Massachusetts

While no longer HIV-designated in FY 2009, the following information is provided because this state was required to submit compliance reports since being designated in FY 2006.

AIDS Rate per 100,000

Since the AIDS rate in this State has dropped below 10 cases per 100,000 population, it is not currently a designated State. CSAT has instructed this State to stop allocating SAPT funds for HIV early intervention activities.

State Funds for HIV Early Intervention Services

State Expenditures	
Required Base	**SFY 2008 Expenditures Maintenance**
N/A	N/A
SAPT EXPENDITURES	
FY 2006 HIV Set-Aside	**FY 2009 Planned**
$1,695,282	$1,593,122

FY 2010 SAPT Reports

State contracts with a provider to integrate HIV early intervention services into overall treatment infrastructure making early intervention services part of the overall array of services provided to clients in substance abuse treatment, including pre/post test counseling, treatment referral, HIV risk assessment, and HIV/AIDS education.

HIV Early Intervention Services Provided							
Rapid Testing	Funding Rapid Testing	Regular HIV Testing	Pre-Test and Post-Test Counseling	Referral Services	Risk Assessment	HIV/AIDS Education	Outreach
N/A							

State Narrative Summary

In FY 2006, the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS) contracted with SPHERE, a statewide vendor, to offer capacity-building activities for substance abuse treatment providers to enhance their ability and skill in providing HIV early intervention services to people with substance abuse disorders. The training focused on helping providers to create welcoming environments in which clients could explore their HIV-related risks, be tested to learn their HIV status, and be referred to appropriate treatment services. In FY 2008, these activities continued, with SPHERE promoting systems integration and coordination, providing additional opportunities for providers to share concerns, strategies, and interventions for reaching their shared client population. In addition, BSAS collaborates with the Office of HIV/AIDS, also within the Department of Public Health, to

***THE MOST RECENT DATA PUBLISHED PRIOR TO OCTOBER 1, 2008 BY THE CDC IS TABLE 14, REPORTED AIDS CASES AND ANNUAL RATES (PER 100,000 POPULATION), BY AREA OF RESIDENCE AND AGE CATEGORY, CUMULATIVE THROUGH 2005-UNITED STATES, HIV/AIDS SURVEILLANCE REPORT 2005 VOL. 17, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, NATIONAL CENTER FOR HIV, STD, AND TB PREVENTION, DIVISION OF HIV/AIDS, PREVENTION, SURVEILLANCE, AND EPIDEMIOLOGY. SINGLE COPIES OF THE REPORT ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE CDC NATIONAL PREVENTION INFORMATION NETWORK, 800-458-5231 OR 301-562-1098 OR HTTP://WWW.CDC.GOV/HIV/TOPICS/SURVEILLANCE/RESOURCES/REPORTS/2006REPORT/TABLE14.HTM.**

provide HIV Early Intervention Services to substance abusers while they are in treatment. Because Massachusetts is not a designated state for FY 2009, no SAPT09 block grants dollars were spent on HIV early intervention services. In years that MA is not designated, state dollars are dedicated to the on-going collaboration with the Office of HIV/AIDS and capacity building services provided by SPHERE.

In addition the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services provides Early Intervention for HIV services within its Methadone treatment programs and Acute Treatment Services. These treatment programs provide HIV education and referral to counseling, testing and treatment.

Full State Narrative

FY 2006 (COMPLIANCE)

The Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS) contracted with a statewide vendor (SPHERE) to offer capacity building activities for substance abuse treatment providers to support the delivery and expansion of early intervention services in treatment to individuals living with HIV/at risk for HIV. Programming focused on helping substance abuse treatment providers create welcoming environments in treatment for clients to explore their HIV risks, discover their status, and be linked to care while in a recovery program. This was the second year of a new five-year BSAS contract with SPHERE, demonstrating that the previous contract met BSAS requirements for the scope and quality of HIV services.

