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Education Department

Annual Report

1998-1999

AIDS VANCOUVER

TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER

September 1999

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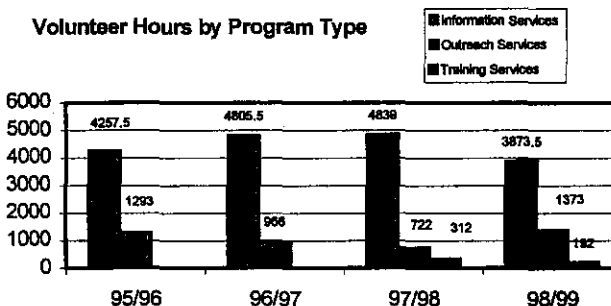
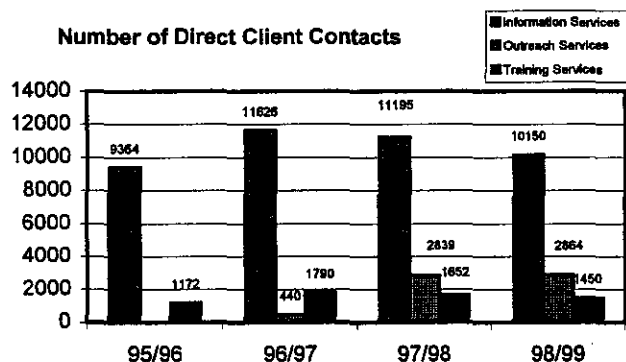
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last fifteen years, AIDS Vancouver has developed and sustained considerable capacity in the field of HIV/AIDS education and prevention. The Education Department has provided consistent HIV/AIDS technical support for community-based organizations through its training services (The Training Institute), reliable information through its information services (The Library and Helpline), and innovative approaches to targeted prevention for specific vulnerable populations through its outreach services (Women's Outreach and Man to Man Program).

The Education Department of AIDS Vancouver is committed to raising awareness about the prevention of HIV transmission and the prevention of the progression of HIV illness, through supporting individuals to make informed choices with regard to their health. Through its five programs it strives to honour the principles of health promotion, population health, harm reduction, participatory action research and community development in all aspects of program planning including design, implementation, evaluation and ongoing program refinement. Our programs work together in collaborating with other departments in the agency as well as other community organizations and community members in all aspects of programming.

In 1998/99 AIDS Vancouver's Education Services continued to be responsive to the changing epidemiological trends by providing services to the populations in most need including women, young gay men, injecting drug users and aboriginal people. Our services were delivered to a total of 14,464 individuals in 1998/99. This represents a decrease of eight per cent from 1997/98 due to the discontinuation of our community outreach program as well as decrease in Helpline requests. However, since 1995/96, requests for these services have increased by eight percent and 24% respectively. Outreach contacts increased by 1% over last year indicating that we have provided a consistent level of targeted outreach activity over the two years. Unfortunately, contact information for the Man to Man Program is not available for 1995/96 and 1996/97.



VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Education Services has continued to meet increasing demands for services with the same level of resources we had three years ago. One of the main reasons we have been able to do this is through the strong dedication and commitment of our volunteers. Our education services have always recognized the value of peer involvement in developing relevant programming as well as a means of building community capacity. The volunteers, in turn, have stood by us over the years and made it possible for us to continue addressing the increasing demand for services.

DEPARTMENT OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

AIDS Vancouver's Education Department aims to provide targeted and accessible education services and information which prevent HIV infection and the progression of HIV disease, as well as evaluate our services for ongoing program refinement and to provide comprehensive and accessible documentation of these services. Our approach focuses not only on individual harm reduction but also on addressing the immediate environmental and societal conditions that contribute to an individual or a population being more vulnerable to risk.

Evaluation outcomes over the last year were based on an internal analysis by agency staff of information gained from monthly activity reports, event activity reports, client surveys conducted at community events, client focus groups, volunteer feedback and evaluations, and a review of program documentation and activities. Based on our analysis, we conclude that our programs did in fact meet our goal of providing targeted and accessible educational services and information in the following ways:

- a) provided accessible print resources, condoms and lube
- b) provided information in plain language that was culturally appropriate
- c) provided training and technical support to service providers who work with people living with HIV
- d) provided targeted information to specific populations including young gay men, women, injecting drug users, and aboriginal people as well as to service providers supporting these populations
- e) provided information at venues that these targeted populations frequent in their own community
- f) developed new community partnerships and sustained existing ones in building community capacity to address HIV related issues
- g) created safe and supportive environments in which information was shared
- h) provided referrals for individuals to address HIV related health issues.

