

Boston EMA Ryan White Planning Council



Someone You Know & Love Anti-Stigma Campaign

2024-2025 Final Report

July 2025

Funded by Ending the HIV Epidemic, Boston Public Health Commission

Consumer Committee
Planning Council Support
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www.someoneyouknowandlove.com

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Introduction

The Planning Council’s Consumer Committee is the home of the Anti-Stigma Campaign: Someone You Know and Love, which prioritizes Consumer-led initiatives regarding community engagement, education, and HIV stigma reduction. The centerpiece of the campaign is a short documentary film that highlights several people living with HIV (PLWH), how they have dealt with personal stigma in their own lives and with their family and friends, and how they continue to move through their lives with dignity. The prevailing message is that people with HIV can and do live healthy lives and de-stigmatizing HIV is a powerful way to improve health outcomes.

The Boston EMA Ryan White HIV/AIDS Services Planning Council Support team (PCS) received Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) funding in FY24 to help the Consumer Committee advance the goals of the Someone You Know and Love Anti-Stigma Campaign through the implementation and evaluation of several activities. This is our second year of funding under this grant, and our FY24 award was a total of \$54,000.

Campaign Activities

To remain aligned with the goals of Ending the HIV Epidemic through prioritizing community engagement and education led by PLWH, all decisions about activities conducted via this campaign are made among a group of consumers and other Planning Council members who participate in the Consumer Committee meetings. As a result, this campaign aligns with HRSA’s community engagement goals to be intentional, committed, sustainable, flexible, tailored, and transformational, and the work done by this campaign is critical to the success of the grant.

This campaign is also in direct alignment with the priorities of the Boston Public Health Commission to empower community leaders and to develop diverse campaigns and promotional materials to normalize prevention, care, and treatment while reducing HIV stigma. Those initiatives and their related goals, outcomes, and impressions are as follows:

Initiative 1: Marketing and Merchandise

The Consumer Committee designed new merchandise and marketing materials. Printed materials and stickers were distributed to Council members and community members at various events to boost campaign recognition and engagement.

In December of 2024, PCS ordered 950 stickers in four distinct designs that represented the campaign. PCS also ordered 300 stress balls with the Someone You Know and Love logo on them.

Figure 1: Anti-Stigma Campaign Merchandise Count

Product	Order Date	Amount Received
Sticker Logo 1	12/24/24	300
Sticker Logo 2	12/24/24	250

Sticker Logo 3	12/24/24	200
Sticker Logo 4	12/24/24	200
Stress Balls	12/24/24	300
		Total: 1,250 items

Initiative 2: Film Subtitles Translation and Social Media

The Consumer Committee continued its efforts to provide well-established, reliable, user-friendly, and accessible media to advance the campaign. This year, the Consumer Committee recommended adding translated subtitles to the SYKL film on the website to increase accessibility and reach. The SYKL film was previously only available in English, with some quotes in Spanish. The Committee had the film’s subtitles translated into the most commonly used languages in the Boston EMA: Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese. We also embedded English captions on the film for reading accessibility, which was previously only available through YouTube’s built-in captioning service. In February, PCS submitted the film with English captions to the American Public Health Association’s Public Health Film Festival.

This year, PCS posted and engaged new followers on the campaign’s Instagram account, @someoneyouknowandlove. Post topics ranged from educational to current campaign events, including Education Session Key Takeaways, national public health recognition days such as National Native American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, and collaborative posts between the SYKL Instagram and community partners like SPOKE Art. These collaborations helped increase engagement and views. In FY24, PCS and the Consumer Committee co-created 18 unique Instagram posts.

The SYKL website and Instagram account were essential tools in the monitoring of campaign reach and impressions.

