

Prevention Materials Availability: Protection Connection

The online platform for managing this program <https://protectionconnection.ldh.la.gov/>

Overview

The Prevention Materials Availability program also titled “Protection Connection” is a community-level intervention that focuses on increasing the accessibility of information about STI/HIV prevention and methods/tools (condoms, specifically) for preventing the transmission of HIV and other STIs. This intervention involves the distribution and monitoring of STI/HIV risk reduction materials, campaign promotional items and other prevention tools either through approved sites and/or recruitment activities. Prevention Material sites include a variety of clinics, community-based organizations, gatekeepers, not-for-profit sites (e.g. community centers) and commercial businesses (e.g. beauty shops, bars, tattoo parlors) in high-priority zip codes and areas, which are determined by SHHP Surveillance. Sites should be located in areas with priority populations in corresponding priority zip codes. Signs, posters, stickers, and brochures can also be used to promote the availability of Prevention Materials and use of prevention strategies, methods, and tools in order to increase awareness of these methods and normalize condom use. All materials shall be provided free of charge, accessible, and visible to the public. When possible, patrons should be made aware of and/or referred to other existing prevention resources, interventions, and services in their community.

Definitions:

Agency is the community based organization (CBO) that registers, maintains, and monitors a site.

Site is the agency or business distributing the prevention materials provided by the agency. Allowable sites include: Non-federally or state funded alcohol/substance abuse clinics, bars/clubs, beauty/barber shops/nail salons, CBOs, civic groups, colleges/universities, convenience/grocery/retail stores, community/recreation centers, drug dens/shooting galleries, gym/health clubs, non-federally or state funded health clinics, homeless shelters/soup kitchens, probation and parole offices, liquor stores/smoke shops, motels/hotels, restaurants, non-governmental social services agencies and religious institutions/groups. Other sites may be approved by regional field staff provided there is written justification that details the ability of the site to reach priority populations as defined by SHHP.

Vendor is the company producing and shipping specific prevention materials.

Prevention materials include HIV/STI Info line information, posters, brochures, business cards, how-to-use-a-condom guides, lubrication, and condoms.

KEY ELEMENTS

- a) Prevention material distribution sites shall reflect the high priority zip code areas. Prevention materials are to be distributed at **no cost** to priority populations through pre-approved distribution sites.
- b) Sites can be registered through the Protection Connection Database for the Regional Prevention Coordinator to review and become approved by the STI/HIV Program (SHHP) prior to providing supplies to a site.

- c) Prevention materials shall be available at no cost, visible, and accessible to the adult clientele (e.g., on the counter). Prevention materials should be displayed in containers that are either clear plastic/glass or open so that they are easily visible and accessible. Prevention materials should always be accessible without having to request them (i.e. not kept behind the counter).
- d) Signs/posters and other printed materials shall be used to promote distribution and usage.
- e) Prevention materials are to be distributed by CBOs during recruitment, HIV counseling and testing, and as appropriate during all other STI/HIV prevention activities. Educational materials and information about the HIV/STI Info line can be distributed at health fairs, *but condoms are not to be distributed in open or self-serve containers at health fairs*. However, condoms may be packaged in small brown paper bags, or small clear zipper bags with appropriate educational information. Recruitment Specialists and/or health educators staffing health fair tables will only distribute pre-assembled packages to adults upon request.
- f) Information about the HIV/STI Info line and other educational materials may be distributed in elementary and secondary schools, but distribution of condoms in these sites is prohibited.
- g) Prevention materials supplied by DHH/Office of Public Health (OPH) – STD/HIV/Hepatitis Program may not be used for resale purposes.

NOTE: SHHP reserves the right to investigate all alleged violations of this policy, which may involve condom distribution by staff supported with SHHP funds. SHHP will formally request the suspension of recruitment and other funded activities from any entity for which the alleged violation may be substantiated. Any entity found to be in violation of this policy may request to be reinstated to the program following completion of a probationary period as determined by SHHP. A Corrective Technical Assistance Plan (CTAP), as outlined in an agency's Statement of Work may be put into place to address any of these issues.

PREVENTION MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION- FEE FOR SERVICE

ORDERING PREVENTION MATERIALS

Agencies will order educational materials directly from SHHP. Condoms can be ordered directly from a condom vendor of their choice such as Global Protection Corp, bCondoms, Atlas, etc. There is no set schedule for ordering condoms. Agencies will purchase directly from the vendors and resolve any billing needs with the vendors directly. There are a variety of vendors to order condoms from including, but not limited to: bCondoms, Atlas, Global Protection, ONE, etc.

ENROLLING PREVENTION MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION SITES

Site Registration process: The registration process will be completed through the Protection Connection website. Please also email your Regional Coordinator a minimum of two photos or a video of the proposed site for evaluation purposes. Sites will be reviewed and followed up on within 2-4 weeks of the registration submission.

Sites requesting prevention materials must be referred to an agency in their region for registration following established protocol. The only exceptions are Parish Health Units.