The workplan for 2006 continued to emphasize onsite training and technical assistance with substance abuse treatment providers, with a special emphasis on: systems integration and coordination, needs assessment, and viral hepatitis integration services. SPHERE's commitment to systems integration afforded it with enhanced opportunities to collaborate with the HIV/AIDS Bureau and incorporate HIV related services and service providers into its statewide meetings for drug and alcohol treatment providers. These opportunities promoted and supported providers creating linkages with providers in the HIV service world to further support their referral capacity for early intervention services. In addition, SPHERE focused its planning on fostering sustainable changes in programs by initiating a follow-up survey to all programs which received its onsite training, identifying what changes, if any, had been made as a result of the training and what additional resources would further support their work.

The following services were delivered statewide:

- Promotion of affiliations among substance abuse and HIV service providers to enhance access for clients of substance abuse treatment services to Hepatitis C services, STD screening and treatment services, community health centers, HIV Counseling, Testing, Referrals, Partner Counseling and Referral Services (CTRPCRS), HIV case management, and family planning services;
- Ongoing efforts to integrate Hepatitis C into substance abuse treatment by providing hepatitis trainings onsite for substance abuse treatment providers, disseminating resources and tools to help providers integrate Hepatitis C into their services, and working with the staff of the Massachusetts Hepatitis C program by launching a special 3-year partnership with the Hepatitis C Office to bring enhanced viral hepatitis programming to substance abuse treatment providers and increased awareness of hepatitis vaccination;
- Ongoing development of a website to promote direct access to HIV integration and early intervention information materials;
- Dissemination of resources and tools to enhance the substance abuse treatment system's capacity to facilitate the discovery of HIV status in treatment, and support the disclosure of status to partners and health care providers, including the delivery of specific trainings designed to offer drug and alcohol treatment providers specific skills to support clients in discovering their HIV status and in responding to it through positive prevention efforts;

- Dissemination of resources and tools to enhance the substance abuse treatment system's capacity to make active referrals for clients to a range of health and HIV services, and to support clients to follow-up on these referrals;
- Dissemination of specialized provider tools to strengthen providers' capacity to link clients living with HIV case management services;
- Translation of provider cue card resources into Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, building the capacity of Spanish/Portuguese-speaking substance abuse treatment providers who work with Spanish/Portuguese-speaking clients;
- Availability of Model HIV/AIDS Confidentiality Policies for substance abuse treatment programs to all BSAS providers;
- Dissemination of the BSAS Standards of Care as they relate to HIV integration to all substance abuse treatment providers;
- Continued use of innovative evaluation instruments for each of its trainings and technical assistance to measure achievement of learning objectives and participant capacity to implement new skills and information;
- Development, implementation and analysis of three statewide surveys of Program HIV/AIDS Coordinators (PACs) on the capacity of their programs to integrate HIV; integrate viral hepatitis, and on provider interest in sponsoring hepatitis vaccine clinics on site;
- Fostered greater systems integration by the development and dissemination of an electronic newsletter on HIV/substance use issues sent to a variety of public health programs;
- Implementation of two cycles of region-based PACNet meetings to increase provider capacity to implement the BSAS HIV/AIDS Guidelines and meet the Standards of Care and to strengthen the capacity of Program HIV/AIDS Coordinators to play leadership onsite roles in HIV integration and early intervention efforts through specialized programming, resource dissemination, special training events, and other activities;
- Continued to offer six free all day trainings, reaching 123 providers in geographically diverse locations for substance abuse treatment providers;
- Continued to partner with the HIV/AIDS Bureau to deliver four (4) trainings on "Understanding Substance Use and Abuse" to the HIV service system to improve its understanding of the substance abuse treatment system and recovery programs and four (4) additional trainings on Viral Hepatitis to these same providers;
- SPHERE consulted with BSAS, recommending specific HIV risk assessment questions to be included in the BSAS MIS process;
- SPHERE provided 1,038 CEU Certificates;
- SPHERE provided a total of 74 trainings, reaching 1,286 training participants;
- SPHERE disseminated 5,052 resources to 196 MA programs/agencies;
- SPHERE created and instituted a follow-up evaluation for the on-site trainings to measure and identify sustainable change resulting from training;
- SPHERE tabulated 1,113 training evaluations;
- SPHERE developed and submitted Quarterly and annual reports to BSAS;
- SPHERE provided technical assistance addressing the needs of substance abuse providers in the areas of HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and STD prevention and risk reduction; and
- Developed curriculum on a new training on "Positive Prevention" and working with people living with HIV along with provider resources to accompany this unique training and on another new training on Building Referral Capacity to improve provider capacity to link clients to early intervention services.

