

Our+Care OC

A newsletter created by HIV-positive individuals for people living with HIV



In the last issue of the Our+Care newsletter, we discussed the importance of visiting your HIV medical doctor at least once every six months and how to select a doctor who is an HIV specialist. In this issue, we will talk about the importance of the Continuum of Care also known as the Treatment Cascade.

The Continuum of Care explains the following stages of HIV care:

HIV Infected the total number of people who are estimated to be HIV positive.

HIV Diagnosed is the total number of people who have been diagnosed with HIV disease.

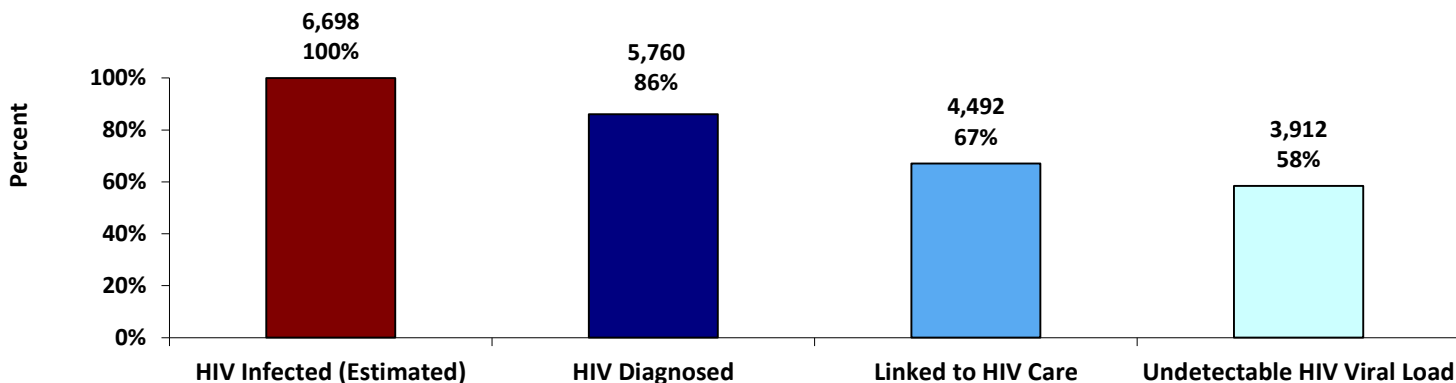
In HIV Care is the total number of people who see their doctor regularly (at least once every 6 months).

Undetectable HIV Viral Load is a HIV viral load count below 200 copies/mL in the blood.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that out of all people living with HIV disease (PLWHD) in the United States (US), an estimated one in every seven PLWHD (14%) do not know they are HIV-positive.

Orange County Treatment Cascade* 2014



*Data presented in the Orange County Treatment Cascade reflect those who are currently living with HIV disease in Orange County.

About half (52%) of PLWHD in the US are in HIV care, and only 40% are HIV virally suppressed.

This creates a visual “cascade” where the number of individuals in the Continuum of Care decreases along the different stages of the graph (see below).

For Orange County, there were an estimated 6,698 individuals living with HIV, 67% (4,492 of 6,698) were in care, and 58% (3,912 of 6,698) had an undetectable HIV viral load in 2014. Orange County results are better than the US and California for all areas of the treatment cascade.

Orange County’s goal is that by the end of 2015, 85% of all PLWHD living in Orange County will be in HIV care and 67% will have undetectable HIV viral loads.

According to the CDC, those who are currently on HIV medication will live more than twice as long as individuals who are not on HIV medication. Suppressed viral load reduces the risk of transmitting the virus to others and may slow the progression towards AIDS.¹

If your doctor prescribed HIV medications to you as part of your treatment plan, the most effective way to maintain viral load suppression is to take your HIV medication.

Dr. Will Staywell says, “See your doctor.” Make your health a priority. Use the Self-test checklist.



Self-test Checklist!

- When did you last see your HIV doctor?
- Do you know your numbers (viral load and CD4 counts)?
- Is your next appointment with your HIV doctor within 6 months?
- Do you have any questions for your doctor?

HIV Medicines Help People with HIV Live Longer	
	Average Years of Life
A healthy person without HIV or other illnesses	79
A person diagnosed with HIV at age 20 on HIV medicines	71
A person diagnosed with HIV at age 20 not on HIV medicines	32

Source: (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Vital Signs, November 2014)

¹ <http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/html/1/adult-and-adolescent-arv-guidelines/458/plasma-hiv-1-rna--viral-load--and-cd4-count-monitoring>

ORANGE COUNTY HIV QUALITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Our+Care OC is a project of the Orange County HIV Quality Management Committee and HIV Consumer Advocacy Committee. The HIV Quality Management Committee works to increase the quality of Ryan White services. For more information about the committee, please call (714) 834-8063. If you have feedback or suggestions for future newsletters, please contact **Mindy He** at MHe@ochca.com.

