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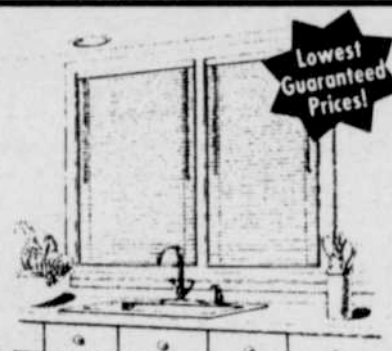
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NORTHWESTnews

NARROWING THE TARGET

Increased funding from Multnomah County allows CAP
to tailor prevention messages to specific populations

by Timothy Krause



Cascade AIDS Project staffers Rafael Arellano-Barrera (left), Felicia Wilhelmy and Philip Knowlton are aiming their HIV prevention work at high-risk communities

Cascade AIDS Project was recently awarded a \$210,000 contract from the Multnomah County Health Department to conduct HIV prevention work aimed at three specific categories of men who have sex with men (MSM), reflecting a 58 percent increase in funding over the previous year.

The contract, which began July 1, seeks to reach MSM of color; alcohol- and drug-using MSM who are not intravenous drug users; and MSM 25 and older. Outside In, a social service agency that reaches many queer youth, received a fourth award in the amount of \$70,000 for work with MSM 24 and younger.

According to Felicia Wilhelmy, CAP's outreach and prevention education manager, these specific categories were defined by the county's community planning team, which recommended focusing on the pop-

ulation prioritized by local HIV epidemiology, namely MSM. "Those who are at highest risk, who have the highest numbers, the newest infections are all in that category," she notes.

National data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for example, indicate a 7 percent rise in HIV infections from 2001 to 2002 and an increase of nearly 18 percent since 1999, the year in which the number of infections among gay and bi men was at its nadir. Only 25 states report diagnoses, however, so these statistics do not reflect hard-hit areas such as California and New York.

Although comparable increases in new HIV infections have yet to occur in Portland, CAP says the quadrupling of local syphilis cases among gay and bi men in 2002 over 2001 is evidence of increased high-risk sexual behavior that can also result in HIV transmission.

"We really want members of the Latino community to be involved and to be able to help us develop the different ways to provide a message"

—Rafael Arellano-Barrera



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