EMERGING THEMES, TRENDS AND PLANNING

This last year has been a transitional year for education services as our agency adopted a population health paradigm to guide service delivery. This new model places an emphasis on evidence based decision making and outcome evaluation. As part of this transition we undertook some internal evaluation of our services as well as the integration of prevention research into our outreach programs.

The outcomes of our research has provided direction with respect to program development over the next 2-3 years. One of the major findings through a market feasibility study of our Training Institute's potential for cost recovery is that HIV/AIDS is no longer considered a serious health issue by the public. This suggests the need for new approaches to public education which addresses the reality of living with HIV in lieu of the efficacy of the new drug treatments as well as the development of HIV prevention

messages which address the sociocultural factors contributing to people's vulnerability to HIV infection and HIV illness progression.

Another major finding of our research was that there are more effective ways of doing general outreach than solely providing information booths at community events. While we will continue to have a presence at important community events we have discontinued our Community Outreach Program and shifted our focus in the area of general public information to social marketing strategies.

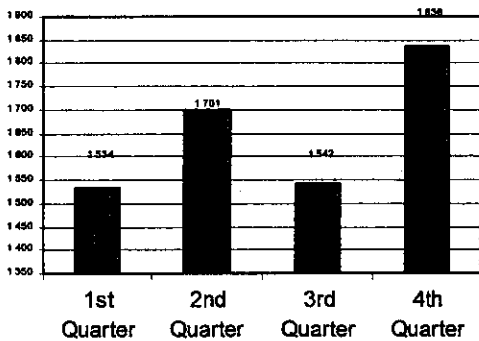
Our targeted outreach programs, Women's Outreach and the Man to Man Program, continued to evolve through the integration of participatory action research processes into ongoing program development. The outcome has been not only more relevant and responsive prevention programs through a better understanding of sociocultural factors underlying HIV transmission but increased capacity of HIV affected communities to undertake HIV prevention research themselves.

INFORMATION SERVICES

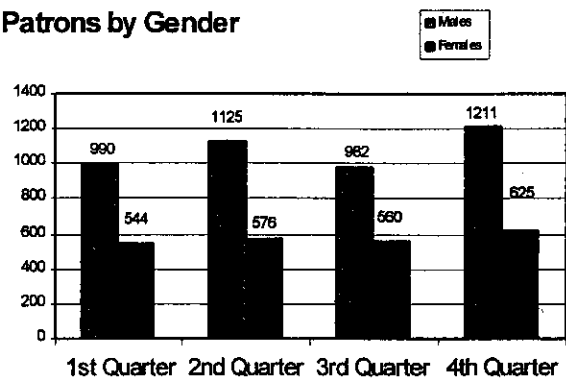
PARC LIBRARY - STEPHEN SMITH

The 1998/99 fiscal year was a busy and eventful one for the PARC Library. June and August of 1998 and February and March of 1999 saw the largest number of library clients for those respective months ever. Overall, Library use was up slightly despite the fact that the hours of operation for the Library were reduced in July, eliminating service on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons. Several factors played into the decision to change the hours, not the least of which was the fact that the evening and weekend shifts were rarely used. Staff in the Library received no negative feedback regarding the change in hours.

Library Patrons



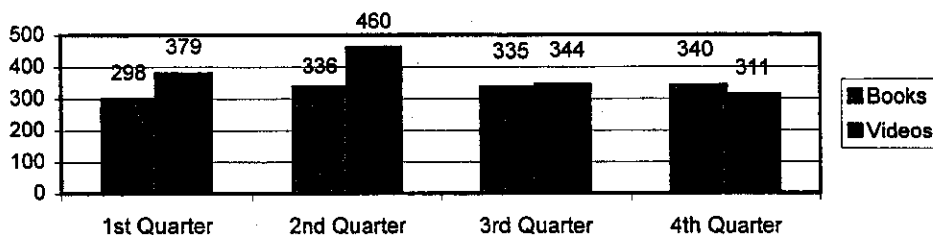
Patrons by Gender



Another series of changes involved the actual staff of the Library. After winning the British Columbia Library Association's Award of Achievement in Library Service, PARC Librarian Janice Linton accepted a position out of the province in September. Janice was replaced as PARC Librarian by Stephen Smith, formerly the PARC Library Assistant. Stephen was in turn replaced by Christopher Barnes who assumed the role of Helpline Coordinator/Library Assistant in December.

