

History of Gay and Lesbian Life in Milwaukee, Wisconsin - [Organizations](#) - [Health](#)

Brady East STD Clinic/ BESTD Clinic

Founded: October 1974 (as GPU Clinic)
Disbanded:
Target: Health care
(male and female)



View the [BESTD Clinic web site](#) at this link (will open in a separate browser window).

The BESTD story is a long history of volunteers providing healthcare services to greater Milwaukee. In the early 1970's, a group of concerned and caring people responded to the rising incidences of sexually transmitted diseases in Milwaukee and the lack of sensitive, accessible resources. Their discussions and encouragement from the Milwaukee Health Department and the Wisconsin Division of Health resulted in the founding of the BESTD Clinic (then known as the Gay People's Union Venereal Disease Clinic - GPU VD Clinic) in October 1974.

[GPU's STD Clinic flyers, March 1979](#)

In the early 1980s, when a new epidemic seemed to be targeting gay people, there was virtually no government response to the crisis, which was often referred to as "the gay plague". The BESTD Clinic staff saw a critical need for action, and thus was formed the Milwaukee AIDS Project, a "committee" or related effort of the BESTD Clinic. Sue Dietz was hired to head the project, the clinic's first paid staff person. As the crisis grew in scope however, it became obvious that no "gay" organization could get the recognition that would be required to take advantage of government grants to properly address the crisis.

A task force made up of the BESTD Clinic President, Nova Clite; MAP Director, Sue Dietz; the president of the Cream City Business Association, Marc Hauptert; and the president of the Cream City Foundation and GAMMA, Don Schwamb, was formed to find a solution. The result was the formation of a new organization, to be spun off from BESTD Clinic's Milwaukee AIDS Project- that new organization being named the [AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin](#). Marc Hauptert became ARCW's founding President, Don Schwamb its founding Vice President,



Formation of MAP, later to become the ARCW

In Step vol 2 issue 10



Founding of the ARCW
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[\(view photo\)](#)

and Sue Dietz its first/paid Executive Director.

With the mission of providing unmet or underprovided services, BESTD Clinic became one of the early pioneers in HIV antibody testing. Today, it is one of the most active and accessible anonymous testing sites in the State of Wisconsin. Clinic volunteers also initiated "outreach clinics" for off-site testing. One of the early outreach clinics was done in concert with the Milwaukee Health Department and offered counseling and testing for those at risk to both HIV infection and tuberculosis.; The tests performed at BESTD and its outreach sites identify and large number of newly diagnosed persons who are HIV infected.

(View the full story of the [BESTD Clinic history](#) from an excerpt from the Clinic's own web site.)



Logo, c2000



Logo, 2002