



Atlantic Summer
Institute on
Healthy and Safe
Communities

l'Institut d'été
sur les collectivités
sûres et en santé au
Canada atlantique

Posterboard Presentation

Hep'd Up On Life

Presenter

Pam O'Neill

Description of Presentation

Hep'd Up On Life is a Public Health funded program that is sponsored by NCPEI. The project first began in 2007 to address the issue of Aboriginal Canadians being over represented in the HIV/AIDS, HEP C, population. A youth Advisory Committee was formed to steer the project. A dissemination element was required to present the findings of the Committee. Several initiatives were decided on. A music video inspired by the Aboriginal rap group War Party was what sparked the interest of the group. Some of the Advisory Group members were also members of the Eagle Island Singers Drum group and it was decided that the video would feature the Drum group and Advisory Council as singers. All members of Cultural Connections would be invited to participate. The creation of this music video has been ongoing since the Fall of 2007 when one of the members of the Advisory Committee first suggested it. Ideas came after that and in February a poetry contest was held. It was decided that the rap would consist of material from all of the poetry entered in the project. The subject for the poetry was to be about the program Hep'd Up On Life or what they had learned from participating in it. A total of 4 rap songs were submitted that surpassed anything I could have imagined. The quality of material submitted for the youth to work with excited the committee and the music video grew from there.



The Youth Advisory Committee of the Hep'd Up On Life of the Native Council of PEI began in 2007 with 6 Aboriginal Youth. Today it consists of approx 20 members

who are actively participating in project dissemination initiatives such as A Rap Music Video containing lyrics written by youth about HEP C promotion and protection. A website is being created by the youth as well and this will feature pertinent information regarding high risk behaviours and methods of protection from HEP C, HIV/AIDS and other STI's. The age range of the youth involved is approximately 13-24.

The youth are also in the process of designing a website to host some of their initiatives. They have also begun a campaign to put condom machines in Island schools to enable the youth to access condoms in privacy. An online petition is available at www.nativeyouthleadtheway.tk and this is also the address of the website www.nativeyouthleadtheway.ca. The youth have also presented their petition at venues such as Youth ConneXt symposiums and at their schools.



Atlantic Summer
Institute on
Healthy and Safe
Communities

l'Institut d'été
sur les collectivités
sûres et en santé au
Canada atlantique

Posterboard Presentation

The Youth of Native Council of PEI are extremely proud of their combined efforts to educate and protect the public from transmission of blood borne pathogens. In that much of the educational material on HIV/AIDS, HEP C, and STIs are in written form, the youth have chosen to take the written material and present it to their peers in the tradition of their ancestors, which is oral in the form of story-telling. The literacy skills (the ability to use language to read, write, listen, and speak) and the strong link between the written and the oral were used to preserve what the youth have created in their efforts to convey their message.

Some of the unexpected outcomes of this program was in the form of unexpected media coverage with the announcement that the youth planned to petition the Board of Education for condom machines in schools. The story was picked up on the web and several newspaper and magazine articles were written about it.

It is the mission of the Hep'd Up On Life Advisory Committee to educate the public to the very startling fact that while Aboriginals make up 3% of our Canadian population, they account for 30% of the population who are HEP C and HIV positive. There are a number of factors that contribute to these statistics!

How you will benefit

You will learn:

- About HEP C and HIV/AIDS and what behaviours are high risk;
- How people can reduce the risk to themselves and others from becoming infected with blood borne pathogens; and
- What the youth of Hep'd Up On Life are doing to help their community become more healthy and how they are using their literacy skills to do so.

Handouts

Available during the presentation

Resources

Available during the presentation

Contact Information

Pam O'Neill
Native Council of Prince Edward Island
6 McAuley Court
Charlottetown, PE C1A 9M7
Telephone: (902) 566-2709
Email: hepc@ncpei.com

