

PROVINCETOWN POSITIVE PEOPLE WITH AIDS COALITION

Provincetown Positive PWA Coalition is a non-profit, tax-exempt, grass-roots, member controlled organization not receiving financial support from any of the traditional sources of funding. PP/PWAC was formed in 1988 to meet needs not being addressed in the community - namely to provide the means for empowerment: information, education and advocacy to those individuals who are HIV+, or at risk for becoming so. Our major goal is to investigate and provide information on all current developments in treatment and research on HIV. This goal reflects our belief in and active commitment to the concept of empowerment. The concept of empowerment is predicated on the notions that we are at our best when we have autonomy over decisions affecting our lives; the capacity to assume situationally appropriate levels of responsibility in meeting our needs; and ownership of our choices and the consequences thereof. Central to the concept of empowerment are information and access. It has been said that HIV is a chronic but manageable disease, much like diabetes. This is only partially true. One cannot manage the disease if information about and access to treatments and therapies are unavailable. PP/PWAC has several programs where one can obtain information on and access to treatments and therapies. These are: **Information Dissemination** - PP/PWAC publishes a newsletter "Provincetown Positive" which is nationally distributed free of charge. A listing of published newsletters is provided, as well as a copy of our latest issue. **Coalition Search** is a service which, through our link to the National Association of People with AIDS computer system, provides up-to-the-minute data on AIDS treatments and research which is distributed at request of the individual and/or through press releases. Over the past year the Coalition has conducted over 400 searches for individuals, physicians and organizations. In addition, PP/PWAC maintains an extensive library of written materials, audio and visual tapes. **Education** - We have sponsored educational programs on safe sex, risk reduction, early intervention strategies, prophylaxis for OI's, and living well with HIV. Our educational presentations this year are entitled "Building Partnerships with Physicians". These seminars are designed for all physicians on Cape Cod and the Islands who have practices which would bring them into contact with men, women and children who

are HIV+. The first presentation will be held in July. Dr. Bernard Bihari, former director of CRI/NY, who is in the forefront of the fight against AIDS and who has developed an aggressive protocol will be the featured speaker. The second presentation, to be held in September, will feature Mark Konlee, author of the AIDS Control Diet, which is being called the single biggest breakthrough in AIDS treatment. We hold weekly educational forums for HIV+ individuals and monthly gatherings for this population and friends. We participate on a monthly basis in the "Provincetown AIDS Journal" a community-based radio program. **Complementary Therapy** - This program provides monthly stipends to HIV+ individuals to assist them in staying healthy. This is a receipt reimbursement program. We have just begun a two new projects under this program: **The Coalition Arts Project** which distributes monthly stipends to HIV+ individuals who wish to explore their creativity. This is also a receipt reimbursement program; and **Herbs Etc.** which makes herbs, grapefruit seed extract and blue-green algae available to HIV+ persons at cost. **Advocacy** - PP/PWAC has been a leader in the fight to provide access to experimental treatments and early intervention strategies to HIV+ individuals, and to those at risk for becoming HIV infected. For example, we advocated extensively for the testing of peptide T, a non-toxic anti-viral which has proven effective for, among other symptoms, the debilitating neuropathy, and AIDS dementia experienced by many individuals with HIV. We are actively involved in providing access to investigational therapies through buyers clubs located nationally. We advocate locally on a case-by-case basis, at the request of the individual. This advocacy has usually taken the form of intercession with the individual's physician or primary health care provider around access to investigational, unapproved and/or complementary therapies.

PP/PWAC is the only AIDS related organization on Cape Cod run by PWAs. Ninety percent (90%) of our nine member Board of Directors is HIV+. The Board of Directors is actively involved in all aspects of the program. Each Board Director contributes 4-5 hours a week on various Coalition projects. The Board is assisted by the Executive Director, the only paid staff. The Executive Director is responsible for the day to day operation of the Coalition and for implementing Board policy. She is the main project director for all Coalition programs. Our membership is composed of HIV+ individuals and concerned members of the community. The membership is broad based with representation from various social, racial, ethnic and gender groups. Membership is open to anyone interested in HIV. Out constituency, as evidenced by requests for services and mailing list, is representative of all affected by and/or interested in HIV.

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