Figure 2: Total SYKL Website Views, 3/2024 – 2/2025

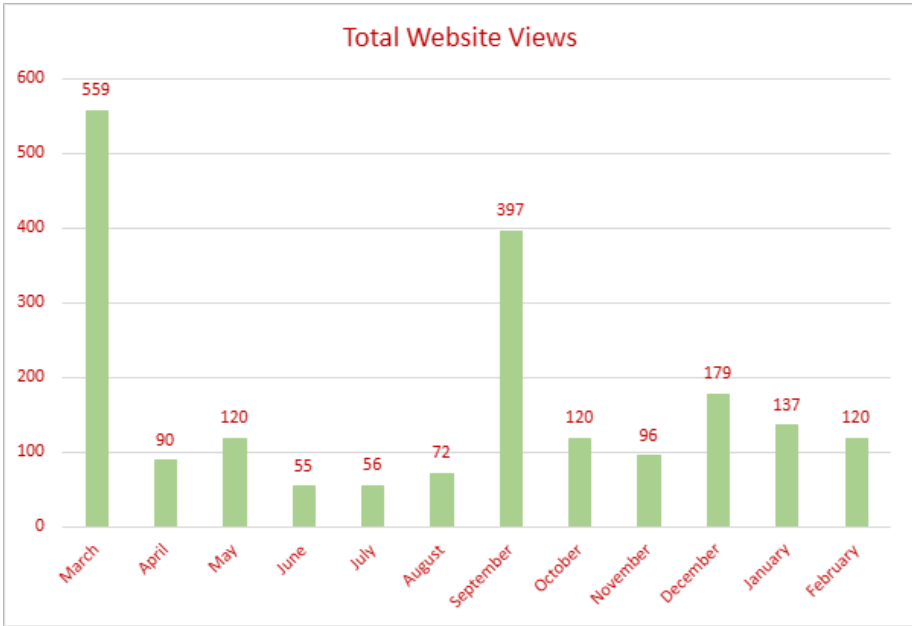
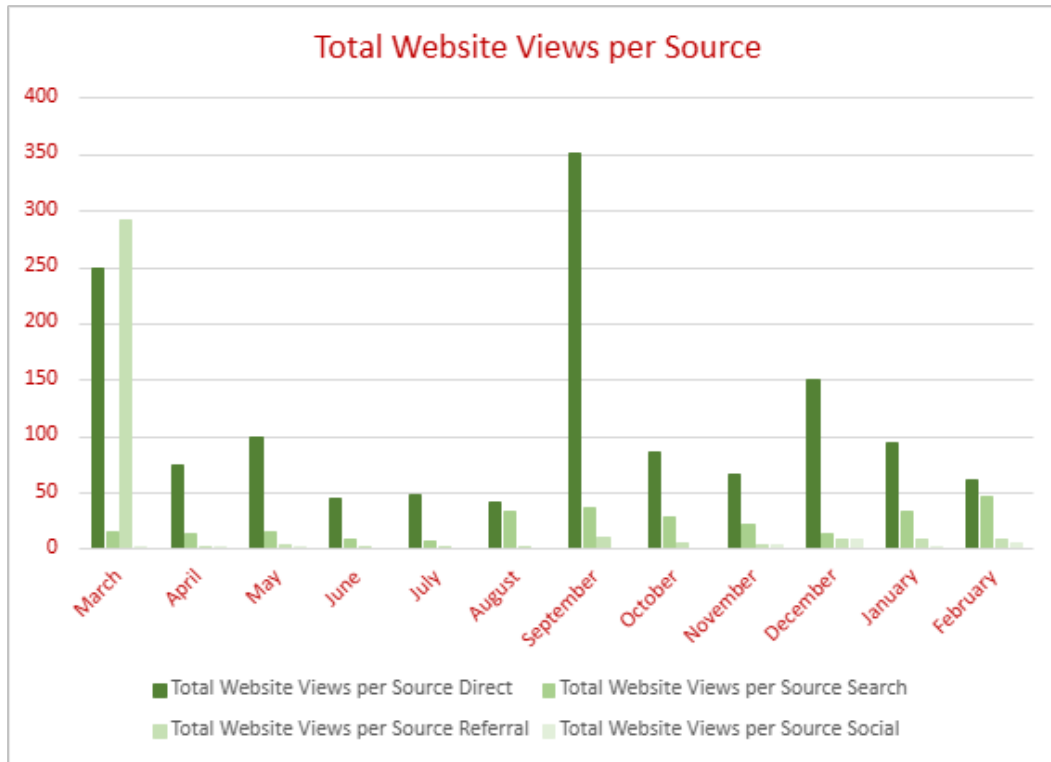


