

"Obviously, prevention is doing something to hold the line," Wilhelmy states, "but even so, if there hasn't been a drop-off in the number of new infections, then that means there needs to be a shift in how we go about our business."

The key is to determine effective ways to influence behavior, and CAP is examining outside factors that contribute to an individual's decision-making process. This includes cultural values, substance abuse and even social patterns.

"It's now going to be a much more targeted outreach," remarks Wilhelmy. "The emphasis is to address the issues around alcohol and drugs and their influence on risk-taking behaviors as well as prevention work for those who are HIV-positive and continue to transmit the disease or become infected with other STDs or perhaps a resistant strain."

For example, CAP will train staff in collaboration with ASAP Treatment Services, which offers an alcohol and drug treatment program specifically geared toward the sexual minorities community. And in addition to bars and sex clubs, CAP staff now frequent Internet chat rooms, where prevention outreach workers answer questions on topics ranging from what's risky behavior to how to get tested. Wilhelmy says more than one in 10 interventions now happen online rather than over the phone.

Among CAP's new prevention strategies are efforts to connect with two of the hardest-hit MSM communities of color.

To tap the African American community, CAP is partnering with Brother to Brother, an organization that provides support to black gay and bi men. Under the coordination of Stephen Herrera, Brother to Brother has assembled an advisory group of young African American MSM to develop a long-term outreach program that will implement culturally responsive prevention interventions.

A similar program, Sí Puedes, is already reaching out to MSM in the Latino community.

"One of the things that we want to do with Sí Puedes is to be community-driven," says Rafael Arellano-Barrera, an HIV prevention educator at CAP. "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."

The program last month established a 10-member advisory board and now seeks volunteers to create a companion core group to implement activities, such as gay movie nights, karaoke events and an Internet chat room—all in Spanish.

Arellano-Barrera notes, "One of the main [challenges] is to really understand the diversity that exists within the Latino community." Nationality is one variable, but he says outreach

A WALK TO REMEMBER

Mark your calendars now for Sept. 20, the day of Cascade AIDS Project's 17th annual AIDSWalk.

About 5,000 participants will come together from all walks of life in the fight against the pandemic. All of the money raised provides services to residents living in Oregon and southwest Washington.

Registration begins 8:30 a.m. at Pioneer Courthouse Square. Special entertainment will be provided by master drummer Obo Addy.

Individual walkers who raise between \$100 and \$999 will receive a prize package based on how much money they bring in; gifts include an AIDSWalk03 T-shirt, bag and sweatshirt as well as a Nike gift certificate. Those who collect at least \$1,000 will get all of these.

Five prizes will be awarded to the walkers who raise the most money, including stays at Sunriver; Skamania Lodge in Stevenson, Wash.; the Columbia Gorge Riverside Inn; and Hotel Vintage Plaza in downtown Portland. The first-place winner will be flown to San Francisco and receive hotel accommodations for two nights.

The team that collects the most money will receive a party at Rogue Ale. The top three youth fund-raisers will be rewarded with Nike gift certificates.

To register for AIDSWalk03 call 503-223-WALK or visit www.cascadeaids.org.

workers also must recognize the range of Latino MSM, from drag queens to mayates—MSM who don't identify as gay or bi. Mayates, like African American men on the "down low," are so hidden in their real lives that they often miss prevention messages.

Wilhelmy and Arellano-Barrera also observe that although fewer in number, African Americans often have a local history and nearby family. Latinos, on the other hand, might constitute a larger population, but families often are still in their native country. Therefore, they might find it easier to be openly gay, while long-term cultural changes might be easier to make among families and allies within the black community.

"One of the most important things is to be present and develop relationships," acknowledges Arellano-Barrera, "and that takes time." □

SÍ PUEDES will play host to a movie night 7 p.m. Aug. 28 at the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center, 2100 S.E. Belmont St. For more information call 503-223-5907 or visit www.cascadeaids.org.

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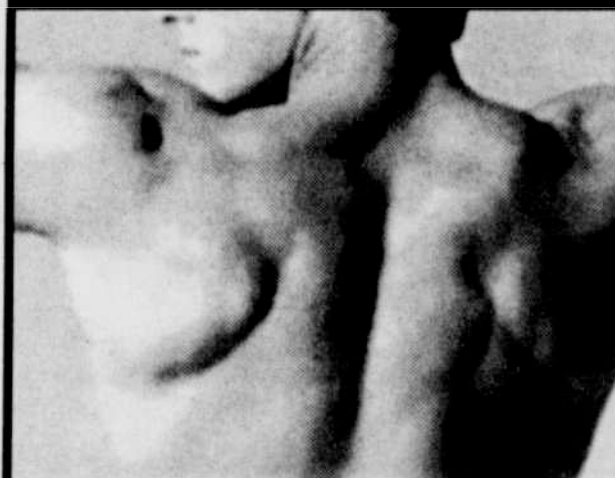
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