

# Reaching HIV-positive Clients

How does Theresha Threadcraft identify so many HIV+ clients?



Theresha Threadcraft, Aspire Behavioral Health, Albany, Georgia

**T**heresha Threadcraft, RN, BSN, of Aspire in Albany is targeting the right people. She has diagnosed several clients HIV-positive. And while it can be disturbing to give someone an HIV diagnosis, each encounter is life-saving for the clients who are now in care.

Albany is the seat of Dougherty County where, according to AIDSvU, 892 people out of every 100,000 are living with diagnosed HIV. Theresa is committed to doing all the educating and testing she can. And she makes getting HIV-positive clients into treatment a top priority. Of the two who tested positive this quarter, both are now in treatment. Recognizing a level of denial in one client – even though they agreed to treatment – she arranged for a case manager to provide transportation to medical appointments.

At Aspire she set up a system for the reception desk to refer to a client who wants an HIV test with a code number to protect their privacy. When Theresha hears the code, she immediately attends to the client wanting to be tested.

After they test, Theresa asks clients to send in people they know for testing. The more clients spread the word about testing, the more impact Theresa has in the community.

"I often get phone calls from HIV-positive clients letting me know how they're doing. It feels so good to hear they're doing well."

Before training to become an HIV Early Intervention Services worker, Theresha was hesitant about filling the role. Now, more than two years later, she is grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives. "I am excited every day to be doing this work." ■