Site Visits:

Required prior to enrollment, CBOs must conduct a physical visit to verify the site's type of business, clientele and high-risk criteria. The date of the visit and the name of the person conducting the visit must be recorded on the site registration. A site visit will be necessary for:

- any new site interested in participating in the prevention materials distribution program;
- any site where there is a change of monitoring agency;
- any site that had previously participated in the prevention materials distribution program but has been dropped or become inactive;
- any site that has a change of address.

MOU with partner sites:

It is strongly encouraged but not required to document an MOU with a new partners site—please see suggested verbiage/template at end of document

If the agency determines that a site is appropriate for prevention materials distribution, the site approval shall be obtained in two ways when completing the Site Registration process (depending on if the proposed site's zip code is high priority or not).

• *Priority/non-priority Zip Codes requirements*

*o **Within high priority zip codes:** a completed registration process (either with a form or through the PC database). The focus of all of the distribution efforts should be in priority zip codes. A list of your LDH Region's high priority zip codes will be provided by your Regional Coordinator before the start of each fiscal year.*

*o **Non-high priority zip codes:** a completed registration process accompanied by a justification for recruiting this site. Exceptions to approving sites outside of priority zip codes will be determined internally by SHHP staff on a case by case basis. A proposed registration with a justification does not guarantee an approval. Factors that are considered include, but are not limited to: the number of other sites in this non-priority Zip Code, foot traffic/number of clients or customers served, the interest/investment of the business owner/staff, the efficacy/success of similar sites historically, and overall number of out of zip code sites of the agency. Approving proposed sites in non-priority zip codes will be a selective and internal process to keep the total number at a reasonable amount, not to exceed 10% of total number of contracted sites. If your agency is interested in proposing a site outside of priority zip codes, you are welcome to suggest it before going through the formal process of visiting the site in person, submitting registration paperwork, etc. to save a few steps and time.*

Once approved, prevention material distribution sites shall be provided with the agency's name, a specific contact person, email address, and phone number so sites may call the agency to replenish their supplies as needed. It is the responsibility of the agency to monitor and replenish each site's supplies. Agencies shall order prevention materials (brochures, posters, and stickers, etc.) for each enrolled site to promote the prevention program.

MAINTAINING AND MONITORING PREVENTION MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION SITES

Prevention Materials Monitoring Log

Each approved prevention materials distribution site is to be monitored by the assigned agency at a minimum of once per quarter (for sites in priority zip codes, these should be physical site visits; for those outside priority zip codes, these may be physical visits or by phone with a minimum of one physical visit per year) to ensure that the sites have adequate supplies of materials which are easily accessible, visible, and at no cost to the site's clientele. Physical visits of prevention material distribution sites are to be recorded on the Protection Connection website. Additional contacts may be made by telephone.

It is the responsibility of the Agencies to maintain their Prevention Materials Monitoring documentation and complete on a quarterly basis, if not a monthly basis. The log should be used to report agency activity on a monthly basis, summarizing all condom availability activities undertaken by an agency. The report will include the number of each type of prevention material and condoms made available to registered sites through the program by each month.

Every agency monitored by SHHP must submit a quarterly, preferably monthly, total count (which will be automatically calculated based on log when a report is run) of all prevention materials and supplies distributed to their Regional HIV Coordinator via Protection Connection website. All prevention materials distributed from an agency's inventory shall be recorded on the Prevention Materials database as well. All materials distributed to sites, transferred to other CBOs or clinics, distributed through public distribution (available at the agency's location), and during outreach or special events are to be recorded on the database.

Agency Reimbursement

Prevention Materials Site Visit Reimbursement is made based on the number of active distribution sites an agency has registered, as long as it is in keeping with an agency's contracted amount. Agencies will be reimbursed the first time a visit or contact is made with each site during the quarter. These visits are required to be in-person for each site within the priority zip codes. For sites outside the priority zip codes, contact can be made either by phone or in-person once each quarter, and will be reimbursed for either type of contact. Reimbursement will be made at the contract rate which at present) is \$95.00 per visit for fixed volume sites and \$190.00 for high volume sites.

- ***Fixed Volume Sites:*** *In order to receive credit (\$95) for a fixed volume site visit, there must be confirmed contact with a person at the partner site. This must be over the phone, or in-person to confirm whether or not the site is in need of condoms. If a site visit occurs during the site's business hours but no one is present, credit may be given only one time per year to allow for communication to be re-established. The site should then be marked as "inactive" subsequently dropped if no communication can be re-established. It can be changed back to "active" again if you receive confirmation that they are still invested in the program. It is required to alert your Regional Coordinator if you visit a site during their hours of operation and it was closed by utilizing the notes function in the database to detail the situation.*

High Volume Sites: *To receive credit (\$190) for high volume sites, this number will be calculated at 10% based on the cumulative total of sites visited over the course of the quarter, rounded up or down to the nearest 5%. (Ex: If your agency is contracted for 100 sites but only 87 sites were visited over the quarter, then your high volume site reimbursement is for 9 sites, or 9%. If your agency distributed to 92 sites out of 100, then 9% credit will be given). It is not an automatic 10% reimbursement rate. If contracted for High Volume sites in prioritized zip codes, an agency will receive the calculated additional stipend at the end of each quarter for the procurement of additional condoms. Rates are based upon contractual agreement. The invoice for high volume sites will be sent with the invoice for September, December, March and June.*

The monthly or quarterly invoice will be based upon the first contact per site, per quarter, whether or not materials are delivered. So if a site is visited in January, February, and March, the agency will be reimbursed only for the visit in January. Invoices are prepared based on information submitted on Protection Connection website and record of completed activities are due to the Regional Prevention Coordinator by 5:00PM on the third business day of the following month (for monthly invoicing) or the following month after the close of the quarter (for quarterly invoicing). Late or incomplete monitoring records may result in delays in reimbursement. Invoices will be sent to the agency within 5 (five) working days after receipt of the monitoring activity in SHHP's Central Office.

