

## Western North Carolina AIDS Project Public Policy Directions

*WNCAP is dedicated to providing HIV related services to the people of Western North Carolina through client support, prevention, education, and advocacy in a collaborative and financially responsible manner.*

### Access To Care

We support early and uninterrupted access to health care for all those living with or at risk of HIV and AIDS to improve health outcomes and reduce transmission rates.

- Secure adequate and recurrent funding for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program so that people living with HIV & AIDS have access to the full spectrum of pharmaceutical services in order to achieve the highest level of health status.
- Support full implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion.
- Support robust funding of the Ryan White Care Act which provides essential services, including linkage, retention and adherence to life-sustaining antiretroviral therapies that will continue to be a critical part of the HIV care system in the U.S. going forward.

### Harm Reduction

We support evidence-based Harm Reduction Strategies that reduce the risk of transmission of HIV, viral Hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections (STI's).

- Support legislative efforts to decriminalize syringe possession in North Carolina.
- Improve legal access to clean needles and safe disposal of used ones.
- Educate policy makers, law enforcement, health-care professionals and the general public on the benefits of syringe exchanges.
- Support the lifting of the ban on federal funding of syringe exchange programs.
- Increase access to housing for people living with or at risk of HIV & AIDS by decreasing homelessness and increasing affordable and supportive housing.
- Promote routine HIV Testing and increased access to HCV testing in accordance to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines.

### Prevention and Education

We support efforts to raise awareness of the prevalence of HIV, viral Hepatitis and STI's and the need to provide people, young and old, evidenced-based prevention education.

- Protect the integrity of evidence-based reproductive health and safety curriculum under the Healthy Youth Act while promoting its full implementation, which includes condom demonstrations.

### Reduce HIV-Related Disparities

We support efforts to reduce HIV-Related Disparities and Health Inequities by addressing the social drivers of the epidemic including HIV stigma, homophobia, racism, poverty and criminalization.

- Reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.
- Empower people living with HIV/AIDS to advocate for themselves.
- Cultivate meaningful and sustained leadership of those most impacted by the social drivers of HIV, including people of color, those living in poverty, and people living with HIV (HIV Prevention Justice Alliance).
- Support efforts to reduce the high rate of incarceration of people of color, sex workers and those affiliated with the illegal drug trade because of its link to long-term poverty, chronic homelessness, and the destabilizing affect on communities.