The International Conference held in Geneva in June/July sparked a general interest in HIV information, and resulted in a flurry of new Library resources brought back by attendees. Other major gains to the collection this year resulted from sizable donations from pharmaceutical companies, local businesses and clubs, and a generous bequest from a former Library volunteer. In order to highlight and promote these acquisitions, a New Library Materials display was conceived, accompanied by a monthly bibliography distributed electronically to PARC staff and volunteers. Response to the initiative has been very good, and the bibliography is already being distributed beyond PARC.

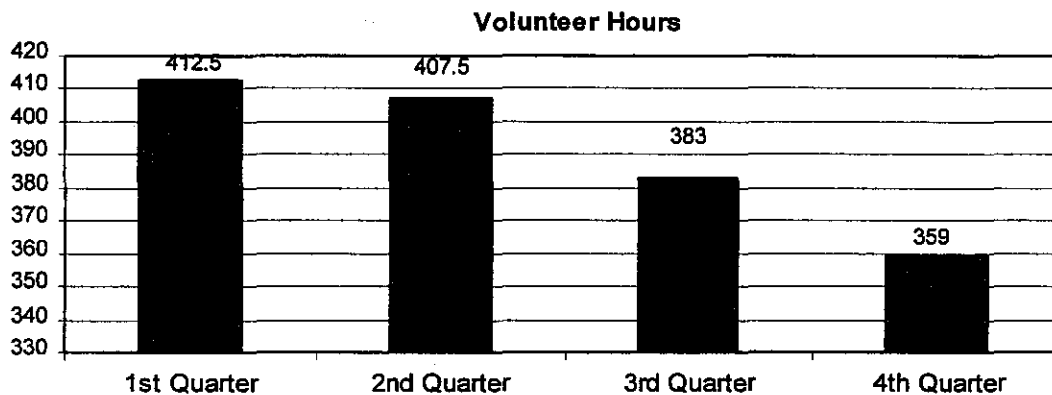
Materials Circulation



In addition, the following activities highlight the 1998/99 fiscal year in the PARC Library:

- a) New shelf labels to assist browsers
- b) Elimination of the rarely-used audiocassette collection - donated to AIDS Committee of Toronto
- c) Instigation of electronic conference announcement to PARC staff and volunteers
- d) Collaborative work with CANET, Canadian Health Network, Medical Library Services of the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Tzu Chi Institute at Vancouver General Hospital, the Canadian Liver Foundation, the STD Library at the BCCDC, and various ASOs in BC and Canada.

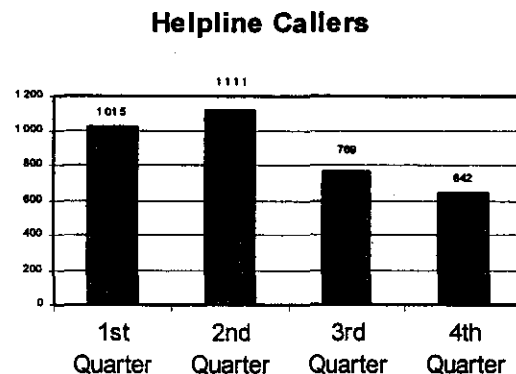
Volunteers continued to provide important services to patrons throughout the year.



HELPLINE - CHRISTOPHER BARNES

The Helpline is a confidential and anonymous telephone service providing accurate and timely information about HIV and AIDS, and appropriate referrals. The program strives to be accessible, and seeks to enable callers to make informed decisions regarding their health.

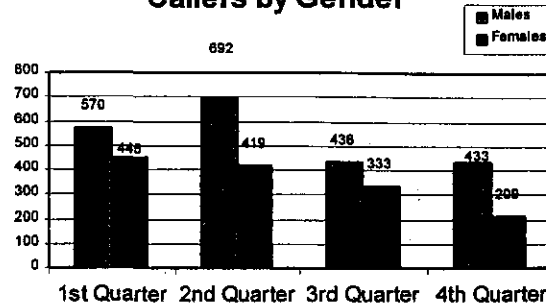
Volunteers and staff in the Helpline program assisted 3,537 callers in 1998/1999, which represents a decrease of Helpline requests from the previous year. The decrease in Helpline callers over the last couple of years is only due to a misperception by the general public, conveyed through the media, that HIV is no longer an urgent health issue.



