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## **New Strategies to Help Clients Aging With HIV**

Recognizing that our clients with HIV/AIDS are aging and living with a unique combination of health issues, our Program leadership has launched a series of initiatives to ensure our team is well equipped to help older adults with HIV. New efforts include expanded referral relationships with partners serving New Yorkers with HIV/AIDS, and a series of trainings for staff members who work closely with this population.

When God's Love was founded at the height of the HIV crisis, few anticipated that people diagnosed with the disease would live as long as they are now. Our clients living with HIV are predominantly older adults, and the median age for new enrollees with the diagnosis is increasing.

Vulnerable and aging – many living in poverty after decades of mounting medical costs, depleted assets, and varying levels of employment – our clients with HIV must contend with a complicated web of issues surrounding their health and wellbeing. Because of this, we have made it a priority to educate Program staff on issues including HIV stigma in eldercare, long-term health effects from HIV treatment, cognitive decline, and the isolation that comes from having outlived many of one's friends.

To meet these emerging challenges, God's Love is conducting and attending a series of trainings for staff. Trainings to date include "Addressing the Needs of Older New Yorkers Living with HIV" led by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and an LGBT Sensitivity training led by the Latino Commission on AIDS. Future classes are in the works to help our Client Services and Nutrition staff make sure that clients are receiving appropriate care, taking medications as prescribed, and monitoring treatment side-effects.

Program staff are also expanding our relationships with referral partners such as NY Connect, Callen Lorde, and Bronxworks. Whatever problem a client might encounter, it is our goal to help them solve it by connecting them with the appropriate resources.

Recently, a client living with AIDS who had last been served by God's Love in 2010 contacted us to resume services. He reported having housing issues and that he needed assistance with finding a new medical provider. Our Client Services staff was able to refer him to Housing Works who helped him find a stable place to live. They also connected him with a new doctor and medical case manager. By having relationships with all types of providers across the city, we are able to assist our clients in more ways than one.

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