Figure 2 shows the monthly website views from March 2024 to February 2025. The chart shows a variation of views, with the highest number of views in September. On average, there were 166 views per month and 1996 total unique viewers, a 26% increase from FY23. Website views tend to increase when there are important Planning Council events or dates, such as the New Member Orientation in September, or our Priority Setting meeting in March.

Figure 3: Total Website Views per Source



Total website views are organized by source, including referral, direct, search, and social. Figure 3 illustrates that the most common way to find the website was by directly typing in the site URL, likely because of hearing about it at an event or other in-person engagement, or by clicking directly on the link in an email. In March 2024, there was a significant number of referrals, likely because our MBTA advertisements from FY23 were still running. In January and February 2025, there was a steady increase in views generated by “search,” indicating that individuals discovered the Someone You Know and Love Campaign and either looked up the website on a search engine or typed in the link. There were also some views from “referral,” which refers to websites that link to one’s content that do not fall under other channels. This can include any scans of QR codes or clicks on links from other sites (i.e., Instagram, Boston.gov, etc.).

Figure 4: Overall Instagram Growth, 9/2024 – 2/2025

Overall Instagram Growth September 2024 – February 2025			
	Accounts Reached	Accounts Engaged	Total Followers
September	55	8	151
October	87	8	154
November	94	10	159
December	193	18	160
January	279	11	170
February	1175	59	201

The SYKL Instagram saw a notable increase in accounts reached, accounts engaged, and total followers. At the end of FY23, the Instagram account had 161 followers. It participated in various collaboration posts with different community organizations, boosting engagement and profile views. A collaborative post allows multiple accounts to share a post on their profiles, making it visible to their followers in their Instagram feeds. For instance, we created several collaboration posts with SPOKE Art and one with BPHC’s Instagram account @healthyboston, which led to increased video and picture views. Notably, there was higher engagement from December 2024 to February 2025. Furthermore, Figure 4 shows a follower growth of 59 unique account engagements by the end of FY24 and a 33% increase in followers, elevating the follower count to the next hundred.

Initiative 3: Someone You Know and Love Gala

To showcase the campaign on a larger scale, PCS and the Consumer Committee organized a Someone You Know and Love Gala. The event highlighted data related to the Someone You Know and Love campaign, featured healthcare and policy leaders in the Boston EMA area, spotlighted community organizations, included a screening of the Someone You Know and Love film, and provided an opportunity for feedback and integrated planning for stigma reduction efforts. This event was the majority of our FY24 budget. There were 120 community members in attendance, and 19 responses to a post-event survey.

While only 19 responses may not be representative of all the people in attendance, data gathered from the post-event surveys showed that there is more familiarity with the Someone You Know and Love Campaign after attending the event. Participants from the survey shared many reactions to the film with us, including:

- *“Inspiring and encouraging as it has been in the past, I enjoy watching it every time to notice something new!”*
- *“It is a really inspiring, sincere, and honest film learning about the lives of PLWH”*
- *“I experience something new about the SYKL film every time it is presented. It touches me and I begin to get very emotional and even cry sometimes. It is [a cry] of happiness and confidence that we can have a video to help others who are beginning a journey of being HIV positive or remembering loved ones who have been lost to the fight of the virus.”*

- “Excellent film! Did an amazing job at personalizing the experience of living and thriving with HIV and destigmatizing.”