Approximately 60 percent of the callers were male, and 40 percent were female, which remains fairly consistent with the gender ratios from previous years.

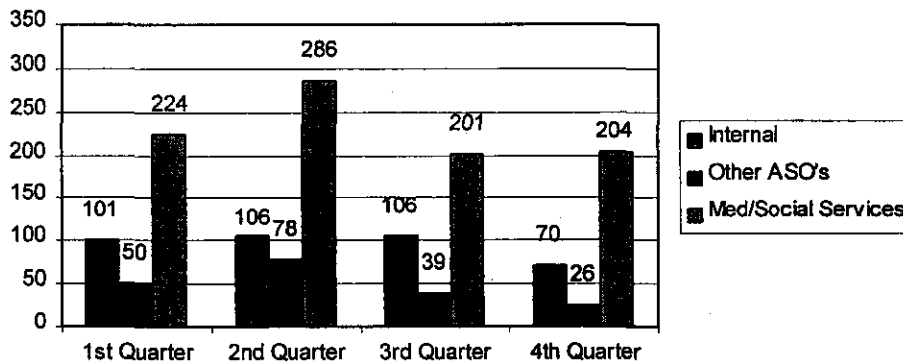
In the future, it is likely that callers will continue to rely on the Helpline as a source of information about diseases that may or may not be related to HIV. As the number of calls related to Hepatitis has conformed to increase over the past year, and many callers continue to contact the Helpline for information about sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV.

Callers by Gender

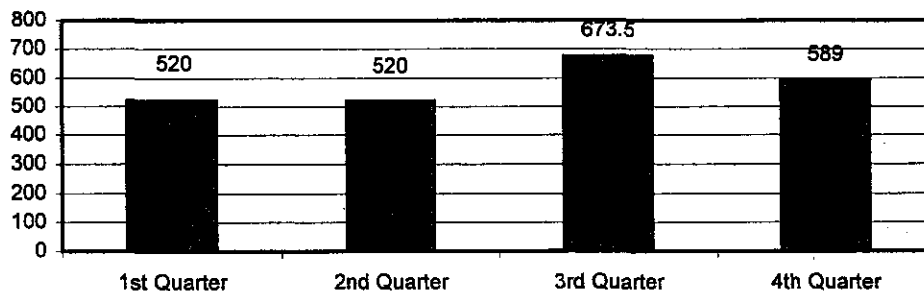


Use of both the Spanish Helpline and the Cantonese Helpline continued to be low despite labour-intensive attempts at promotion. Consequently, these lines are now only operated through automated voice phone systems.

Referrals



Volunteer Hours

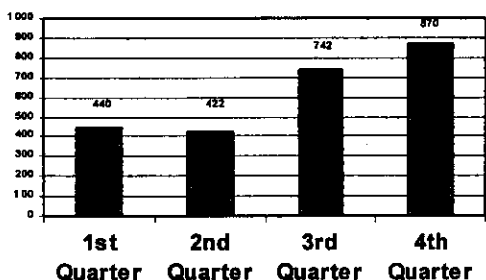


OUTREACH SERVICES

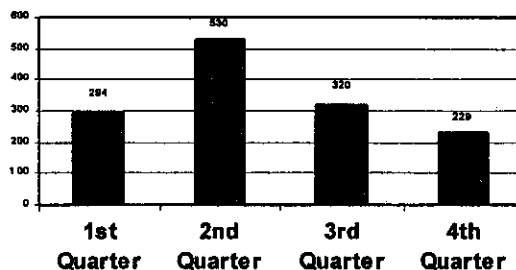
MAN TO MAN - ANDREW BARKER AND ZDENKY BURKHARDT

The past fiscal year has been one of growth and stabilization for the Man to Man Program. The Program has become a leader and active player in expanding community partnerships and collaborative efforts amongst service providers for gay men. Our volunteer pool has reached its optimal size (with more volunteers waiting to get in) and is comprised of a group of highly dedicated and motivated individuals.