In 2006 SPHERE continued to use the BSAS Terms and Conditions and Standards of Care as educational tools with substance abuse treatment providers and structured its training priorities to reflect the Bureau's HIV-

related training requirements. SPHERE continued to engage in program planning that supported the implementation of these Standards, developing and implementing all day trainings that address these standards and offering technical assistance to providers in order to ease their implementation.

Compliance with early intervention services for HIV in substance abuse treatment programs is monitored at annual site visits by regional managers and at bi-annual licensing inspections by licensing inspectors. These site visits include review of policies related to HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, review of educational group topics provided to clients, staff training topics, and confirming that each agency has a Program AIDS Coordinator who attends regional PAC-Net meetings and forwards information to the rest of the staff. SPHERE provides the Bureau with a list of attendees to the PAC-Net meetings, and a list of the agencies that have received staff training for monitoring purposes.

FY 2008 (PROGRESS)

BSAS strengthened its targeted capacity building for substance abuse treatment providers in ways that support continued systems integration, providing additional and enhanced opportunities for BSAS funded programs and HIV service organizations to share concerns, strategies and interventions to reach their shared population. SPHERE promoted systems integration and coordination, increased provider awareness and skills around offering positive prevention services, and increased the visibility, skills, and credibility of onsite HIV integration specialists in substance abuse treatment programs (PACs).

In its last year of its special 3-year contract with the Viral Hepatitis Program, SPHERE delivered a range of regional trainings on hepatitis related topics, delivered hepatitis capacity building services, disseminated and purchased additional hepatitis-related resources, and completed a special evaluation project on the MDPH Viral Hepatitis Program and its HCV Medical Management pilot sites. The partnership also led SPHERE to organize and coordinate a spring forum for the MDPH on New Treatments for Hepatitis C. This partnership also supported enhanced collaboration between Program HIV/AIDS Coordinators (PACs) and Hepatitis Educators, and continued its very popular resource dissemination of liver educational models to PACs to support conversations around liver health and viral hepatitis.

Our work with PAC-Net continued and expanded, and we undertook two statewide needs assessments to understand the level of HIV integration and Hepatitis integration in drug and alcohol treatment programs throughout the state. SPHERE also developed and implemented a statewide survey of drug and alcohol treatment providers on overdose prevention in order to identify the ways in which providers were incorporating overdose prevention into their work, to better understand the barriers providers face in doing this work, and clarify their needs in order to offer it. SPHERE also partnered with BSAS to develop a unique overdose prevention resource magnet. In addition, the effort to conduct follow-up evaluations proved successful, documenting the changes programs and staff have made in response to SPHERE's trainings.

Along with these services, SPHERE continued to offer its high quality onsite training and technical assistance to increase provider knowledge, skills, and capacity to work across systems to improve services for the clients with HIV/at risk for HIV. We maximized opportunities to enhance provider capacity around supporting HIV testing decision making and supporting clients to obtain testing services. These statewide activities were undertaken:

- SPHERE assessed the needs of the BSAS service system as it related to HIV and viral hepatitis integration, documenting systems changes and making recommendations for continued improvement;
- SPHERE implemented two cycles of region-based PACNet meetings (a total of 12 meetings reaching 146 substance abuse treatment providers) that increased provider capacity to deliver and facilitate early intervention services and make effective referrals to HIV services;

