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This newsletter is organized to align the updates with Strategies from the ***Laying a Foundation for Getting to Zero: California's Integrated HIV Surveillance, Prevention, and Care Plan*** (Integrated Plan). The [Integrated Plan](#) is available on the Office of AIDS' (OA) website.

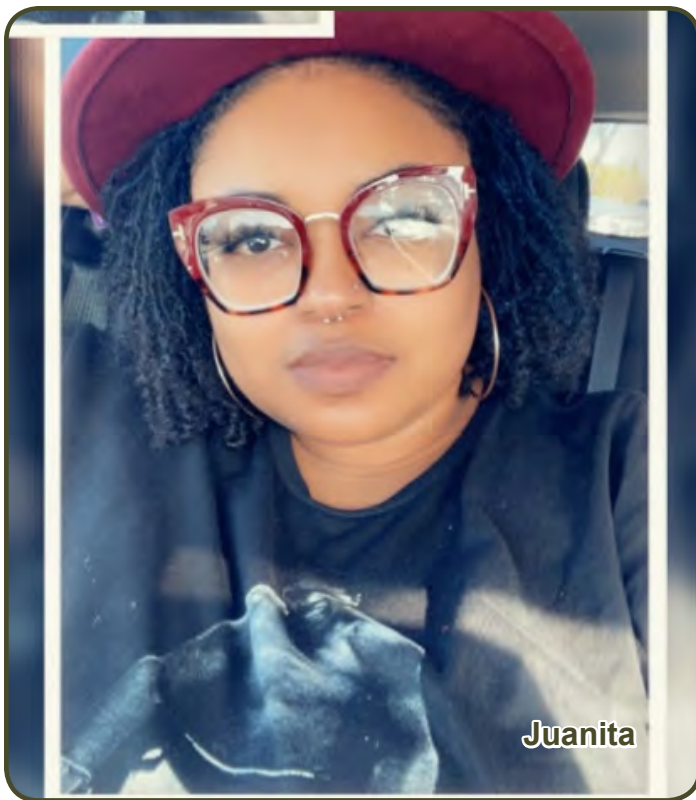
STAFF HIGHLIGHT

OA congratulates **Leslie Knight** on her promotion to Health Program Specialist I in the newly formed "Business Implementation and Program Collaboration Unit" of the HIV Prevention Branch. This is the second time in her OA career Leslie has helped launch a new unit. She was the first staff hired in the Harm Reduction Unit, and she helped design the innovative Harm Reduction Supply Clearinghouse, which provides a baseline level of supplies to the 68 Syringe Services Programs (SSPs) in the state and was one of the first programs of its kind in the United States. Leslie has overseen the program for the past 7 years and has been key to the program's success. She worked closely with our contractor, Dave Purchase Project, to develop standards and protocols for it, honoring the expertise that our partner brings to the collaboration while meeting stiff state requirements. She helped design the evaluation instrument for the project and leads the process of developing the survey we send out to programs to check our progress each year. She has helped steer the inclusion of new products into the Clearinghouse that are critically useful to protect the health of people who use SSPs but are often perceived as controversial, such as smoking supplies. She recently helped design a mini grant program that allowed SSPs to apply for a small amount of funds to help them deliver services to their program participants. Her guidance in setting up the program was critical,



and the program has helped people experiencing homelessness in several rounds of funding since its inception.

Leslie is a published author, and before coming to OA spent many hours coaching other authors in how to do the same. She keeps up the creative work by crafting, although a good deal of her time is now spent chasing after her very enthusiastic dogs. She also keeps up with her three adult kiddos and whenever she and her husband James can hang out on the water with friends, that's where you'll find them.



Congratulations to **Juanita Moses** on her promotion as the newest Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator/Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA) within the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) Branch's Quality Assurance and Training (QAT) Unit. Juanita has been a Staff Services Analyst working as an ADAP Advisor for the Eligibly Operations Section for almost two years. In that time, she reviewed and analyzed supporting documentation, verified client eligibility, and evaluated insurance assistance program applications for accuracy and payment requests. She is also a member of the ADAP Team Building Workgroup where she helps to plan and facilitate ADAP team building events. Prior to that, she was a Supervising Program Technician II for the Client Services Unit within ADAP for over three years. During that time, she had a staff of six direct reports, and was responsible for overseeing their work, and ensuring adequate phone coverage and timely processing of eligibility documents for the unit. She performed quality assurance reviews of phone calls and work items that were processed by the call center, facilitated team and one on one meetings, and oversaw onboarding

and training for new staff. Prior to joining ADAP, she worked as a Program Technician II for both the California Department of Social Services and Covered California, where she gained experience answering inquiries related to all IHSS pay-roll issues and on-exchange healthcare coverage. Juanita has a bachelor's degree in Psychology and completed her senior thesis on the rise of HIV/AIDS in the African American Communities, during which time she interned with the Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services in Columbia, South Carolina.

