

TO: All DSHS HIV/STD Prevention Contractors Implementing Protocol-Based Counseling (PBC)

FROM: HIV/STD Comprehensive Services Branch

DATE: August 20, 2007

SUBJECT: Revisions to Protocol Based Counseling

In an effort to provide the best quality risk reduction counseling for prevention contractors, the DSHS Training Team, the City of Houston Training Team, and the Workers Assistance Program (WAP) Training Team met in September 2006 to review and revise the Protocol-Based Counseling protocol book, related trainer and participant manuals, and quality assurance standards, protocols and tools.

Seasoned DSHS-funded and SAMHSA-funded HIV prevention counseling staff participated in the Protocol-Based Counseling (PBC) training roll-out May 2005-August 2006. The training was four days for risk reduction specialists (RRS) and five days for supervisors; the fifth day was focused on quality assurance activities and responsibilities. These trainings were based on the original protocol-based counseling project piloted and evaluated in four sites in Texas.

Protocol Book Changes: Minor revisions were made to the spiral protocol book to make it easier for new risk reduction specialists to use the protocol. Goals and tasks were numbered to allow the trainers and RRS to locate the particular task being discussed more quickly, especially during the training. Example questions were revised to better accomplish the specific task. Additional space was provided in many of the Example boxes to allow RRS to write his/her own examples and/or other items to ask the client which are often forgotten during a session (ex. types of sex, types of drugs used, how the drug was used, etc). PBC is an evidence-based intervention based on the RESPECT and RESPECT 2 studies from the mid-1990s so the revisions did not result in the addition or deletion of any goals/tasks. The order of the tasks for Goal 5 of the Initial Session protocol and Goal 2 of the Positive HIV results protocol were revised. The revised protocols can be found on our website: www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivtsd/training/pctools.shtm

DSHS will not provide revised protocol books to persons who have already completed PBC training because the revisions are minor, the expense for printing the revised protocols is considerable, and seasoned staff may have mastered the protocol they learned during training.

Training Changes: The PBC training is now a four and a half (4 ½) day training. There is more time spent on the counseling elements and the Stages of Change since most people attending the PBC training will be new, not seasoned, risk reduction specialists. The quality assurance training for supervisors is now a one-day training (*Quality Assurance for Protocol-Based Counseling*) and will be offered quarterly, based on need. The pre-requisite for this training is successful completion of Protocol-Based Counseling (PBC) training.

There is also an additional 1-day Rapid Test Protocol training that can be provided to RRS that have successfully completed PBC. The training focuses on special considerations related to Rapid tests and delineates differences in the protocols for traditional HIV testing versus rapid HIV testing. The course also provides skill building opportunities.

Form Changes: Minor changes have been made to the PBC forms; the forms are located at www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd/training/pctools.shtm. The supervisor session observation forms (A1-A8), and the chart reviews and session documentation forms (D1-D5), are required forms that were revised to match the protocol changes. The self-assessment forms (B1-B8), personal review forms (C1-C2) and the sessions notes forms (E1-E5) are optional forms with minor revisions. For supervisors that have seasoned and new staff, you will find four forms with an “o” after the title of the form (A-1, A-3, B-1, and B-3). These are the original risk reduction observation forms that have the tasks in the order that RRS learned them, if they completed PBC training prior to November 2006.

Quality Assurance Changes: The QA standards have been updated. The most significant change is related to the observation cycle of RRS new to the protocol. New RRS must **observe 4** initial sessions, **4** negative results sessions and **1** positive results session before actually using the protocol. This can occur prior to PBC training. After PBC training, the RRS must **be observed** on a **4/4/1** schedule at a minimum before using the protocol solo. The previous observation cycle was **5/5/1**.

There are new standards for staff that will be conducting Rapid HIV testing as well as traditional testing; requiring an observation cycle of 2/2/1 for staff using the rapid protocol and 2/2/1 for staff using the traditional tests.

The other revision to the Quality Assurance Standards relates to the chart review schedule for new RRS. The QA Standards now require a supervisor, lead RRS, and/or a QA specialist to review 5 charts twice/month for the first six months for new RRS; this will allow a supervisor to provide on-going feedback and guidance related to the charting of the session and the risk reduction step(s) in a more timely fashion. The supervisor will be able to support the RRS with on-going feedback and hopefully prevent bad habits from forming. The chart review standards for RRS with more than six months experience remain the same.

To completely review all changes, DSHS recommends that supervisors and risk reduction specialists review the new forms, quality assurance standards and revised protocols on our web site www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd/training/pctools.shtm.

If you have any questions or comments regarding these changes, please contact your Regional HIV Consultant, Field Operations Consultant, or Tammy Foskey, Training Manager.