Figure 5: Participants’ familiarity with the Someone You Know and Love Campaign before SYKL Gala

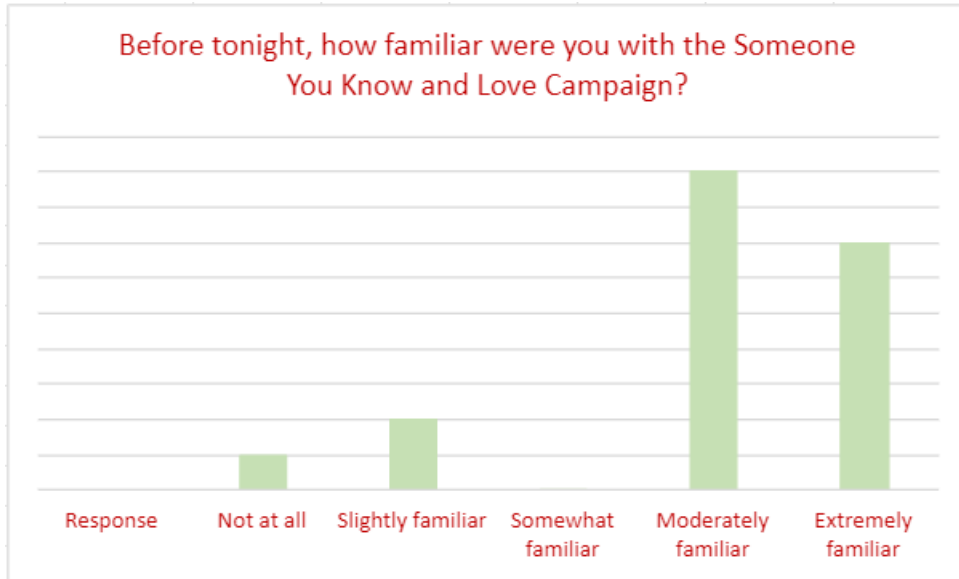
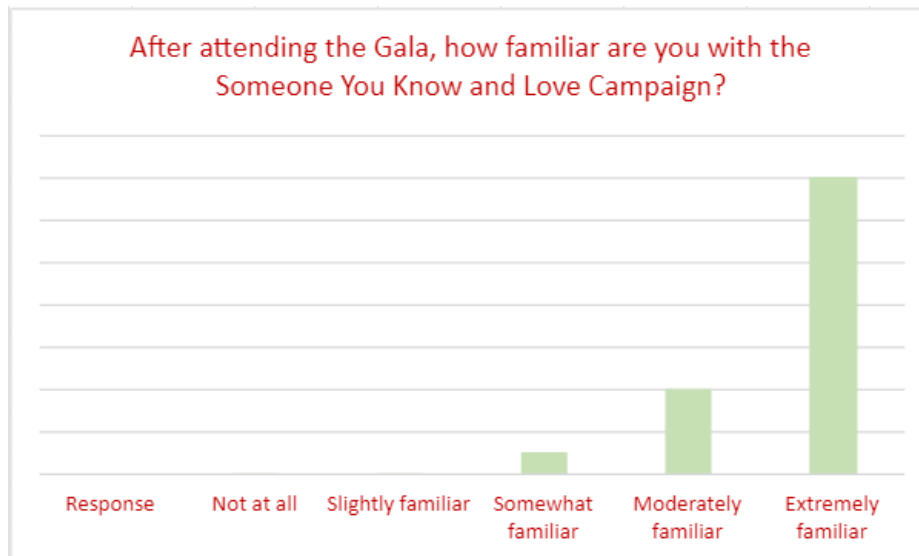


Figure 5 shows that some participants from the post-survey were either not familiar or only slightly familiar with the Someone You Know and Love Campaign before coming to the gala. After the gala, participants that reported that they are not familiar with the SYKL Campaign said they that are familiar with it now. This is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Participants’ familiarity with the Someone You Know and Love Campaign after SYKL Gala