In her free time, Juanita enjoys spending time with her son, wine tasting, reading, and being the social butterfly that she is.

OA would also like to congratulate **Patrice Lewis** on her promotion to AGPA in the Client Services Unit (CSU). Patrice has spent the last five plus years as the CSU Technical Lead/Staff Services Analyst in the CSU. During that time, she was instrumental in standing up the new unit, helping to create various processes and procedures, and conducting user acceptance testing for the ADAP Enrollment System (AES).



Patrice has also quickly become a subject matter expert in the ADAP and PrEP-AP programs. In her role as an SSA, she gained valuable experience working alongside our developers for the AES and assisting with AES access issues for multifactor authentication (MFA) to internal staff as well as Enrollment Workers, which will serve her well in her new position. Patrice began her state service career as a Key Data Operator at the Franchise Tax Board before joining CDPH. In the private sector, Patrice worked as a Geographic Information Systems Analyst for SMUD where she reviewed, converted, and edited maps before going into production, and as an Eligibility Worker for Healthy Families where she would enter new applications for Medi-Cal into the Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) before being assigned to a caseworker. In addition, she worked in various call centers for over 20 years assisting callers from commercials to collections in Virginia before moving to California. In her spare time, she enjoys making candles and diamond art paintings. She also enjoys spending time with her 8 grandchildren and looking forward to the birth of the 9th in a couple of months.

Lastly, congratulations to **Joseph Lagrama** on his promotion to Branch Chief of the ADAP Branch. Joseph has been with the state for more than 13 years, with about 3 of those years being with OA. In July 2020, he joined OA as the Unit Chief of the Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Assistance Program, where he oversaw the planning, development, and implementation of various health program policies and initiatives aimed at advancing health equity by expanding pre-exposure prophylaxis access. In January 2022, he became the Section Chief of the Business Operations and Compliance Section, where he managed and provided strategic direction related to OA's administrative, personnel, and federal grant compliance functions. He centralized and streamlined access to OA's most commonly needed resources through the development of the OA Support Branch SharePoint site. He's developed federal grant budgets and has created tools to automate



salary expenditure forecasting methodologies. Prior to OA, he provided fiscal oversight over a multi-million-dollar program, led re-designs of competency-based training curricula for multiple government programs, implemented automated claims research processes, oversaw contracts and invoices, ensured internal and external compliance to contractual and legal requirements, and more.

In his spare time, Joseph likes to cook, travel, scuba dive, and spend time with his partner and their two new puppies!

HIV AWARENESS

June is Pride Month! Pride month is a tribute to honor those who took part in the Stonewall Uprising and is celebrated to continue advocating for equity and inclusivity for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) community. On June 28, 1969 the Stonewall Uprising was a six-day occurrence where members of the LGBTQ+ community and

clientele of the Stonewall Inn, fought back and stood up against injustice and discrimination. This was not the first altercation between the police and the LGBTQ+ community; however, this uprising changed the discourse surrounding LGBTQ+ activism in the United States. A year later, the first Pride march and protest was held in New York City. Since 1970, the LGBTQ+ community and allies continue to celebrate and advocate for equity, justice, and inclusion. Now, 54 years later, the Stonewall Uprising continues to inspire us to fight for our hard-fought equality currently being rolled back by anti-trans/Anti-LGBTQ legislation.

June 27, 2023 is National HIV Testing Day.

The theme this year is “Take the Test & Take the Next Step.” National HIV Testing Day is meant to encourage individuals to get tested and learn their HIV status. Knowing your HIV status helps you choose options to keep yourself and others healthy or linked to care and treatment. This day also focuses on education, care and prevention. More than 1.1 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV, 1 in 7 are unaware. We encourage you to take the test and take the next step!