- Developed training, technical assistance and specialized tools to improve provider capacity to establish effective linkage agreements and enhance client services and referrals, with special emphasis on increasing drug and alcohol treatment provider's awareness of HIV testing services and Hepatitis vaccine services;
- Provided onsite and statewide trainings to enhance provider capacity to integrate HIV education, prevention and referral services into their work, in 2008 SPHERE provided 86 trainings on 19 topics reaching 1348 participants;
- Promoted opportunities for systems integration and networking across service systems, incorporating these opportunities in trainings and statewide meetings. This year we were particularly successful at partnering with our newly established sister program, the Statewide Homeless/HIV Integration Project, to develop additional knowledge and skills with substance abuse treatment providers who work with homeless clients;
- Continued to explore new training and resource strategies to increase provider access to capacity-building services, achieve HIV integration outcomes, and document long term impact of services;
- Reviewed evaluation data to better understand the fundamental effects resulting from SPHERE services. This involved collating, compiling, tabulating and reviewing 1326 individual evaluations and producing 83 evaluation reports;
- Issued and distributed 1071 CEU certificates to training participants as documentation fo their participation and as an incentive for their engagement on these issues;
- Continued to offer free regional all day trainings in geographically diverse locations for substance abuse treatment providers, reaching 145 providers, that support providers to be in compliance of Standards of Care training requirements for HIV integration; provided ten opportunities for cross collaboration to happen between drug and alcohol treatment providers and hepatitis service providers;
- SPHERE disseminated 14,668 HIV-related resources to 329 programs in Massachusetts;
- In its effort to continue to partner across systems, we continued to collaborate with DPH health educators and provided them with resources and brochures relevant to the support they provide to substance abuse treatment providers;
- Continued to partner with the HIV/AIDS Bureau to deliver trainings on "Understanding Substance Use and Abuse" to the HIV service system to improve its understanding of the substance abuse treatment system and recovery programs, and explored other opportunities for collaboration that enhance systems integration efforts;
- Continued to partner with the HIV/AIDS Bureau and the Hepatitis C Office to deliver trainings on "Viral Hepatitis" to the HIV service system to improve its understanding of viral hepatitis;
- Created curriculum on: "Integrating Overdose Prevention Messages into Drug and Alcohol Treatment"; and
- SPHERE collaborated with its sister program, the Statewide Homeless/HIV Integration Project (SH/HIP), to create and present a regional training on "The Intersecting Risks of Homelessness and HIV: HIV Integration in Homeless Service Settings" to substance abuse treatment providers who work with clients experiencing homelessness. Also, this collaboration has ensured participation of drug and alcohol treatment providers in the annual survey conducted by SH/HIP of homeless service providers and their efforts around integrating HIV into their work.

Many individuals at risk for HIV continue to enter drug and alcohol treatment with no knowledge of their HIV status and little awareness of their risk for HIV. Early intervention services, however, can only be provided to individuals once they know they are living with HIV. Finding the client who needs and benefits from early intervention services so that we can provide them with these services continues to be a critical need and can be met by creating an environment that welcomes and supports risk conversations. In order to achieve early

intervention in treatment, treatment needs to support individuals to discover their status. To reach this goal, on behalf of the Bureau, SPHERE delivered these critical services:

- To support the discovery of HIV status in treatment, SPHERE continued to enhance provider capacity to integrate ongoing risk assessment conversations into substance abuse treatment counseling;
- Assisted substance abuse treatment programs to create safe, responsive, caring and accepting environments (through confidentiality policies and other environmental cues) that allow for discovery of one's HIV status to happen (through HIV counseling and testing) and support disclosure of it (through training and policies);
- Partnered with the BSAS to be available to assist it in providing internet-based HIV/AIDS information;
- Improved the skills and competencies of substance abuse providers on issues related to HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis;
- Enhanced the capacity of the drug and alcohol treatment system to provide support for clients to seek and obtain HIV testing results and to access appropriate early intervention services, as needed, following discovery of status; and
- Created opportunities to bring HIV service providers, including testing providers, together with substance abuse treatment providers as a way of increasing referral and utilization of these services.

