

# *The Role of the Health Systems Navigator*

## **In this module**

- ♦ **What is the history of Health Systems Navigation?**
- ♦ **What is the SPNS research project?**
- ♦ **What is HSN?**
- ♦ **Who is eligible for Health Systems Navigation?**
- ♦ **What are the four stages of Health System Navigation?**
- ♦ **What steps do I take with my client in each phase?**

# The History

**OK, tell me what's going on here.**

No problem.

The branch of the federal government that provides the most HIV care is called the Health Services and Resources Administration, call them HRSA. They are constantly trying to provide better HIV care, and one of their ways of exploring how to do that is to fund some special projects to explore new ways of doing things. These are called Special Projects of National Significance, or SPNS for short (we always just say "spins"). And you guessed it, you're here today because of a SPNS project called (drumroll please...) "HIV Outreach and Intervention Models".



**The Goal of this SPNS Initiative**  
**To stabilize HIV medical care for minority and historically underserved populations.**

**Are we the only ones doing this project?**

Ten different sites around the country are participating in the SPNS initiative described above.

But each site has been given a choice on how to reach their goal — so we are the only site that is testing this new concept called Health System Navigation.

There is also a national evaluation group, called CORE, that's watching all the sites, tracking data we give them, and seeing which ideas seem the most promising. There might even be some CORE people in this room.

# The History (cont.)

**OK, so that's our goal, how does it relate to the training today?**

Well, each site was given some time to watch the local historically underserved and minority HIV+ people, paying special attention to things that stopped them from getting regular HIV medical care.

Then, from that information, the sites were able to plan a new or changed program to help be more successful in getting the local target populations stable in medical care.

We spent a few years watching folks. And what we found was that there was no easy answer as to why the most vulnerable people were not stabilizing in HIV medical care. Most people were balancing a host of different problems, like:

- ✓ Addiction issues
- ✓ Poverty-related issues
- ✓ Housing problems
- ✓ Mental Health issues
- ✓ Problems with their HIV care providers.

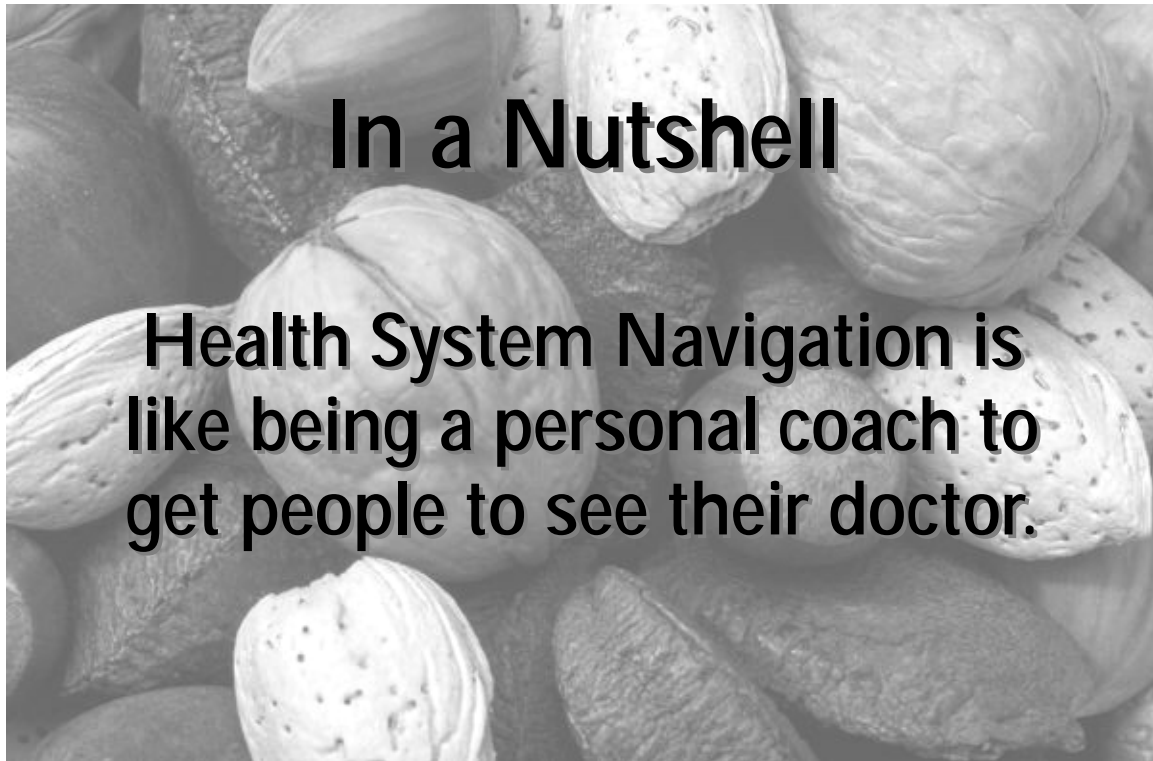
Yet, many of these people did have case managers and doctors!

So, what in the world could help stabilize them in medical care?

Well, one of the partner agencies in the grant, the Multicultural AIDS Coalition, had already identified the same problems, and was creating a service to try and fix it, kind of a personal troubleshooter to address a variety of problems folk might be having with HIV testing or care... and this service was called Health System Navigation.

So now we are in the process of testing to see if training and supporting people to do Health System Navigation can help accomplish the goal of stabilizing people into HIV medical care.