68.75% of respondents said that the quality of the content presented was excellent, with 31.25% responding that it was good. Below are a few examples of comments:

- *“The presentations were clear and disability friendly.”*
- *“Love the speeches, balanced time with speaking and networking, socializing.”*
- *“It was good to hear different speakers and their thoughts and feelings about the work and what they are doing to lessen the stigma. It was good to hear from both people who work in the field and from people living with HIV. It was very powerful to hear and experience.”*
- *“Content was educational and engaging.”*

Venue ratings

Respondents commented that the venue was spacious, and the location was accessible with public transport and parking. Some direct comments:

- *“The venue was beautiful, spacious, and easily accessible.”*
- *“I loved the part of feeling like I was going through a secret passageway to get into the venue!”*
- *“I have never been to that BU space, and it was very nice and insulated from the rest of the Saturday bustle of Comm Ave.”*

Accessibility ratings

Throughout the event, there were a few asynchronous interactive activities for members to participate in: a community art project, table discussion questions, ‘Who have you met tonight?’ Bingo and a resource table. Respondents generally liked these activities, but many felt that they should have been facilitated more explicitly or prompted to participate in them.

10 people responded to “What is one thing that you learned tonight?”:

- *“About new HIV infections of young teenagers between 13 to 17 years.”*
- *“I learned that as a collective group, we have power, and we have strength. We can encourage each other, and we need to continue to work on ending stigma for all PLWH - and all discrimination around how we are different from each other, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. - that we all matter!”*
- *“Learned more about SPOKE Art and more about Planning Council and what is ahead for the future.”*

When asked about what their favorite part of the event was, 14 people responded, including:

- *“Seeing Consumers enjoy the excellent environment.”*
- *“The socialization between so many different kinds of people coming together to celebrate the same thing.”*
- *“Being in a room with people [who] all have the same goals and agenda, doing this work for the population of PLWH and those who are at risk. We continue to support each other!”*
- *“Sharing of the history of the campaign and connecting it to the EHE grant initiatives.”*

There was time for networking, talking to other community partners, and learning more about the Planning Council and the Someone You Know and Love Campaign. The event was the first Someone You Know and Love Gala, so there was some feedback to further elevate the event.

Respondents requested more options for food and beverages, facilitated rather than asynchronous activities, and more decorations around the venue. Overall, the Someone You Know and Love Gala was a successful event in bringing together people from all over the Boston EMA and the HIV/AIDS care landscape to discuss stigma and celebrate our collective achievements.

Initiative 4: Youth Outreach

The Consumer Committee identified youth as a target audience for the campaign. The first youth outreach project was the Someone You Know and Love Art Campaign, which prompted multiple youth organizations and institutions within the Boston EMA to submit art answering the question, “What does HIV Stigma Look Like to You?” PCS received eight submissions during the duration of the campaign (December 2024 to January 2025). The submissions were posted on the SYKL Instagram, and the youth artists collaborated on the post, which brought more viewership and traffic. Figure 7 shows the poster advertising the art campaign.



Figure 7: Someone You Know and Love Art Campaign Flyer

The Consumer Committee also participated in SPOKE Art’s Annual World AIDS Day Vigil on December 1st, 2024. Youth from SPOKE Art’s YouthSPEAK Program attended a Planning Council meeting in November 2024 to facilitate a creative workshop surrounding HIV stigma with the Council members. The result was a community art installation during the World AIDS Day Vigil, where the Committee also tabled and screened the Someone You Know and Love film to over 80 attendees.

The next initiative for youth engagement was the Youth and HIV Education Session on December 12th, 2024. The Consumer Committee invited two different youth organizations, BAGLY from Boston and Seacoast Outright in New Hampshire, to educate Council members about their programs, how they engage young people, and their next steps towards providing HIV education and resources. There were eight Council members in attendance.