SPHERE continued to strengthen its efforts to increase the utilization of early intervention services by substance abuse treatment clients. On behalf of the Bureau, SPHERE continued to:

- integrate HIV service information, referrals and how to make active referrals into all of its onsite and statewide trainings;
- Collaborate with the Bureau to develop specialized linkage tools and templates for providers to use with other public health programs and agencies;
- participate in regional substance abuse treatment provider meetings and collaborate with the regional HIV Service Coordination Collaboratives (SCCs) to ensure that HIV program planning reflects the needs of substance abuse treatment clients; and
- Develop and offer technical assistance to substance abuse treatment programs to develop HIV risk reduction action planning skills that are compatible with substance abuse treatment counseling.

Compliance with early intervention services for HIV in substance abuse treatment programs is monitored at annual site visits by regional managers and at bi-annual licensing inspections by licensing inspectors. These site visits include review of policies related to HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, review of educational group topics provided to clients, staff training topics, and confirming that each agency has a Program AIDS Coordinator who attends regional PAC-Net meetings and forwards information to the rest of the staff. SPHERE provides the Bureau with a list of attendees to the PAC-Net meetings and a list of agencies that have received staff training from them for monitoring purposes.

FY 2009 (INTENDED USE)

In FY09, Massachusetts is not a designated state and therefore will not be spending any SAPT09 dollars on activities related to Early Intervention for HIV.

In FY09, funded with state dollars, the statewide capacity building vendor for HIV and Hepatitis plans to launch the overdose prevention training initiative and deliver the training "Incorporating Overdose Prevention Messages into Drug and Alcohol Treatment" to drug and alcohol treatment providers across the Commonwealth. As part of this initiative, we will disseminate overdose prevention resources in order to

support the Bureau's targeted efforts to reduce fatal opiate overdose and we will enhance our internet presence on overdose prevention to facilitate access to these resources and other capacity-building overdose prevention information. In addition we will continue to offer our wide array of trainings on HIV related topics to build the capacity of providers to support clients living with/at risk for HIV/AIDS. Our efforts will also capitalize on recent information demonstrating the need for renewed commitment and action on HIV prevention efforts. This will translate to creating additional opportunities to share HIV prevention information and resources, through the use of targeted and specialized monthly emails to substance abuse treatment providers in Massachusetts.

Also, SPHERE will use 2009 as an opportunity to undertake efforts to better understand the kinds of changes that are resulting from our capacity building services. We will review participant evaluations of training and technical assistances, and closely review responses to our follow-up surveys. It was our hope that these surveys could identify and measure sustainable change resulting from onsite training/TA services. This review will include all responses in the past year to our "self assessment surveys" which are completed by training participants before and after trainings. The responses to these surveys may document the changes in self-perception around knowledge, skills, and referral capacity as a result of our training experiences. We will conduct our annual statewide needs assessment around HIV integration, not only as a way to compare what providers are doing in this year vs. recent years, but also as another strategy to identify needs and supports in the field that we can prioritize. We will conduct an internet survey to measure the effectiveness of particular resources as a way to understand if they should be replicated or shelved. Our work is about utilizing best practices, and sometimes we need to be the ones to assess whether or not an effort is working and worth repeating.

SPHERE will also continue to offer its high quality onsite training and technical assistance to increase provider knowledge, skills, and capacity to work across systems to improve services for the client with HIV/at risk for HIV. The roster will include new curricula and resources that meet emerging needs. It will also continue to emphasize access to HIV testing and HIV prevention information and support.

Massachusetts will strengthen its targeted capacity building for substance abuse treatment providers in ways that support continued systems integration, providing additional and enhanced opportunities for BSAS funded programs and HIV service organizations to share concerns, strategies and interventions to reach their shared population. SPHERE will continue its efforts to promote systems integration and coordination, increase provider awareness and skills around offering positive prevention services, and increase the visibility, skills, and credibility of onsite

HIV integration specialists in substance abuse treatment programs (PACs).

