

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

BACKGROUND

The Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN), established in 1998, is a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve the health and lives of people living with and at risk of HIV by using data and evidence to drive change. We work with three main types of partners -- 1) testing programs and clinics; 2) AIDS service and other community-based organizations; and 3) policy and system leaders within and beyond the health sector – to support the implementation of the provincial HIV strategy, priorities, and directions.

The Black communities in Ontario are disproportionately impacted by HIV and are a priority in the provincial HIV response, and in the HIV Action Plan to 2023. Gaps in HIV services for this population have been exacerbated by:

- recent shifts in migration patterns, which have resulted in Black families settling in areas that are farther from major centres (where most specialized HIV care is based) and underserved for HIV care.
- lack of confidence on the part of primary care providers in these communities to manage HIV care despite advances in HIV treatment, which mean that most HIV care can be integrated into families' primary care.

Epidemiological data show that once Black individuals with HIV are connected to care and treatment, they tend to do well in terms of viral suppression and retention in care. However, they often take longer to link to care and treatment, and longer to become virally suppressed once on HIV treatment. A significant proportion also have complex psychosocial needs related to migration (e.g. loss of family/social support, trauma, employment and housing needs) and face challenges integrating into Ontario society.

In 2020, the Black Toronto-to-Zero Working Group highlighted the issues facing the Black population in Toronto and beyond and stressed that it is critically important for the health and social service system to close key service gaps for this population, and ensure they have access to culturally appropriate wrap-around supports for HIV testing, connection to care, and access to HIV treatment. The group recommended that Ontario provide more integrated, family-centered care for Black families living with HIV.

In 2022, the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN) began funding an implementation science project, led by Dr. Notisha Massaquoi, to assess the feasibility and impact of intensive case management services for Black families integrated within a community health centre (CHC): TAIBU in Scarborough. Staffed by a nurse practitioner, a social worker and peer workers, the team provides intensive case management services for whole families. In 2024, the HIV and Hepatitis C Programs (HHP) of the Ministry of Health allocated funding specifically to expand integrated, family-centred HIV and primary care for Black families in Ontario. HHP asked the OHTN to facilitate an evidence-based process to: identify the communities outside major centres in Ontario that have large/ growing Black population who would benefit from more integrated, family-centred HIV care closer to home; and determine whether/how the model in place at TAIBU can be scaled to these other communities.

SCOPE OF WORK

The OHTN is seeking the services of a consultant who will support this process. The consultant will work with a small time-limited steering committee to develop and implement a plan with key goals, outcomes, a timeline and deliverables to complete the following tasks:

1. Gather available data that can be used to identify a) communities with large/growing Black populations that are underserved for HIV care and b) primary care sites in those communities that have the capacity to serve Black communities, focusing specifically on community health centres (CHCs), which already provide interdisciplinary

models of care and social support.

2. Identify any data gaps and work with the steering committee to identify the best way to fill those gaps.
3. Review existing tools to assess the readiness of primary care sites and adapt/apply them to assess the readiness of identified primary care sites and their training/support needs.
4. Summarize data/experience on the existing models of HIV care for Black families and identify key characteristics that could be implemented/scaled in other sites.
5. Facilitate the meetings of the steering committee and prepare draft materials for its review.
6. Prepare a brief final report describing the process, recommendations and outcomes.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The consultant will:

- Facilitate meetings of the steering committee, including preparing agendas and materials for the committee's review
- Review, analyze and summarize available data and evidence to map Black communities against possible primary care sites
- Collect additional data/information if/as required
- Review and adapt existing readiness assessment tools to determine the preparedness of selected primary care sites and their training/support needs
- Conduct the readiness assessment, and analyze and report results

DELIVERABLES

- A detailed workplan outlining the key goals/outcomes, key deliverables and timeline
- A map of Black communities living outside major centres that are underserved for HIV care
- A list of primary care sites currently delivering care to Black families and ready (with and without additional training and supports) to implement an integrated, family centred program of HIV and primary care
- A list of communities and primary care sites that should be prioritized for this initiative
- A final brief report describing the process, advice and outcomes

TIMELINE

It is expected that this work will begin in August 2024 and conclude by December 2024.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested Individuals should submit:

- A curriculum vitae which demonstrates experience with facilitation and priority settings, and conducting environmental scans
- A proposal describing how they plan to undertake the work, including an estimate of the number of days and associated costs to complete the work.
- A sample of similar work.
- Three references.

Proposals should be email to OHTN no later than **Friday July 19, 2024 at 5pm** to:

OHTN

c/o Lydia Makoroka, Sr. Director Programs

Email: lmakoroka@ohsn.on.ca