



October 9, 2014

Dear Prevention Partner:

We are writing to inform you that after an extensive review of evidence and consultation with CDC and external experts, the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention (DHAP) is discontinuing its support for RESPECT, one of CDC's long-standing behavioral interventions for people at high risk for HIV infection. This decision was made as part of DHAP's ongoing, systematic review of interventions to ensure that we focus on strategies that deliver the greatest impact among those who need them most.

RESPECT pairs HIV prevention counseling with HIV testing to reduce high-risk sexual behaviors and prevent both HIV infection and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). As originally conceived, RESPECT involved the use of traditional HIV tests that required clients to return for their results several days after testing. This approach, using both the initial and follow-up visits to provide clients with intensive prevention counseling, was shown to substantially reduce risk behavior and STIs.

With the widespread adoption of rapid HIV testing, RESPECT was adapted to include a single, streamlined counseling session with a rapid test. However, recent studies suggested that this adaptation may reduce the intervention's effectiveness.

In October 2013, a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* confirmed these findings. Among 5,000 people who received either RESPECT counseling with a rapid HIV test or the rapid test with HIV information only, the study found no significant difference in the incidence of STIs between the two groups. In fact, among men who have sex with men (MSM), the study found an increased risk of STIs in the group receiving counseling. This finding, along with other evidence, clearly indicates that RESPECT with rapid testing should no longer be implemented.

While CDC will no longer fund the implementation of the RESPECT intervention, you will be able to access information, tools and materials on RESPECT online at www.effectiveinterventions.org.

Recognizing the varying effects this decision will have on your programs, we're committed to providing the technical assistance and support you need. For grantees that are currently implementing RESPECT, CDC will provide assistance to help shift the program to other CDC-supported prevention interventions to be used with individuals at high-risk for HIV.

Counseling should not be a barrier to HIV testing. However, after HIV testing occurs, a broad range of prevention interventions and other support services may be recommended for high-risk HIV negative individuals.

Below is information on how this decision will affect grantees in specific CDC-funded programs:

- Health departments: All directly funded health departments supporting the implementation of the intervention will transition to other interventions that better reflect the current state of the science. CDC project officers will provide necessary guidance and support throughout this transition.
- CBAs: CBA grantees will no longer provide training for the implementation of RESPECT.
- Directly funded CBOs:
 - PS10-1003 grantees will be able to continue implementing RESPECT for all populations except MSM through July 1, 2015, when the current funding cycle ends. RESPECT will not be supported as part of the new funding opportunity announcement (PS15-1502) issued earlier this month; that program does, however, support a number of other proven behavioral interventions for people at high risk for infection.
 - PS13-1310 grantees will also be able to continue implementing RESPECT for all targeted populations except MSM through the end of that FOA's funding cycle on June 30, 2015.

For questions about the availability of capacity building or technical assistance, please send an e-mail to cbagrantees@cdc.gov. For questions related to how this change affects grantees in specific CDC-funded programs, please send an e-mail to your respective FOA mailboxes: PS10-1003@cdc.gov / PS12-1201@cdc.gov / PS14-1410@cdc.gov / PS13-1310@cdc.gov

Amid the changing landscape of HIV prevention, behavioral interventions for people at high risk for HIV infection continue to play an important role. The decision to discontinue support for RESPECT was not taken lightly, and we are confident that it is in the best interest of people at risk for HIV. We look forward to continuing our work together to bring high-impact HIV prevention to the communities you serve.

Sincerely,

/Janet C. Cleveland/

Janet C. Cleveland, MS
Deputy Director for Prevention Programs
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

/David W. Purcell/

David W. Purcell, JD, PhD
Deputy Director for Behavioral and Social
Science
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention