

HIV clinician survey results in-a-nutshell

A new survey that looked at the workforce challenges experienced by Ryan White Part C programs is expected to be published in 2009.

The initial findings of the study, which was conducted by the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) of Arlington, VA, and the Forum for Collaborative HIV Research at George Washington University in Washington, DC, are as follows:

- HIVMA vice-chair Mike Saag, MD, sent a 32-question survey by email to 363 Ryan White Part C program directors on June 30, 2008.
- A total of 252 (70%) of the programs responded by the deadline.
- All of the clinics surveyed receive Ryan White Part C funding; they served 134,851 patients in 2007.
- Two-fifths of the respondents are located in the Southern United States, and three-fifths of the respondents are located in metropolitan areas with populations greater than 100,000.
- The clinics had an average new HIV patient caseload of 112 in 2007, and they served an average of 651 HIV patients in 2007.
- For the past three years, 70% of the clinics had an increase in patient caseload, and the average reported increase was 29%; 40% of the clinics in the South and 40% of those in rural areas reported rapid patient caseload growths of greater than 33%.
- The clinics reported that 37% of their new patients began care with an AIDS diagnosis.
- Also, the clinics reported that 37% of their patients had a serious mental illness, 35% had substance abuse disorders, and 23% were co-infected with hepatitis B or C.
- The clinics reported an average wait for newly-diagnosed patients of 1.5 weeks and a waiting time of 2.3 weeks for patients who had returning appointments; waiting time in the South was an average of 1.7 weeks, while it was 1.1 weeks in the Northeast.
- Southern clinics reported greater difficulties in recruiting clinicians and handling increasing case-loads.
- Most of the Ryan White Part C patients were low income with complex cases; most were either uninsured or received Medicaid.