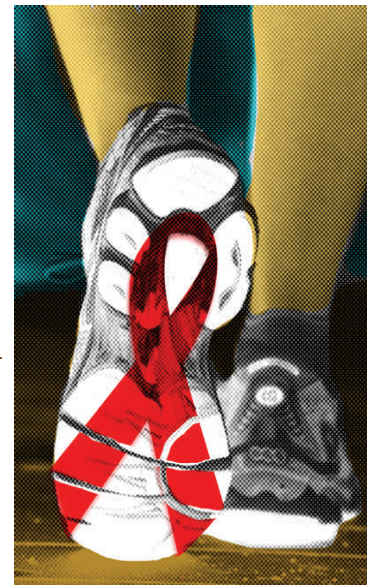
*Questions? Contact your local ADAP nurse or case manager.*

NoFLAC News is published quarterly by the Northwest Florida AIDS/HIV Consortium. Submissions may be sent to Scott Mickley via email (scott\_mickley@doh.state.fl.us), fax (850-595-6400), or regular mail (Scott Mickley, Escambia County Health Department, 1295 W. Fairfield Drive, Pensacola, FL 32501). **NoFLAC News staff reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and content.**

## 5K WALK 4 LIFE - 2K10

*Erica Douglas, Regional Minority HIV/AIDS Coordinator / Early Intervention Consultant*

The Escambia County Health Department's HIV/AIDS Program Office will team up with Pensacola Parks and Recreation, Magic 106.1 and Wil-Lo Week on **Saturday, November 20, 2010** at Legions Field, to host the **5K Walk 4 Life-2K10**. The purpose of this walk is to bring the community together to promote the awareness of HIV/AIDS and other health conditions that affect the community. Vendors from around the area will be present to offer health screenings, testing and educational materials to all participants. For added festivity, bounce houses, fire truck tours, fire safety demonstrations, a 3-on-3 basketball tournament, face painting, and a high school band performance will be available for everyone to enjoy. All proceeds from the event will be donated to the Scholarships for Camps and HIV prevention for the Pensacola area. **Registration begins at 8:00am**. The event will run from 8am until 12 noon. The walk and free HIV testing begin at 9:30am with a post-walk concert at 11:00am. Please contact Erica Douglas, Regional Minority AIDS Coordinator/ Early Intervention Consultant for more information at 850-595-6049.



## PEER NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

*Jennifer Benz Findley, MSW*

*HIV Care Center Inc. / Center for Prevention and Treatment of Infections*

Beginning September 1, 2010 HIV Care Center, Inc. (the non-profit branch of the Center for Prevention and Treatment of Infections at Dr. Barbara Wade's office), was awarded Ryan White funding to begin a Peer Navigator Program for Area 1 (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties) in Florida. Peer navigators are defined as non-licensed professionals whose qualifications rest on their connection with the HIV population. **Peer navigators will provide education, support, and linkage to individuals with HIV/AIDS who have barriers to adhering to their HIV medical care.** The peer navigators will work along

with the MARC (Medical Adherence and Retention in Care) counselor in working with clients to help improve medical adherence through linkage, education, and support.

The program utilizes a total of five peers (four individuals from Escambia/Santa Rosa Counties and one individual from Okaloosa/Walton County). These peers are trained, closely supervised, and are bound by the same confidentiality guidelines as the employees of Dr. Wade's office. They will work as part of the treatment team for eligible individuals who enroll in the MARC program. Eligible individuals include those who are HIV positive and have barriers that make it difficult for them to attend regular medical appointments, take their medications as directed, and maintain their overall health. The peer and MARC counselor will help these individuals with identifying and addressing each barrier and act as a liaison with healthcare and community providers who are involved with the consumer's care.

For more information on the Peer Navigator / MARC program please contact Jennifer Benz Findley, MSW at 850-476-3131 x. 205.



## WORLD AIDS DAY IN PLANNING PHASE - JOIN US!!!

**World AIDS Day**  
**December 1**

PENSACOLA LITTLE THEATER AT 400 SOUTH JEFFERSON STREET IS THE PLANNED VENUE FOR THIS YEAR'S WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVANCE. THIS LOCATION WILL PROVIDE FOR A DIFFERENT KIND OF EVENT THAT WILL ALLOW MULTIPLE TYPES OF TRIBUTES: SOCIAL, ARTISTIC, EDUCATIONAL AND COMMEMORATIVE. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED, SEE THE NEXT MEETING AND CONTACT INFORMATION BELOW.



## Program will feature:

- ♦ Support agency information.
- ♦ **FREE** on-site HIV testing.
- ♦ Art show featuring local artists.
- ♦ Remembrance program/vigil.
- ♦ Music and guest speakers.
- ♦ Local quilt display.