These statewide activities will be undertaken:

- SPHERE will assess the needs of the BSAS service system as it relates to HIV and viral hepatitis integration, we will also assess PAC's needs from PAC-Net to use in current and future program planning, and explore an additional internet survey on overdose prevention efforts;
- SPHERE will implement two cycles of region-based PACNet meetings that will increase provider capacity to implement the BSAS HIV/AIDS Guidelines and meet the Standards of Care as well as increase provider capacity to deliver and facilitate early intervention services;
- Deliver training, technical assistance and specialized tools to improve provider capacity to establish effective linkage agreements and enhance client services and referrals, with special emphasis on increasing drug and alcohol treatment provider's awareness of HIV testing services, Hepatitis vaccine services, and overdose prevention activities;
- Promote opportunities for systems integration and networking across service systems, bring together providers from both the drug and alcohol treatment and HIV service worlds;

- SPHERE will continue to develop and send specialized monthly emails promoting HIV resources and prevention information;
- Review and document long term impact of services;
- Continue to offer free regional all day trainings in geographically diverse locations for substance abuse treatment providers that support providers to provide HIV education, prevention and linkage with HIV services as well as a special series of regional overdose prevention trainings;
- Organize, coordinate and facilitate 12 regional PAC-Net meetings to offer PACs an opportunity to share information and receive current resources;
- Organize, coordinate and facilitate 3 Technical Assistance sessions to provide training support to PACs interested in using an HAB approved video in client education;
- Continue to partner with the HIV/AIDS Bureau to deliver trainings on "Understanding Substance Use and Abuse", "Viral Hepatitis" and "Overdose Prevention" to the HIV service system to improve its understanding of the substance abuse treatment system and recovery programs, its understanding of viral hepatitis, and its capacity to respond effectively to prevent fatal opiate overdose and to explore other opportunities for collaboration that enhance systems integration efforts;
- Explore developing new curricula to address knowledge needs around enhancing motivation, group education, and using specialized resources;
- Review text and content for SPHERE website and revised to make it more user-friendly, more informative, and more able to be used to disseminate resources and technical assistance; and
- Create and deliver ongoing and continued PAC-Net support.

HIV Early Intervention Services

In Massachusetts, injection drug users constitute the fastest growing transmission risk group for HIV. In addition, we have recognized that the use of alcohol and other drugs may also put individuals and their sexual partners at risk for HIV and Hepatitis C. Recognizing this connection, BSAS provides a range of early intervention services for clients living with/at risk for HIV/AIDS, injection drug users and their partners.

BSAS contracts with Health Care of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc. (HCSM) and its program SPHERE (The Statewide Partnership for HIV Education in Recovery Environments) to provide targeted capacity building services to substance abuse treatment staff to support their onsite HIV integration efforts and to support the Bureau's service goals for clients living with/at risk for HIV/AIDS. These capacity-building services include staff training to improve their ability to educate clients about HIV transmission, risk assessment, risk reduction, HIV testing, and the importance of early intervention services; provision of prevention tools; and, staff training on referral to pre/post-test counseling, support around HIV testing in recovery programs and on offering assistance to connect people living with HIV/AIDS to appropriate local medical and HIV services. SPHERE also provides technical assistance to BSAS-funded programs on HIV policy implementation and service delivery. The project develops and disseminates tools providers may need to engage in HIV conversations and programming with clients, and it supports providers to make active referrals around early intervention through training and technical assistance. In addition, SPHERE offered training and technical assistance to drug and alcohol treatment providers to offer this level of support around viral Hepatitis as well.

On behalf of the Bureau, SPHERE creates opportunities for BSAS-funded programs to meet local HIV counseling and testing service providers, HIV case management providers, and medical providers. With each meeting, a substance abuse treatment provider's capacity and willingness to make a supported referral increases on behalf of clients. SPHERE also offers training services on substance use to HIV service providers to increase their awareness of the needs that drug and alcohol treatment clients may bring. Fostering these partnerships and systems collaboration opportunities are essential tasks, one that promotes the delivery of early intervention services and meaningful referrals for substance abuse treatment clients.

