

# **ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS LINKING TO HEALTHCARE THROUGH COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN SOUTH AFRICA WESTERN CAPE**

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## **Background:**

Many PWUD at different hotspots shared the same struggle: denied healthcare due to no ID, no proof of residence, appearance, or drug use. This shows stigma and barriers in the system. Solutions include strong partnerships, mobile outreach, peer support, and harm reduction services. We must fight discrimination, change policies, and create safe spaces. Listening to the community and working together will help ensure equal access to healthcare for all.

## **Description of model of care/intervention/program:**

On December 4, 2024, the South African Network of People who Use Drugs (SANPUD) collaborated with TBHIVcare, NACOSA, SANCA, and VRCID for a World AIDS Day event at the Haven Night Shelter in Bellville 100 people who use drugs attended, 73 tested for HIV, STIs, TB, and hepatitis. Attendees received 100 educational books to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and safer practices, along with 100 water bottles for hydration.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2024 SANPUD in collaboration with Lady Michaelis Clinic hosted a Women's Day Event where 50 women who use drugs attended and was tested for HIV, STI, TB, and hepatitis testing, screening and treatment and 11 of the women went for pap smears to test for cervical cancer.

## **Effectiveness:**

Through constant engagement with community and collaboration with healthcare facilities people who use drugs can access healthcare facilities for healthcare services.

## **Conclusion and next steps:**

The event fostered community, encouraged open dialogue, and successfully provided access to essential health services, enhancing overall health and well-being among participants.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The information provided on the abstract was done by Natalie Jacobs a Community Linkage Officer for SANPUD