If you have questions or would like to request more information:

Call Keelea LeJeune at  
(850) 202-0353



**Find us on FaceBook:**  
**World AIDS Day Pensacola**

*Next Meeting Date is Monday, October 11th at 1:00 - 2:00pm at Covenant Hospice, 2001 North Palafox St.*

*All are welcome!*

## AGENCY UPDATE - ART FOR AIDS AWARENESS

We are extremely pleased to report the members of The Arts for AIDS Awareness, Inc. voted at our general membership meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup> to go from a private membership 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to a public 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. This change no longer requires a membership fee to become a member of The Arts for AIDS Awareness, Inc. If you are interested or know anyone who would be interested in joining this organization to help bring HIV/AIDS awareness back to the area, please call 850-748-9723 or email our membership Vice-President, Scott Heck at [a4aamembership@yahoo.com](mailto:a4aamembership@yahoo.com).

The Arts for AIDS Awareness was invited to have a public showing and art sale for Gallery Night at the Saenger Theater in downtown Pensacola on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. We would like to thank the Saenger for allowing us to setup and participate in such a Historic venue as the Saenger.

A4AA is selling our 2010 Crystal ornaments this year for \$20.00 each. Each ornament is personally handcrafted by artist, Tim Holder, of Knoxville, TN. If you are interested in purchasing an ornament, contact any A4AA member or email us at [a4aainc@yahoo.com](mailto:a4aainc@yahoo.com) or call us at 850-748-9723.

The Board of Directors also elected to rent two booths from Gay Grassroots for Pensacola Pride's day in Seville Park on October 9th. We will be displaying art for sale, the 2010 crystal ornaments, and of course making sure everyone we come into contact with has a red ribbon to wear. We want HIV/AIDS Awareness to be abundant this year for Pensacola Pride.

Unfortunately, the Halloween Masquerade Ball scheduled at Sanders Beach for the evening of October 30th has been cancelled. However, A4AA will still host a Halloween fundraising event at the Cabaret located at 101 S. Jefferson Street in downtown Pensacola. Planning for this event is still ongoing and we will release updates as soon as they become available. Please stay tuned to our Facebook page at "the Arts for AIDS Awareness."

The Board of Directors and the members of The Arts for AIDS Awareness, Inc. would like to thank the gulf coast area for a successful first year. This proves that "Together," we can all make a difference.



\$20 Donation

gift box with ribbon included

A4AAinc@yahoo.com

Arts for AIDS Awareness 850-748-9723

# Announcements and Events

- **AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) has opened a new office** at Madison Park, 4300 Bayou Boulevard just off 12th Avenue in Pensacola. Their former location on Cervantes Street is closed. This office will provide all of the same services: prevention, testing, and administrative offices for the Positive Healthcare Disease Management program, Positive Healthcare Mobile Clinic and Closing the Gap prevention program. AHF offers free rapid HIV tests Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 12pm (by appointment) and 1 to 4 p.m. (walk-in). Testing is also available the last Friday of the month from 5 to 7 p.m. For more information call 850-470-8071.
- **Community Information Network offers free lawn service** (cut, edge, and blow) to those who are HIV positive. For more information, please call 850-470-9155 to speak with a staff member.
- **The Center for Prevention and Treatment of Infections sponsors both men's and women's HIV support groups.** For more information, please call 850-476-3131.
- **October 15th is National Latino AIDS Awareness Day.** The Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program at the Escambia County Health Department will participate in this year's Latino Festival to be held at Bayview Community Center located at 2000 Lloyd Street on Saturday, October 16th, from 10am to 4pm. The family-oriented event will host a variety of activities including dance performances, live music, games, services and information geared toward the local Latino community. See more information about National Latino HIV/AIDS Awareness Day at: <http://www.nlaad.org>

## THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY

**“The United States will become a place where new HIV infections are rare and when they do occur, every person, regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socio-economic circumstance, will have unfettered access to high quality, life-extending care, free from stigma and discrimination.”**

This is the vision for the National AIDS Strategy, the nation's first comprehensive HIV/AIDS strategy, which was released by the White House on July 13, 2010. The White House Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) coordinated the development of this significant and long-awaited strategy. To ensure broad public involvement in its development, ONAP held a series of community discussions throughout the nation, including one in Ft. Lauderdale. These discussions engaged communities in the process of developing a comprehensive plan to refocus our prevention and care efforts.

The strategy has three major goals:

1. Reducing the number of people who become infected with HIV,
2. Increasing access to care and optimizing health outcomes for people living with HIV, and
3. Reducing HIV-related health disparities.

The strategy provides an ongoing process for setting priorities and evaluating success. The effective implementation of this strategy will require knowledge, commitment, and coordination at all levels, from federal, state, and county government to local community-based organizations and persons living with HIV/AIDS. I encourage everyone to read and share this important document. For more information about the document and the implementation plan, please visit:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/onap/nhas/>

## How Does the Affordable Care Act Impact People Living with HIV/AIDS?

Historically, people living with HIV and AIDS have had a difficult time obtaining private health insurance and have been particularly vulnerable to insurance industry abuses. People with HIV/AIDS also face barriers to obtaining care from qualified providers. On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act and set into place an effort that will help ensure Americans have secure, stable, affordable health insurance and the relief they need from skyrocketing health insurance costs. Consistent with the goals of the President's National HIV/AIDS Strategy, the Affordable Care Act makes considerable strides in addressing these concerns and advancing equality for people living with HIV and AIDS. Those strides include improving access to coverage, ensuring quality coverage, and increasing opportunities for health and well-being.