The art campaign, workshop, events, and educational session connected Council members with younger populations in the Boston EMA, and the partnerships will continue into future years.

Initiative 5: Anti-Stigma Campaign Toolkits

In FY23, the Consumer Committee intended to expand its ability to share knowledge and training materials on HIV stigma and the impacts of stigma on people living with HIV, naming these Anti-Stigma Campaign Toolkits as a priority for FY24 and FY25. Throughout Consumer Committee meetings in FY24, the members collaborated to develop an outline for what they'd like to see in a stigma reduction toolkit and began work on a brochure as the first element. They also determined that information developed by the Committee will be in the form of this brochure and/or another physical handout, complemented by an online toolkit hosted on the campaign website.

After three rounds of revision with the Consumer Committee, they developed and voted on a final brochure, which can be seen in Figure 8. The brochure includes a brief introduction to the campaign and its activities, definitions of HIV stigma from the CDC, HIV.gov, as well as personal definitions from PLWH on the Planning Council. It includes a QR code to the campaign's website and contact information for the PCS team. This brochure will be printed in FY25.

WHAT IS THE SOMEONE YOU KNOW & LOVE CAMPAIGN?

Want to learn more about the Someone You Know & Love Campaign?

Need resources about HIV testing, treatment, or social supports?

You are not alone! Check out our website and connect with us via email or Instagram.

www.someoneyouknowandlove.com

@someoneyouknowandlove

Planning Council Support team, pcs@bphc.org

Launched in 2021, the Someone You Know and Love Campaign, created by the Boston EMA Ryan White HIV/AIDS Services Planning Council, sends a message about hope, love, and inclusion to people living with HIV in our community.

Campaign Activities & History:

- An award-winning short documentary film
- Community events and education
- Raising public awareness
- Presenting our efforts to reduce stigma at the city, state, and national levels

JOIN US!

FIGHT STIGMA. FIND COMMUNITY. MAKE CHANGE.

You already KNOW & LOVE someone living with HIV

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Learning more about the Someone You Know & Love Campaign and HIV stigma

www.someoneyouknowandlove.com

WHAT IS HIV STIGMA?

There are many different definitions of HIV stigma!

The CDC defines HIV stigma as negative attitudes and beliefs about people with HIV.

HIV.gov defines HIV stigma as irrational or negative attitudes, behaviors, and judgments towards people living with or at risk of HIV.

Examples of HIV stigma:

- Believing that only certain groups of people can get HIV
- Making moral judgments about people who take steps to prevent HIV
- Feeling that people deserve to get HIV because of their choices

Stigma harms everyone's health by discouraging access to testing, treatment for HIV, and essential care for a long and healthy life.

Planning Council members define HIV stigma as...

- Judging someone based on a misconception that is generally accepted.
- Judgmental language (verbal and body) and assumptions about populations and behaviors associated with HIV.
- A weapon hurting those you love.
- Negative perceptions or beliefs about someone because of their HIV status

Our campaign's message is that yes, someone you know, and love, may be living with HIV and we can and do live a completely healthy life and participate in society as anyone without HIV does.

WHAT DO PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT STIGMA?

"Stigma causes us to have a lot of internal turmoil without support from family and friends."

"HIV is not a death sentence!"

"It is not just about health... but it is living with long-term, everyday health concerns that affect our jobs, families, mental health, and the social world."

"More education is needed about how HIV is contracted, HIV testing must be normalized, and continued support is needed for people living with HIV."

Learn more at our website:

I MATTER. WE MATTER.

Figure 8. Pages 1 and 2 of the Anti-Stigma Toolkit Brochure

EHE Future Planning

The Consumer Committee is committed to remain aligned with the goals of Ending the HIV Epidemic. Their most recent proposal outlined detailed plans on what continued funding would be used for, prioritizing community engagement and social media and information dissemination following the direction of PLWH. This proposal provided information on goals, initiatives, and funding needs for the next fiscal year.