OTHER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Requests for Parades, Special Events or Demonstrations

- Prevention materials are NOT to be thrown from a float or walking participant in a parade.
- Prevention materials are NOT to be given to parade participants riding on floats or walking in a parade.
- During a parade, special event or demonstration, prevention materials may be handed to ADULTS during planned recruitment activities.

EVALUATION

Protection Connection Program Goals

SHHP has established the following goals for the Protection Connection Program:

- 100% of sites visited during the Site Observation Survey Period are active (sites are open and are still actively participating in the prevention material program.)
- >90% of sites have prevention materials visible (materials should be visible from any publicly accessible location of the site)
- >85% of sites have visible program marketing stickers whenever available (Protection Connection stickers visible outside the business, stickers visible inside the business, stickers on containers.)

Quarterly Evaluation:

Quarterly, the Regional Prevention Coordinator will conduct physical site observations at 10% of each CBO's Prevention Material Distribution sites. Additionally, Regional HIV Coordinators will call 10% of sites quarterly to get feedback from businesses participating in the program and assess the site for their supply stock, communications with Agency, any problems or issues, etc. Regional HIV Coordinators will be evaluating the availability of prevention materials at registered sites as well as visibility of prevention materials and program marketing stickers and ensure that everything is being made available to the public at no cost. Results of the evaluations will be compiled and presented to CBOs. Regional HIV Coordinators will discuss the results of the evaluation with agencies in their regions.

MOU Suggested Template

Place your Agency's Name here and your Logo

Prevention Materials Site Memorandum of Understanding

(Place your agency name here) enters into this agreement with (PM Site Name) in an effort to outline the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the Prevention Material distribution program. This community-level intervention focuses on:

- Preventing new HIV and/or STIs in Louisiana
- Reducing resource barriers in high priority areas
- Reducing HIV-related health disparities and inequities

This agreement is effective from the date noted on this form and will remain in effect until terminated by either party. It is in no way a legally binding document or contract.

(Place your agency name here) agrees to:

- **Identify site locations that reflect priority areas and populations.**
- **Provide sites with no-cost (free) prevention materials including condoms and educational materials.**
- **Maintain contact with the site and deliver supplies as needed on a quarterly basis**

Your Agency Contact Person:

(Place your name here)

(Place your number here)

Prevention Materials Site agrees to:

- **Provide prevention materials at NO COST to their clientele.**
- **Ensure prevention materials remain VISIBLE and ACCESSIBLE to their clientele.**
- **Allow for signage and other educational printed materials to promote awareness.**
- **Keep staff informed of the program and its purpose.**

Site Name: _____

Site Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Print Contact Person Name/ Signature: _____

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidance

COVID-19 protocols—will only be enacted and re-implemented as LDH determines and provides directives to Agencies via SHHP and the Regional Prevention Coordinators

CBOs and SHHP staff will continue practicing COVID-19 risk mitigation efforts and an abundance of caution when conducting prevention material distribution program activities and contract monitoring activities including but not limited to the following: Social Distancing practices (calling ahead/scheduling drop offs/pick-ups/maintaining a minimum of 6ft from others), wearing masks/face coverings when in public spaces, utilizing hand sanitizer and washing hands regularly, practicing self-monitoring of symptoms and not going to public places if symptoms of COVID-19 are present (fever, cough, shortness of breath, etc.).

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidance on Enrolling Material Distribution Sites

To expedite site registration approvals and site confirmations, the registration form can be submitted along with a picture of the site (outside at least, and inside where the condoms will be placed if possible but not required) and a description of how the condoms will be made available. These sites will be visited by the contract monitors in person once travel restrictions are lifted.

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidance on Maintaining and Monitoring Prevention Materials Distribution Sites:

- Site visits and communications will be conducted virtually whenever possible visits (via phone). Only go inside a site when necessary or permitted.
- Coordinate within-agency policies and resources or with condom manufacturer directly on shipping condoms directly to sites vs. dropping them off.
- Alternatively, coordinate with the PM site to see if it would be easier for them to pick up the prevention materials from your agency during your office hours.
- When deemed necessary, take a picture of prevention material delivery, dropped within the window of a pre-arranged time for any need of confirmation or future reference. CBOs may submit their own written correspondence to Prevention Materials sites to ensure that there is a communication of expectations, site monitoring requirements, and standards for program participation and distribution.

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidance on Evaluation

Prevention material contracts and sites will be monitored virtually and via telephone calls until further notice