

**HIV Health Services Planning Council
Sacramento TGA**

Policy and Procedure Manual

Subject: HIV Support Group Service Standard

No.: SSC 17

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Consistent with funded Service Priorities established by the Sacramento TGA HIV Health Services Council the following HIV Support Group Service Standard will apply to all Ryan White contracted vendors that provide support group services.

1. Ryan White funding is to be used for HIV/AIDS medical care including, psycho-social and support services designed to significantly improve client access and adherence to such resources. Any HIV support group services that are provided by agencies and paid for through Ryan White funding will be part of a comprehensive medical care plan that promotes the optimal state of health for the afflicted individual and shall be related to healthcare or other critical needs.
2. Ryan White funding is to be expended in a cost effective, equitable manner based upon client need verification. Therefore, clients may present to support groups through self referral or agency referral. Admittance to support groups is at the discretion of the support group facilitator and shall be based upon the facilitator's assessment of the presenting client and the clients' compatibility with the existing group. Payment for HIV support group services through Ryan White funding are authorized only in circumstances where client eligibility is validated and no other payment guarantor has been identified.
3. In accordance with the above:
 - A. Support Group services shall be lead by an individual with documented experience and/or training in group dynamics and group facilitation. The leader must have knowledge and experience with HIV issues.
 - B. Clients needing support group services should be placed in the support group most compatible with their life situations and/or experiences living with HIV.
 - C. Ground rules and group's purpose shall be established and periodically evaluated for all support groups funded by Ryan White funds. The ground rules will be used to minimize interruption in productive group discussion. Ground rules will be reiterated prior to beginning each session.
 - D. With the exception of the facilitator and guest presenters, participation in support groups shall be limited to individuals living with HIV (PLWH), as non-PLWH may intrude on trust and open discussion. Agencies providing support group services should have the ability to work with families of PLWH in a separate setting.
 - E. Support groups will be maintained at the size most conducive to productive sharing, listening, and discussion by all members.

4. RW Agencies which provide HIV Support Group Services shall develop and adhere to budgets for HIV support groups which reflect the principles referred to above. In addition, if available funding levels are anticipated to be less than the total need, agencies shall ensure that funds are distributed among the maximum possible number of clients who rely on RW funded HIV support group services for critical needs. Agencies shall assure that no client receives any RW funded services unless such client is found to be eligible for services under such Eligibility Standards as may be adopted by the planning council.

5. Medical Case Managers at RW Agencies may at any time submit to the RW Fiscal Agent requests for interpretation of these or any other service standards adopted by the HIV Health Services Planning Council, based on the unique medical needs of a client or on unique barriers to accessing medical care which may be experienced by a client.

6. RW Agencies shall provide a means by which Medical Case Managers can obtain in-service training and advice related to interpreting client medical needs.

7. Clients shall have the right to request a review of any service denials under this or any other Services Standards adopted by the HIV Health Services Planning Council. The most recent review / grievance policies and procedures for the RW Agency shall be made available to each client upon intake.

Adopted: 
Kane Ortega, Chair

Dated: 1/26/11