### Improving Access to Coverage

As early as September 23, 2010, insurers will no longer be able to deny coverage to children living with HIV or AIDS. Insurers also are prohibited from cancelling or rescinding coverage to adults or children unless they can show evidence of fraud in an application. And insurers no longer can impose lifetime caps on insurance benefits. These changes will begin to improve access to insurance for people living with HIV/AIDS and other disabling conditions and help people with these conditions retain the coverage they have.

- The Affordable Care Act also broadens Medicaid eligibility to generally include individuals with income below 133% of the federal poverty line (\$14,400 for an individual and \$29,300 for a family of 4), including single adults who have not traditionally been eligible for Medicaid benefits before. As a result, a person living with HIV who meets this income threshold no longer has to wait for an AIDS diagnosis in order to become eligible for Medicaid.
- The Affordable Care Act also phases out the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit "donut hole," giving Medicare enrollees living with HIV and AIDS the peace of mind that they will be better able to afford their medications. Beneficiaries who reach the donut hole in 2010 will receive a one-time rebate of \$250. In 2011, these beneficiaries will receive a 50% discount on brand-name drugs while they are in the "donut hole," a considerable savings for people taking costly HIV/AIDS drugs. In addition, ADAP benefits will be considered as contributions toward Medicare Part D's true Out of Pocket Spending Limit ("donut hole"), a huge relief for low-income individuals living with HIV and AIDS.

### Ensuring Quality Coverage

The Affordable Care Act seeks to make sure that people with public or private coverage have access to the information they need to get the best quality care. This includes:

**Better information.** With the passage of the new law, plans will be required to provide information in a user-friendly manner that clearly explains what is and isn't covered.

**Quality, comprehensive care. Preventive care.** Beginning September 23, 2010 some private insurance plans will cover recommended preventive services like regular check-ups and certain cancer screenings at no additional cost to eligible people. Comparable provisions will apply to Medicare starting on January 1. This will help people living with HIV and AIDS stay healthy.

**Coordinated care.** The law calls for new investments in community health teams to manage chronic disease. The new law also recognizes the value of patient-centered medical homes (coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive care) as an effective way to strengthen the quality of care, especially for people with complex chronic conditions, and it is proven to be effective as demonstrated by the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act of 2009, the pioneer in the development of this model in the HIV health care system.

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*"Once all struggle is grasped, miracles are possible."*

Mao Tse-Tung 1893 - 1976



## Affordable Care Act (continued from page 5)

### Increasing Opportunities for Health and Well-Being

Despite significant advances in HIV treatment and education, there are over 56,000 new HIV infections annually with significant racial and gender disparities. The health of people living with HIV and AIDS is influenced not only by their ability to get coverage but also economic, social, and physical factors.

**Prevention and wellness.** The new law makes critical investments in prevention, wellness, and public health activities to improve public health surveillance, community based programs, and outreach efforts. The new law requires new insurance plans to offer coverage without cost-sharing for HIV screening tests for at-risk individuals. This will enable more people to get access to life-saving treatment more quickly.

**Diversity and cultural competency.** The Affordable Care Act expands initiatives to strengthen cultural competency training for all health care providers and ensure all populations are treated equitably. It also bolsters the federal commitment to reducing health disparities.

**Health care providers for underserved communities.** The Affordable Care Act expands the health care workforce and increases funding for community health centers, an important safety-net for low-income individuals and families. A key recommendation of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy is to increase the number and diversity of available providers of clinical care and related services for people living with HIV. The new law will lead to significant new investments to support critical healthcare workforce expansions to better serve vulnerable populations. This fact sheet and other information can be found at: [http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/affordable\\_care\\_act\\_people\\_hiv\\_aids.html](http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/affordable_care_act_people_hiv_aids.html)



### Flu Season is Upon Us Once Again!

You can get both your seasonal flu and H1N1 in the same shot this year. You cannot get the flu from the flu shot. Ryan White clients can get the shot at Dr. Wade's office. ADAP clients can get their shot from the ADAP nurse. Others can go to their neighborhood pharmacy or "Flu Clinics" set up at various shopping locations around town. Contact your case manager for help finding a location near you.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE NOFLAC CHAIR

Greetings All!

NoFLAC has had an eventful Summer. We saw a great deal of change in our circles of interest. Beginning with state and local successes including our springtime Positive Living and Activate-U 3-day event, the HeartSong retreat and the inception of our Peer Navigation Program to name just a few. On the national news front, the new healthcare legislation and a new National AIDS Policy went into effect. Also of note, Florida hosted the 2010 United States Conference on AIDS in Orlando as well as the Southern Gay Men's Health Conference in Fort Lauderdale.

Now we look ahead to continued changes and challenges for the coming months. The ADAP crisis and mid-term elections may well determine the conditions and quality of life for a great many of our consumers. I would highly suggest we ALL get up to speed on the issues and candidates who will be tasked with making these legislative and funding decisions for the next 2 to 6 years. Thank you ALL for your continued interest and support!

Kind regards, James Talley - NoFLAC Chair [chair@noflacweb.org](mailto:chair@noflacweb.org)