Outreach Contacts



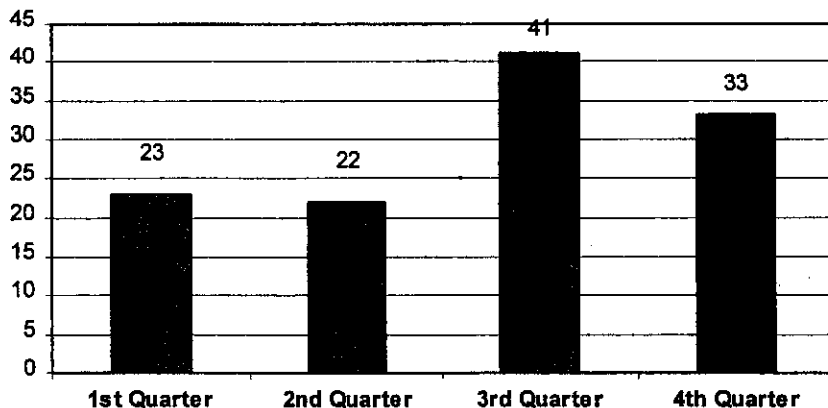
Volunteer Hours



We have continued the successful participatory peer-based qualitative research (Gay Men's Action Plan) that we first piloted in January 1998, and have had the opportunity to present our findings and methodology at local and national levels. The Boys R Us drop-in centre for male sex trade workers has become an integral service to the population that it serves, and exiting programs are being developed. Outreach at Gab youth services has proven to be an effective tool for reaching young gay and bisexual men. Man to Man became a partner in developing and piloting the Monday Health Project, a holistic health access clinic for queer individuals. Neutron, a social support night for HIV+ and HIV- gay men and their allies has evolved into a monthly event. It has featured such entertainment as queer interactive sexual health themed theatre sports, and a Man to Man produced video of impromptu street interviews covering issues pertinent to gay men.

A major issue that we have been facing this past year is the "bareback sex phenomenon".

