

San Francisco Community Health Center

Ending the Epidemics Community Engagement Process

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Who We Are...

- Our Mission: To transform lives by advancing health, wellness, and equality.
- Our Vision: We are an LGBTQ and people of color organization that believes EVERYONE deserves to be healthy and needs access to the highest quality health care.
- Our Approach: Our comprehensive, integrated approach to community and individual health puts our clients/patients at the center of our work. Our wide array of specialized primary medical, dental, behavioral health, and community engagement services are designed to empower people in safe, respectful, and supportive spaces.
- In 2015, we became the first newly-designated Federally Qualified Health Center in San Francisco in over 30 years
- In 2018, 30 years after our founding in 1987, we re-branded from API Wellness Center to San Francisco Community Health Center

We never closed our doors or limited services during the COVID-19 pandemic, our doors have only opened wider...

Who We Serve... In The Tenderloin & Beyond

- Transgender individuals, particularly transwomen
- People Experiencing Homelessness/Housing Instability (PEHHI)
- People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)
- People Who Use Drugs (PWUD)
- People living w/mental illness
- LGBTQ Community
- Sex workers
- Immigrants and Newcomers
- Anyone with unmet medical needs

Our Services...

Headquartered since 1987 in the Tenderloin Neighborhood, with a satellite clinic located at the SF LGBT Center on Market Street, we became a Federally Qualified Health Center in 2015, which vastly expanded our services:

- Primary Medical Care, including:
 - Appointment-based and drop-in clinic visits
 - Specialty HIV and gender clinics
 - Street-based medical, behavioral health, and outreach
- Dentistry, including denture services
- Behavioral Health Care, including individual psychotherapy, substance use treatment, and group-based support
- Daily one-stop-shop drop-in centers for PEHHI living with HIV, and the transgender community
- Comprehensive HIV/STI prevention services, including services for people living with HIV (PLWH), HIV/STI testing and counseling, and direct access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
- Wide array of community-building programs, events, and professional development opportunities
- All services are directly offered in both English and Spanish, with seamless access to 15+ additional languages through our diverse staff

SFCHC and EtE Community Engagement

- In April 2020, SFCHC was approached by San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) to facilitate a community-led process to provide feedback for the draft EtE plan. We were asked to engage the following priority populations: Transwomen and PEHHI...
- With Shelter-In-Place only a month underway, we knew we would have to get creative, especially with communities that have limited access to technology-based platforms...
- But with the resources for data collection/analysis and meaningful community engagement at our fingertips, we quickly launched...
- In September, following two rounds of feedback and input from transwomen and PEHHI, we provided actionable recommendations to the authors of the plan...
- Participants were compensated with cash for their expertise...
- The final plan reflects many voices and insights from our communities...
- On behalf of my colleagues, I will share on our ongoing process to engage transwomen in the development and implementation of the final plan. Miguel Ibarra will follow-up with a presentation on our PEHHI engagement activities...

Community Engagement: Transwomen

Between May-September 2020, our diverse TRANS Services team engaged over 49 unique transwomen to provide two rounds of feedback/input for draft plan...

- **Methodology:** Our Capacity-Building team developed an in-depth feedback tool that pulled salient topics of relevance from the plan and distilled them for community input. Interviews were conducted via in-person individual/small group key informant interviews as well as a series of community-led zoom-based focus groups.
- **Race/ethnicity:** 44% of participants are Black/African American, 30% are Latinx, 23% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3% White.
- **Age:** 10% are in their 20's, 43% in their 30's 10% in their 40's, 30% in their 50's, and 7% over 60 years old.
- Nearly all participants had experience with sex work, and have previously or are currently, living in the Tenderloin and/or Mission Neighborhoods.
- Transwomen (of color) staff members led the tool-development, data collection, and analysis components of the project.

And these are some themes we heard... (paraphrased)

- *We need a room of our own (maybe we call it “You Go Girl!”) with trans leadership and staff, free from stigma, where refuge is guaranteed... where every policy, structure, etc. is trans-affirming and infused with the intimate knowledge of what it means to be trans.*
- *We need a one-stop-shop that goes beyond health services. “Yeah, we need all that,” but also food, computers, employment training, life skills support, sisterhood, hair removal, a place to chill, have fun, and relax!*
- *“When the agencies are open, I’m still asleep. When I’m up, things are wrapping up.” Services should start around 5pm at the earliest – we especially need a safe place throughout the night, to take a break when we’re working. 24 hours is key, safety is most important.*

Themes (cont.)...

- *Focus on sisterhood and community investment: Peers are the first and most primary source of information amongst transwomen; only if a peer endorses a particular agency or service will a transwoman go beyond their peer community circle. “Sometimes I see two or three girls walking a girl in to get screened because they all told her they would support her.”*
- *We need to reframe incentives as compensation for the value and importance of a transwoman’s knowledge, connection to their peers, and lived experiences – “and we need more than these incentives, we need real community investment.”*
- *“If you’re going advertising that you serve trans folks, you better learn how to do it right!”*
- *Hire, train, and retain transwomen!*

What's Happening Now?

- In Summer 2020, we applied for and were awarded additional funding to support a Community Advisory Process (for both transwomen and PEHHI) to empower community members with the tools and skills to engage meaningfully with the implementation of the EtE plan through 2030. Miguel will share on the CAP for PEHHI.
- Leading From Within, our CAP project for transwomen, launched in December 2020 as a employment readiness and empowerment program with the following components:
 - “Spill the Tea” Lounge: Sisterhood and community spaces, for us, by us
 - Social Network Strategy: Gatekeepers are trained to elicit frank and constructive feedback on EtE-related activities from their peers
 - Post-COVID-19 Environment: Retreats, shared meals, digital stories
- Our inaugural cohort of gatekeepers have completed trainings on motivational interviewing, active listening, harm reduction, and trauma-informed care.
 - Gatekeepers are currently reviewing/reacting to the condensed, community-facing version of the plan
- “Spill the Tea” will launch in April 2021, with the eventual goal of 100% community-led facilitation.

What Happens Next?.....

IT'S ALL ABOUT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT!!

We hope to partner with SFDPH to launch a Community Leadership Institute that includes:

- Job training: Yes, for public health jobs but also for other career paths!
- Promising practices to ignite organizational change to better employ and support trans individuals in the workplace
- Professional Support Network: Focus on shared learnings, resources, and sisterhood
- Workforce Development Hub: We're not sure what this will look like but we're excited to help design an inclusive and practical resource for the community
- Pathways to permanent employment

In Closing...

We are excited to continue our partnership with SFDPH to support and implement impactful and culturally appropriate HIV/HCV/STI programming for our community of transwomen, and to *finally* end the epidemics by 2030!

If you have any questions or would like to be in contact:

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