

# Expanding Health Resources for Refugees in Philadelphia



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## About HIAS Pennsylvania

HIAS Pennsylvania provides legal, resettlement, citizenship and supportive services to immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers from all backgrounds who are resettling in Pennsylvania in order to ensure their fair treatment and full integration into American society.



## Project Introduction

As part of its health programming, HIAS Pennsylvania offers health orientations as a way to provide health education materials to all recently-resettled clients. This summer, two Bridging the Gaps students interns supported HIAS Pennsylvania through several projects focused on expanding these educational materials.

- First, the interns compiled **smoking cessation resources** that will be included within existing health orientation slideshows for all clients and created a standalone slideshow to be used one-on-one with clients interested in pursuing treatment for tobacco use disorder.
- Second, the interns assisted in the creation of comprehensive **health guides** on multiple subjects that may relevant to recently-resettled clients. These will be utilized on an as-needed basis in the fall for new arrivals.

Additionally, the interns performed **outreach to various pharmacies** in the Philadelphia area to identify COVID vaccine sites that can be used for client referrals.

In addition to these three projects, the interns accompanied a number of clients to in-person medical and legal appointments.

## Project Materials

Thinking about quitting smoking?

Set your quit date

- The first step to being smoke-free is to choose when you want to quit.
- Give yourself time to prepare, but don't put it off for too long.
  - Choose a date that is not more than a week or two away.



Explore ways to handle nicotine withdrawal.

One of the best ways to deal with nicotine withdrawal is through nicotine replacement therapy, which comes in many forms.

| NRT Types  | How to Get Them  | How to Use Them  |
|------------|------------------|--|
| Patch      | Over the Counter | Place on the skin. Gives a small and steady amount of nicotine.  |
| Gum        | Over the Counter | Chew to release nicotine. Chew until you get a tingling feeling, then place between cheek and gums.      |
| Lozenge    | Over the Counter | Place in the mouth like hard candy. Release nicotine as it slowly dissolves in the mouth.                |
| Inhaler    | Prescription     | Cartridge attached to a mouthpiece. Inhaling through the mouthpiece gives a specific amount of nicotine. |
| Neal Spray | Prescription     | Pump bottle containing nicotine. Put into nose and spray.  |

What is HIV?

- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).
- There is currently no effective cure. Once people get HIV, they have it for life.
- With proper medical care, HIV can be controlled. People with HIV who get effective HIV treatment can live long, healthy lives and protect their partners.

How do I know if I have HIV?

- The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to get tested. Knowing your HIV status helps you make healthy decisions to prevent getting or transmitting HIV.

Are there symptoms?

Some people have flu-like symptoms within 2 to 4 weeks after infection. These symptoms may last for a few days or several weeks. Possible symptoms include:

- Fever.
- Chills.
- Rash.
- Night sweats.
- Muscle aches.
- Sore throat.
- Swollen lymph nodes, and
- Mouth ulcers.

But some people may not feel sick during acute HIV infection. These symptoms don't mean you have HIV. Other illnesses can cause these same symptoms.

What are the stages of HIV?

When people with HIV don't get treatment, they typically progress through three stages. HIV medicine can slow or prevent the progression of the disease.

Stage 1: Acute HIV infection

- People have a large amount of HIV in their blood and are very contagious.

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or damaged tissue

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a busy schedule.

## Reflection

Our time at HIAS Pennsylvania allowed us to expand our knowledge on the immigrant and refugee issues relevant to our own community. By incorporating the multidisciplinary approach that BTG and HIAS Pennsylvania have taught us, we have become better holistic, critical thinkers in our fields of medicine and social work.

Example slides from the smoking cessation slideshow

Sample pages from the HIV health guide