The Consumer Committee plans to continue to expand outreach and knowledge about the campaign, including building upon the documentary film and creating additional video content, continuing development of an Anti-Stigma Campaign Toolkit (initiated in FY24), and increasing the campaign's presence in local organizations, schools, and universities via outreach events and film screenings. The Committee aims to continue to collaborate with existing stigma reduction efforts in the Infectious Disease Bureau at BPHC.

Additional Video/Media Content

The Consumer Committee would like to create additional film and media content focusing on several target demographics to illuminate intersectional stigma. The original film has seen great success in the local community, as well as with national organizations (*see film recognition and credits [here](#)*). To maintain this momentum, the committee will determine the type of content they want to create, determine external needs, such as a production studio, to create this content, and oversee its development and dissemination. It is important to build upon the success of the first film, as this will help to appeal to populations that may not have been reached originally, while also increasing campaign awareness and community trust, and thus connecting people with support and resources for prevention, testing, treatment, and care for HIV. Additionally, the committee will utilize funding to maintain a strong media presence on our social media platforms and a regularly updated website.

Anti-Stigma Campaign Toolkits

The committee will build upon current FY24 work towards developing an Anti-Stigma Campaign Toolkit (Initiative 5). The Consumer Committee would like to expand its ability to share knowledge and training materials on HIV stigma and the impacts of stigma on people living with HIV. They will create a physical and digital Anti-Stigma Campaign Toolkit and partner with local organizations to distribute it to providers and community members. This project is currently in progress and will continue into next year, including printing and dissemination of the brochure, development of the digital portion, dissemination of the toolkit, translation of the toolkit into the languages most commonly spoken in the Boston EMA, and developing partnerships with local organizations to provide anti-stigma education via these kits. This is essential to increasing the reach of the campaign, building upon established resources, and understanding community needs. The committee will utilize funding to research, develop, and procure effective physical and digital toolkits for talking about the campaign and HIV stigma, and the distribution of these materials.

Expanding Outreach Events

In tandem with partnerships through providing Anti-Stigma Campaign Toolkits, the committee will increase its capacity to conduct outreach events that have proven successful in illuminating

HIV stigma and its impact on people living with HIV and their loved ones. Data collected from the outreach events also demonstrated a strong need to engage with local students, healthcare professionals, and community members regarding the topics of HIV prevention, care, and stigma. In alignment with HRSA priorities for effective community engagement, the committee also prioritizes efforts to engage PLWH by providing transportation support and compensation support for the emotional and physical labor of participating in panel discussions. The committee will utilize funding to develop, advertise for, and implement these events broadly throughout the Boston EMA among our target audiences.

Target Populations

In response to state and city level data, including Needs Assessments from Boston Public Health Commission and the Planning Council, the Consumer Committee have identified two target populations in addition to HIV care providers and the general public for the campaign and its expansion.

1. Youth and Young Adults: Committee members have identified youth and young adults (<21) as a population of focus, to fill gaps for young people on HIV, HIV stigma, sexual health, and risk prevention.
2. People who use drugs: Committee members have also identified people who use drugs or are in recovery as a population of focus, to reach people who may be facing overlapping stigmas that prevent them from seeking care or knowing their HIV status.
3. Committee members will continue to prioritize messaging towards HIV care providers across the whole HIV Care Continuum, as well as the general public, with the campaign.

Efforts like these interactive events, combined with consistent and trustworthy media presence and marketing that work to humanize and de-stigmatize HIV, are essential to creating change and improving health outcomes. The Consumer Committee intends to sustain the momentum of this campaign while prioritizing decisions made by people living with HIV.

For more information on the ongoing campaign activities, meeting schedule, and logistics, or to learn how to get involved, please visit the website: www.someoneyouknowandlove.com or email PCS at pcs@bphc.org.