

ASSEMBLY BILL 2899 – HIV/AIDS Counseling Talking Points

Description:

Beginning January 1, 2009, Assembly Bill (AB) 2899 (Portantino, Chapter 555, Statutes of 2008), permits HIV testing sites funded by the California Department of Public Health, Center for Infectious Diseases, Office of AIDS (OA) to:

- 1) Advise a person seeking HIV testing who has been tested before and who is following appropriate risk-reduction measures that he or she does not require further education services;
- 2) Determine if a person can self-administer data collection forms required by OA; and
- 3) Provide prevention education through video, small group, individual interaction, or other methods and in small groups or couples.

Purpose:

To increase the capacity of publicly funded HIV testing sites to screen more individuals by streamlining test site services.

What this means for OA-funded HIV testing sites:

- 1) Allows OA-funded HIV testing sites flexibility in deciding who should receive prevention education.

To facilitate this provision, OA is considering potential training needs for HIV testing staff so they can adequately determine which clients will not be required to receive further HIV prevention education. OA is also reviewing current HIV counseling and testing policy and guidelines to identify any documents that require revision.

- 2) Allows OA-funded HIV testing sites flexibility in deciding who may self-administer OA data collection forms.

To facilitate this provision, OA will need to provide technical assistance to HIV testing staff for the determination of when data collection could be self-administered by the client, while ensuring federal data requirements are met. This will include monitoring and evaluating the standardization of locally collected client data. Of note, OA is currently piloting self-administration of some HIV testing data collection using a range of technologies from paper-and-pencil to handheld electronic devices.

- 3) Allows OA-funded HIV testing sites a variety of methods to provide HIV prevention education, including couples counseling.

OA-funded HIV testing sites are already able to provide a variety of services to clients under OA's existing HIV Counseling and Testing Program with the exception of couples counseling, which may be considered a type of group education. To facilitate this provision, OA will provide guidance and/or training to HIV testing staff to ensure they can appropriately provide services to couples and will add couples counseling as an OA-reimbursable service.