

Growth and Development of an HIV/STI/TB Training Network in the Caribbean

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Issues:

Faced with a growing Caribbean HIV epidemic, there came a need to accelerate and coordinate HIV - related training of health care providers in the region. In 2002, a regional approach was taken to capitalize on economies of scale and allow sharing of expertise among resource constrained countries. Technical partnerships with external agencies assisted in the development of a HIV Caribbean regional training network.

Description:

The Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training (CHART) Network was created in 2003 through partnerships with the International Training and Education Center on HIV (I-TECH), PAHO's Caribbean Epidemiology Centre, among others. Its governance structure and strategic plan (2007-2011) were established to guide the network's activities. Over 11,000 persons attended CHART training events focusing primarily on didactic training methods, skills building workshops and clinical mentoring programmes. Web-based monitoring is used to track achievements.

Lessons learned:

Establishment of a governance structure is critical to the stability, growth and maturation of the Network. There is the need for further strengthening of existing collaboration between the CHART Network, regional Ministries of Health and other stakeholders to ensure "buy in" to the Network's vision. Challenges include selection and subsequent placement of trainees, staff turnover and the need to coordinate HIV training with training to deal with other health issues.

Next steps:

CHART is expanding to include pre-service programmes and incorporate additional target groups, including first responders, primary care service providers, private practitioners and additional

community-based workers. Application will be made to the University of the West Indies (UWI) and other national authorities for trainees to receive certification for CHART trainings. Under PEPFAR II and Global Fund Round 9, greater transitioning of leadership responsibility to the Caribbean will continue. A plan for long-term sustainability of training is being created in consultation with national and regional stakeholders.