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AGENCY HISTORY

In 1988, a group of advocates, providers, and consumers created the Staten Island AIDS Task Force in response to the health crisis of HIV and AIDS in our community. For many years, the Task Force was the only non-profit community-based organization whose primary mission embraced HIV prevention, education and direct services to HIV+ Staten Islanders, their families and people at risk of HIV infection. The agency's original mission was:

In order to promote the health and wellness of our community, we serve persons infected, affected and at risk of HIV infection.

While HIV education, prevention and care remained our core mission, over time our services expanded in direct proportion and kind to the needs of our communities. A state licensed program to serve the larger community struggling with addiction, new initiatives to serve the LGBT community and community-based HIV and STD testing were some of the additions to the agency portfolio during this time. In 2004, the SIATF changed its name to **Community Health Action of Staten Island**, expanding its service scope even wider in response to the evolving needs of HIV + people, and the greater Staten Island community.

In 2007, as we experienced significant growth in the areas of nutrition and benefits assistance for the poor, health services for youth at risk and increased programming for the LGBT community, the agency revised its mission statement to:

The mission of Community Health Action of Staten Island is to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities challenged by health disparities related to poverty, discrimination and lack of access through direct service, education and advocacy.

Community Health Action of Staten Island provides health-related outreach, education, prevention and direct services for populations most vulnerable and affected by health disparities – HIV+ people, youth, substance users, people of color and the LGBT community. In 2010, we served over 550 HIV+ people with direct services, 450 people with addiction treatment, over 6,500 poor and working individuals with food and benefits assistance, 2,193 persons with HIV testing, 431 youth with sexual health services. 6,400 youth and adults attended our health education workshops. Our three neighborhood storefronts recorded 11,650 visits for information, safer sex supplies, health education and referrals last year, and our mobile health unit counted 6,384 visits for services. Over 1,020 LGBT youth and adults were served at the LGBT Center

In 2010, ninety two full time staff worked with many dedicated volunteers to serve the community at six service sites throughout Staten Island.

The agency currently maintains four storefronts in neighborhoods with the highest HIV and STD case rates, poverty levels and incidence of substance use (Stapleton, St. George and Port Richmond.) Programs are also located at the Staten Island LGBT Center in Tompkinsville, an administrative and service office in St. George, and offices in the local State prison, Arthur Kill Correctional Facility. Our Mobile Health Unit is currently out three days and two nights a week, serving eight neighborhoods with general health information, education and screening services, as well as comprehensive HIV prevention service. In February 2008, we opened the Staten Island LGBT Center at 25 Victory Boulevard, a freestanding service and community dedicated to serving the Staten Island LGBT community. In March 2009, we opened a full service “client choice” community food pantry and service center in Port Richmond.

Agency clients live in all Staten Island zip codes and 80% of our clients have household incomes at or below the Federal poverty line. Clients are ethnically and racially diverse: 47% white, 46% black or African-American, 1% American Indian, 7% more than one race, and 35% of the clients identify as Hispanic or Latino, 40% of our clients are female.