



## The State Healthcare Access Research Project: Successes, Challenges, and Opportunities for People Living with HIV/AIDS

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### **Background**

It goes without saying that access to good quality, comprehensive healthcare is critical for people living with HIV/AIDS, but many HIV-positive people continue to face obstacles to accessing care. The **State Healthcare Access Research Project (SHARP)** is a national project, conducted in conjunction with in-state community partners, that examines states' capacity to meet the healthcare needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. SHARP has two main goals: (1) to remove existing barriers to effective care and treatment, and (2) to build advocacy capacity and experience in SHARP partner states and communities.

SHARP is designed as a two-phase project:

**Phase I** is the production of a report that will provide a comprehensive profile of the state or community, and a discussion of the successes, challenges, and opportunities related to healthcare access for people living with HIV/AIDS. The SHARP Phase I process includes a series of in-state meetings with community partners (consumers, advocates, healthcare and services providers, academics, and government officials), as well as one-on-one interviews. Throughout the Phase I process, SHARP supports the creation and/or ongoing development of a statewide coalition committed to removing barriers to healthcare access for poor and low-income individuals, including people living with HIV/AIDS.

**Phase II** uses the SHARP report as a framework for efforts to improve healthcare access, by developing and executing an advocacy strategy to implement the opportunities outlined in the Phase I report. The coalition of state-based community partners formed during Phase I take the lead in this effort, with ongoing facilitation and technical assistance from SHARP staff.

### **Community Partners**

Collaboration with community partners is integral to the success of SHARP, and the SHARP staff works closely with our community partners throughout the process. We need the opinions and insights of people who live and work in the state or community who know first-hand the successes and challenges faced by individuals living with HIV/AIDS as they seek care. Community partner perspectives on the political, cultural, and fiscal factors that are unique to your state and community are an important part of the project.

### **Who is doing this project?**

The State Healthcare Access Research Project is being conducted by the **Health Law and Policy Clinic of Harvard Law School** and the **Treatment Access Expansion Project**, with support from **Bristol-Myers Squibb**. The Health Law and Policy Clinic has provided legal services to low and moderate income people living with HIV/AIDS for 20 years, and is an active participant in HIV healthcare access advocacy efforts. TAEP is a national organization focused exclusively on HIV healthcare access advocacy. TAEP's efforts include working for passage of the Early Treatment for HIV Act (ETHA), and trying to ensure that Medicaid, Medicare, and Ryan White programs adequately meet the needs of people living with HIV and AIDS. The mission of both organizations is to help bring good quality, comprehensive healthcare to more people living with HIV and AIDS.

We hope you will join us!

October 2009