

COMMUNITY PARTNER



Camden AHEC works every day to assist disadvantaged people in the navigation of complicated healthcare and insurance systems, empowering them to take control and responsibility for a healthy future. Camden AHEC **meets people where they are** and uses a **holistic approach** to recognize the impact lifestyle, environment, economic status, and access to care has on health. Camden AHEC **provides services to youth, families, and seniors.** Health education services are provided onsite, on the Camden AHEC mobile van, and at various community sites throughout the area. **The services reach over 10,000 individuals a year and range from rapid HIV and STI testing as well as treatment and syringe access to community wellness programming.**

Camden AHEC's vision is "healthy futures for all people." Read more at camden-ahec.org



BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

	New Jersey	Camden County	United States
2018			3,694,000 PWID, representing 1.46% of the US population, according to the CDC
2019	98,628 treatment admissions to substance abuse programs (per NJSAM)	Residents identified primary drug as heroin (45% of those surveyed). 29% identified as PWID 29% dropped out or quit treatment 18% had no health insurance at discharge, 5% of patients identified as homeless	The CDC reports that 7% of newly diagnosed HIV cases occur due to exposure via a used needle. aidsvu.org reports in male transmission categories, IV drug use responsible for 8.1%; in female transmission categories, IV drug use was responsible for 19.4% of cases.
2020		Dec 31; 1860 known cases of HIV	.3% of People 12+ had used heroin in the past year; .4% when only considering adults age 26 + (samhsa.gov)
2021	7/1/2021 prevalence rate of HIV is 397.2 per 100,000 (nj.gov) CDC reports 35207 individuals living with HIV, at a prevalence rate of 448.5 per 1,000	6/30/2021 Camden has 3680 total cases of known HIV, 24% report that injection drug use was the route of transmission (nj.gov)	384 per 100,000 is the prevalence for those living with HIV in the US Out of the total population, 331,893,745 are living with HIV
2022	Jan; 8752 people experiencing homelessness on any given night (USNews)		Department of Housing and Urban Development counted around 582,000 homeless



TEAM EXPERIENCE

Reid assisted at the Syringe Access Program mobile site twice a week every week of the BTG internship.

Their **main projects** included sourcing photos of STI-associated dermatologic symptoms on ethnically diverse skin for our future educational presentations, incorporating their research into commonly held misconceptions regarding STIs into an interactive, informative trivia game, and an **instructional/educational oral hygiene handout** to accompany the dental kits that they assembled thanks to the generosity of BTG. 149 kits were distributed to local Camden residents.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ORAL HEALTH
 IMPORTANT TO YOUR OVERALL HEALTH
 THE GOOD NEWS: THERE ARE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE PLAQUE BUILD UP!

- BRUSH FOR 2 MINUTES 2X A DAY & AFTER MEALS
- USE FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE & MOUTHWASH
- USE FLOSS DAILY
- CHANGE YOUR TOOTHBRUSH EVERY 3 MONTHS, IF YOU HAVE BEEN SICK, OR AFTER A PROFESSIONAL CLEANING
- TRY TO SEE THE DENTIST 1-2 X A YEAR

SOME BACTERIA (THE BAD KIND) BUILD UP IN PLAQUE

- PLAQUE • STICKY, CLEAR FILM ON YOUR TEETH
- IF PLAQUE IS NOT REMOVED, IT CAN HARDEN INTO TARTAR
- TARTAR ATTRACTS MORE BAD BACTERIA, LEADING TO MORE TARTAR BUILD UP

THE NOT SO GOOD NEWS: TARTAR MUST BE REMOVED BY PROFESSIONAL DENTAL CLEANING UNTREATED TARTAR CAUSES GUM DISEASE (ALSO CALLED GINGIVITIS OR PERIODONTAL DISEASE)

- GUM DISEASE MAY DOUBLE OR EVEN TRIPLE THE RISK OF HEART ATTACK OR OTHER ♥ PROBLEMS
- IT CAN ALSO LEAD TO HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE OR STROKE

SOME BACTERIA IN THE MOUTH IS GOOD AND NORMAL

ORAL HEALTH RECS FOR AN IDEAL WORLD ARE BELOW

GENERAL TIPS

- RINSE MOUTH OUT WITH WATER AFTER MEALS (SWISH & SPIT 3X)
- SCRAPE YOUR TONGUE TO REMOVE BACTERIA
- EAT CHEESE AT THE END OF A MEAL TO NEUTRALIZE MOUTH ACIDITY
- CHEW SUGARLESS GUM
- DRINK LOTS OF WATER
- LIMIT TOBACCO, SUGARY OR ACIDIC FOODS/DRINKS, AND ALCOHOL

NO TOOTHBRUSH? NO TOOTHPASTE? NO MOUTHWASH?

- WRAP YOUR FINGER IN A TOWEL OR WASHCLOTH AND USE YOUR FINGER AS A TOOTHBRUSH
- YOU CAN ALSO FINGER-BRUSH WITHOUT CLOTH
- BRUSH WITH BAKING SODA
- USE SALT WATER TO GARGLE
- OR MIX ONE PART HYDROGEN PEROXIDE TO TWO PARTS WATER

REMEMBER: DO NOT BRUSH TEETH / FLOSS JUST BEFORE OR JUST AFTER SEX BECAUSE IT CAN LEAD TO BIGGER RISK OF STI TRANSMISSION

SOURCES INCLUDE: COLOGATE, THE CDC, AND THE CLEVELAND CLINIC

The BTG CHIP experience enhanced Reid's professional and personal development. The weekly didactics sessions encouraged questioning of not only the status quo, but also questioning of one's own thought processes and potential implicit biases. The component program meetings and experience at the community site furthered this end. **Reid gained insight into the Camden community, the inner workings of an NPO, and herself: "BTG provides a lot of opportunities for reflection, and the really galvanizing, and gratifying experience of getting to work in the community.** Every day I was at the site, I was reminded why I chose to pursue medicine and how much working in the community – being the hands that help with anything, being the person to smile and strike up a conversation with anyone – not only matters to me, but refreshes me. Through my experience in this program, **I found the answer to a question that had been bothering me for years: my grandmother, who is not a fan of tattoos, and happened to spot one on my ankle, asked how having a tattoo would make me a better doctor.** When I was at one of Camden AHEC's mobile sites, **a member of the team and I struck up a conversation about tattoos,** and where the most painful locations for a tattoo are, etc. **A client joined the discussion. The three of us joked together, the client received services and then left.** I realized in that moment that **being tattooed had opened the door for connection** – connection with someone who might otherwise look at me and think that they had nothing in common with me – and be less likely to want to talk with me, or be candid with me, or trust me. **Connection fosters the ability to partner with someone in working toward their goals,** whether health outcomes or something else. **Connection is such a fundamental cornerstone of care,** good care, and also connection and kindness are so at the core of what I personally care about. There are many ways to connect, of course. **And if the reason a person in an underserved demographic, who is statistically less likely to seek healthcare due to stigma, connects with me is through being tattooed, then my tattoo will make me a doctor better suited to serving the population I aim to serve."**

REFLECTION