# What is Health System Navigation?



## Who does it?

- ✓ People who come from the same populations they're serving
- ✓ Who can work with the client in the field
- ✓ Who have been trained in Health System Navigation

# What is Health System Navigation (cont.)

## HSN is a set of skills

- ✓ Anyone can use it to supplement their current work.



The goal of HSN is to stabilize people into HIV medical care.

## OK, a client that's stable in HIV medical care is doing what?

- ✓ Going to their scheduled HIV primary care doctor appointments, and
- ✓ Having at least one appointment every six months.



### Why is HIV Medical Care so Important?

Working with your doctor is key to making HIV chronic instead of fatal.

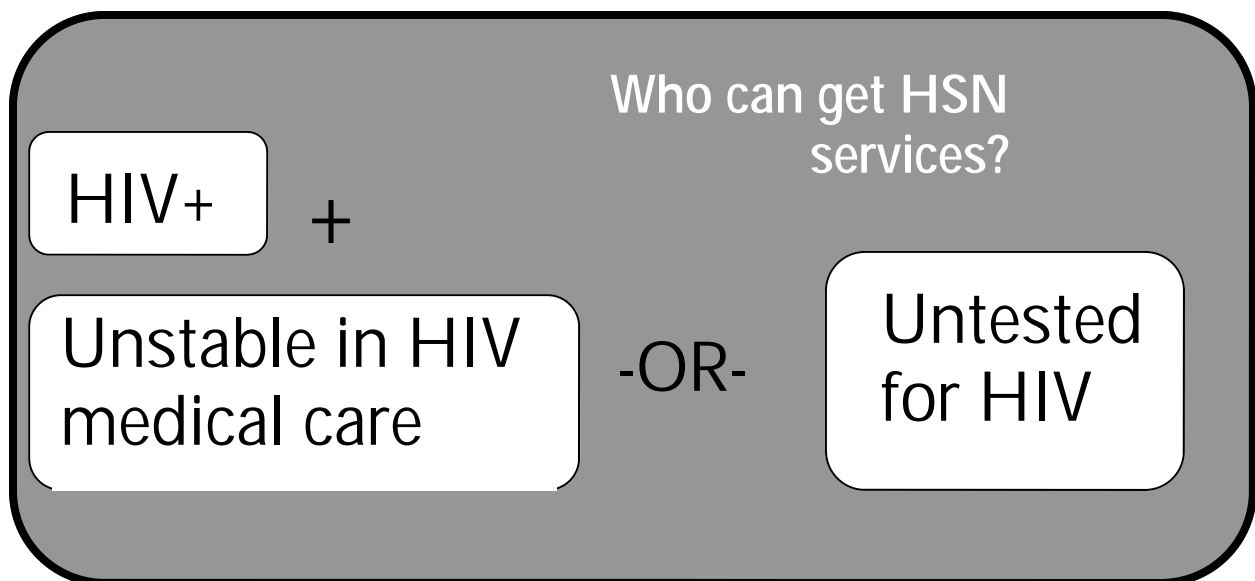
## Sounds easy, any catches?

- ✓ Some types of doctors appointments aren't the type of medical care we're counting here. We want them to go the HIV specialist. Specialty care appointments, like dermatologists, or proctologists, are great, but we need them to see a "HIV primary care" doctor too.
- ✓ One type of doctor could be either specialty care or primary care, the OB/Gyn. It'll be up to you to decide, is that OB/Gyn their HIV specialist or just someone they saw to check something out?

# What is Health System Navigation (cont.)

## How long does someone get HSN?

- ✓ They usually only get it for a short period of time, 3-6 months.
- ✓ But an HSN will keep checking in for longer after that, to make sure things are still ok.



## Who is targeted for HSN services?

Historically underserved and minority populations.

We are especially targeting the previously incarcerated, injection drug users, transgender, and all people of color.

Are others excluded? No, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria above.

# What is Health System Navigation (cont.)

## A Health System Navigator

Can be a...

- ✓ Buddy
- ✓ Sounding board
- ✓ Facilitator to health care
- ✓ Guide
- ✓ Coach
- ✓ Advocate
- ✓ Case-finder
- ✓ Resource
- ✓ Someone who "teaches you how to fish"

But is *not* a...

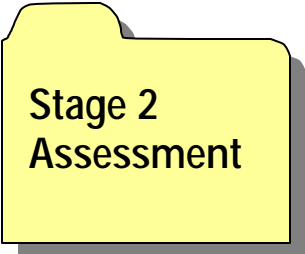
- ✓ Case manager
- ✓ Mental health specialist
- ✓ Permanent solution

# Overview of 4 Stages



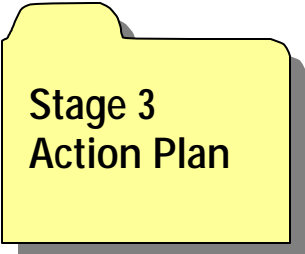
## Stage 1 Engagement

1. Identify clients
2. Introduce Health System Navigation to Clients
3. Introduce the SPNS research study to clients
4. Prescreen clients for eligibility



## Stage 2 Assessment

5. Enroll client into the SPNS study
6. Review intake to get the big picture
7. Help them create an Action Plan



## Stage 3 Action Plan

8. High intensity Action Plan intervention
9. Low intensity Action Plan intervention



## Stage 4 Monitoring

10. Follow-up on progress, help if needed.