In 1992 the Bureau developed an HIV/AIDS policy that outlined guidelines applicable to all programs funded and/or licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In 1997, the Bureau revised the policy guidelines which reflect the advances made in the treatment of HIV until that time and the Bureau's need to provide comprehensive HIV treatment. These guidelines support, reinforce, and complement each agency's unique mission by offering a uniform framework for legal, policy and ethical concerns and responsibilities. These policies require that all BSAS-funded programs designate a staff person as a Program HIV/AIDS Coordinator (PAC) to oversee the implementation of the guidelines and facilitate onsite HIV integration. These PACs work with SPHERE to facilitate onsite HIV integration.

SPHERE strengthened its statewide network of these PACs (PACNET) and HIV prevention/ service providers involved with substance abuse integration. This year, SPHERE provided six regional PACNET meetings, twice a year. These meetings afford SPHERE with a unique opportunity to give direct technical support to these PACs, disseminate information, resources and specialized mailings to them to assist in their onsite HIV integration work, and offer an opportunity for them to learn about HIV services in their areas and meet the providers who deliver them. SPHERE organizes, schedules, plans and facilitates these networking opportunities for the PACNET to provide an important opportunity for building relationships, and help to ensure that services are rooted in the experience in the field, meeting real needs in ways that make the most sense for providers and clients. By bringing PACs together biannually and consulting with them around their needs, SPHERE helps to ensure that its curriculum development, training and technical assistance meet current and emerging needs. SPHERE uses the PAC-Net meeting setting as a forum for its technical assistance. PAC-Net meetings have also been used to reinforce provider knowledge of Bureau expectations regarding HIV integration and as an opportunity to support providers to reach Bureau standards in this regard. PAC-NET meeting agendas usually entail an abridged training to offer current information on an HIV related topic and a “guest speaker” who is usually a local HIV service provider. At these meetings, SPHERE conducts its statewide needs assessments in person, ensuring an extraordinary large response and contributing to the program planning process.

BSAS collaborates with the AIDS Bureau to increase early access to free medical care for uninsured, HIV positive individuals with substance abuse problems. The ACT Now program (Access to Care and Treatment) provides confidential access to comprehensive medical evaluations, routine medical care, mental health and/or social services, related diagnostic laboratory and/or x-ray tests, and medications for early intervention and treatment of HIV. SPHERE supported BSAS-funded programs to become active members of their local HIV consortia, helping to ensure that the planning and delivery of HIV integration services in local communities is relevant to the needs of the substance abuse treatment population. In addition, BSAS collaborates with the HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB) by providing SPHERE to the HAB to deliver specific substance use related trainings for HAB-funded service providers to build their capacity to deliver early intervention and medical services to the substance abuse treatment client population.

BSAS also collaborated with the Massachusetts Hepatitis C Program, entering into a unique three-year collaboration with SPHERE to augment its HIV capacity building services to include viral Hepatitis capacity-building training and resources. As a result, SPHERE was able to initiate a significant training series on hepatitis related trainings and a resource dissemination initiative which providers have credited with directly contributing to the quality and quantity of hepatitis related education that was provided to clients. This partnership also resulted in a hepatitis vaccine promotion campaign, increasing providers' awareness of the importance and locations for hepatitis vaccination in the Commonwealth.

BSAS continued the process for development of the “HIV, Hepatitis and Addiction Service Integration” (HHASI) plan. In FY06, BSAS continued to revise and update its Standards of Care and strengthened all sections related to HIV and Hepatitis C integration in drug and alcohol treatment programs, clarified its expectations for professional development and staff training around HIV/Hepatitis C/risk reduction, strengthened the role of onsite Program HIV/AIDS Coordinators (PACs), and established standards for linkage

protocols and agreements with a range of HIV and other health related programs. SPHERE will provide technical assistance, training and access to specialized materials to assist all BSAS-funded programs to operationalize these new Standards and to create the linkages that promote access to early intervention services for individuals in recovery. Creating enhanced opportunities for collaboration between the substance abuse treatment system and the HIV services system will be a priority.

In FFY 2006 Massachusetts spent $3,519,813 of state funds on Early Intervention services for Substance Abusers.