

## CHAPTER 7

### Inmate Peer Education Program (IPEP)

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The IPEP serves the inmate population of the CDC. Inmate Peer Educators provide their peers current, medically correct health information and education regarding HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, and hepatitis, as well as a range of other health issues.

The exchange of information about infectious disease and high-risk behaviors can have a major impact on public health and public safety. This type of educational empowerment helps to create the kind of *cultural change* that benefits the incarcerated, parolees, their families and communities. Through the IPEP, inmates can leave prison better informed about the behavioral choices available to illuminate or reduce the risk of infection and transmission of infectious diseases.

The IPEP is a partnership between the HCSD; the institutions and the inmates all equally involved in the program's development and implementation. The success of the program depends on such involvement and support. The local community connection is a valuable resource. It is important that individuals or community-based organizations be encouraged and recruited to participate in facilitating the program, training inmates and in sharing of resources.

The IPEP training is facilitated by Regional Coordinators provided by the CDC HCSD, Office of Continuing Medical Education. It is their role to design institution specific programs, develop implementation plans, conduct training for trainers sessions, and to oversee and assist local staff. They work with staff and management at the local institution to establish and maintain an active peer education program.

Each institution also has a Peer Education Coordinator who supports the Regional Coordinator. It is their role to coordinate and, as necessary, conduct activities related to the development, implementation and administration of the program at their individual institution. In addition to training provided by the HCSD, sessions may include speakers from the institution's medical staff, staff from the local county health department, or other pre-approved speakers.