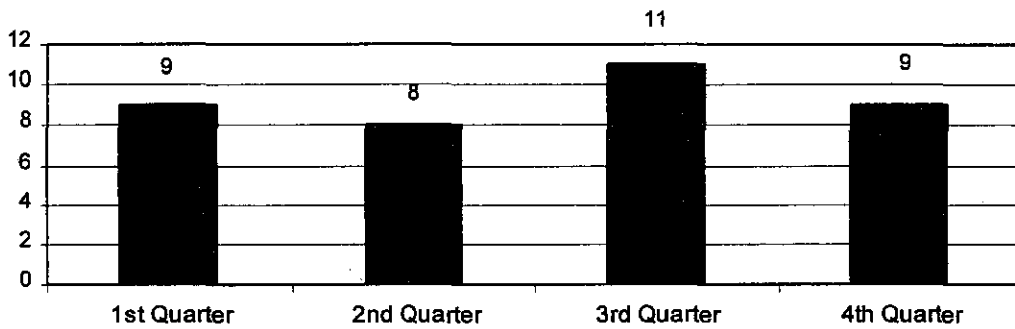
Outreach Events



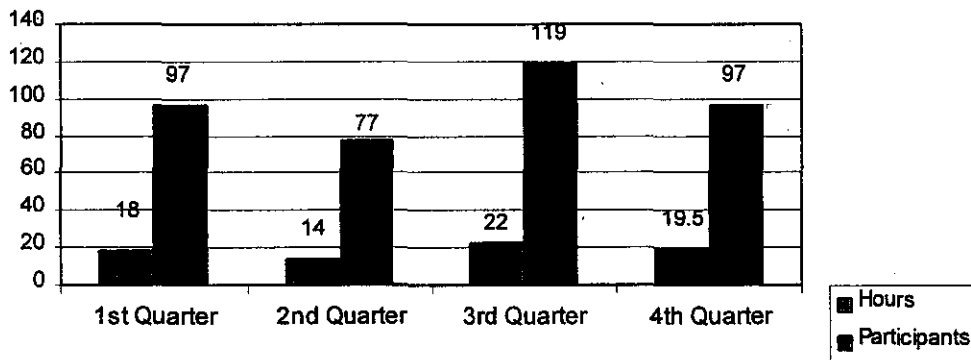
WOMEN'S OUTREACH - MARGRETH TOLSON

The Women's Outreach Program worked on a number of projects this year with a variety of successes and ongoing challenges. Advocacy for women's health issues in the Downtown Eastside over the last five years has resulted in increased consultation by the Vancouver Richmond Health Board with regard to services for women, and resulted in more action in the community and in the Ministry of Health regarding inconsistent standards of care given by medical professionals in the Downtown Eastside. At BCCW the peer education program was closed down in September due to a variety of factors, but workshops have started again in the new fiscal year and we hope to start another peer education program with the support of Corrections Services Canada. Other issues which emerged over the last year include the need for more holistic reproductive workshops, the new multi-factor risks for women's increased risk of HIV infection and illness progression due to crack-cocaine use, increased request for program staff's time in the role of consultation (and therefore less time for traditional outreach activities) and finally, an exciting and innovative research project in collaboration with Positive Women's Network looking at determinants of health and women's risk for HIV.

Workshops



Workshop Hours/Participants



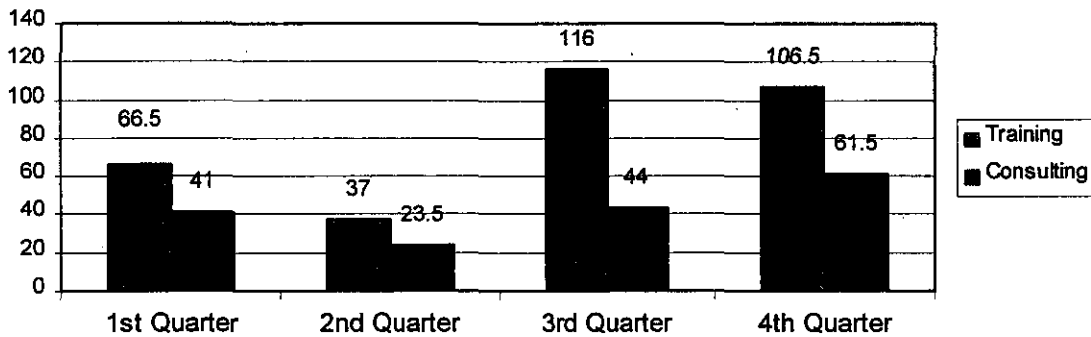
TRAINING SERVICES

TRAINING INSTITUTE - GREGG BROWN AND MICHEAL VONN

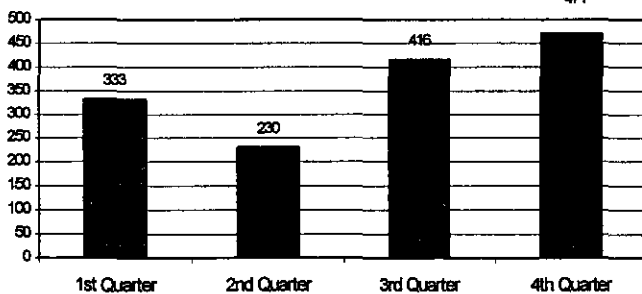
The Training Institute is a unique HIV/AIDS training and consultation program. The majority of our clients are service providers, professional groups and community agencies working with populations disproportionately impacted by HIV. The training hours, number of sessions and participants logged in this fiscal year (see program statistics) are quite consistent with the year previous.

Noteworthy trends in the program include an increasing focus on partnerships with post-secondary institutions and increasing specialization of course design including trainings in palliative care and prison wellness. Training in HIV grows ever more complex with each year. This year there has been a great deal of work and consultation given to legal, ethical and policy issues, particularly relating to the Supreme Court decision in the Cuerrier case pertaining to disclosure of HIV status to sexual partners; confidentiality and duty-to-warn and various concerns related to HIV antibody testing. We have also undertaken both feasibility and marketing studies to help guide plans for the increasing financial self-sufficiency of the program.

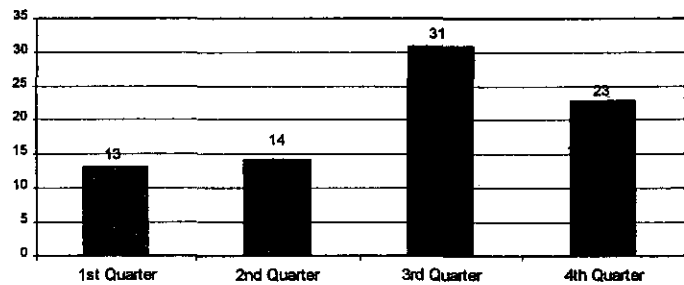
Hours



of Participants



of Trainings



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