GENERAL UPDATES

➤ COVID-19

OA is committed to providing updated information related to COVID-19. We have disseminated a number of documents in an effort to keep our clients and stakeholders informed. Please refer to our [OA website](#) to stay informed.

➤ Mpox

OA is committed to providing updated information related to mpox. We have partnered with the Division of Communicable Disease Control (DCDC), a program within the Center of Infectious Diseases and have disseminated a number of documents in an effort to keep our clients and stakeholders informed. Please refer to the [DCDC website](#) to stay informed.

[Spanish mpox digital assets](#) are now available for LHJs and CBOs.

➤ Racial Justice and Health Equity

The Racial & Health Equity (RHE) workgroup aims to gain insight and understanding of racial and health equity efforts throughout the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and take next steps towards advancing RHE in our work. The workgroup has formed subcommittees to address community stakeholder engagement challenges, improve OA policy and practices to support RHE and increasing OA knowledge and attitude on RHE among leadership and staff.

➤ HIV/STD/HCV Integration

Now that the Emergency Declaration has ended and the COVID-19 response is winding down, we are reinitiating our integration discussions and moving forward with the necessary steps to integrate our HIV, STI, and HCV programs into a single new Division. We will continue to keep you apprised on our journey!

➤ Ending the HIV Epidemic

Free Virtual Ending the Syndemic Symposium June 22nd, 23rd, 29th and 30th, 9-1 PM. Sponsored by CDPH, OA, the Ending the Syndemic Symposium will offer an opportunity for all California counties and the community programs that they fund to share best practices and innovations in serving the communities most impacted by HIV, HCV and STIs.

This symposium also aims to support the 8 federally funded California-based counties participating in the Ending the HIV Epidemics in America (EHE) initiative: Alameda, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

Workshops will include best practices for integrated HIV/STI/HCV work with cisgender women, transgender people, older adults living with HIV, people experiencing homelessness,

and young Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Special sessions will also be held on effective partner services, self-testing and how to leverage our Strategic Plan and Implementation Blueprint. The conference is free and open to all interested in ending the syndemic.

Register for the Syndemic Symposium at https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zVQvJ84WTCWwwwEMPjSnXw

ENDING THE EPIDEMICS STRATEGIC PLAN OA/STD

Special thanks to the San Diego HIV Planning Group, Strategies & Standards Committee for hosting a discussion about the *Strategic Plan and Implementation Blueprint* on June 6th. The San Diego HIV Planning Group, along with the Part A Planning Councils of Alameda, Sacramento, San Bernardino/ Riverside, San Francisco, Santa Clara and the California Planning Group were all partners in reviewing and improving the Strategic Plan and Implementation Blueprint. The work that is done at California's planning councils is what makes it possible to talk about Ending the Epidemics today. We stand on the shoulders of so many and we are grateful for their work and advocacy. Please look for ways to amplify the work of the HIV/STI/HCV planning council in your community!

STRATEGY A

Improve Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Utilization:

➤ PrEP-Assistance Program (AP)

As of May 24, 2023, there are 204 PrEP-AP enrollment sites covering 189 clinics that currently make up the PrEP-AP Provider network.

A comprehensive list of the PrEP-AP Provider Network can be found at <https://cdphdata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6878d3a1c9724418aebfea96878cd5b2>.

Data on active PrEP-AP clients can be found in the three tables displayed on page 6 of this newsletter.

STRATEGY B

Increase and Improve HIV Testing:

OA continues to implement its Building Healthy Online Communities (BHOC) self-testing program to allow for rapid OraQuick test orders in all jurisdictions in California.

TAKEMEHOME

The program, TakeMeHome, (<https://takemehome.org/>) is advertised on gay dating apps, where users see an ad for home testing and are offered a free HIV-home test kit. In April, 153 individuals in 35 counties ordered self-test kits, with 131 individuals ordering 2 tests. Additionally, OA's existing TakeMeHome Program continues in the six California Consortium Phase I Ending the HIV Epidemic in America counties. In the first 32 months, between September 1, 2020, and April 30, 2023, 5732 tests have been distributed. This month, mail-in lab tests (including dried blood spot tests for HIV, syphilis, and Hepatitis C, as well as 3-site tests for gonorrhea and chlamydia) accounted for 309 (73.2%) of the 422 total tests distributed in EHE counties.

Additional key characteristics of individuals ordering TakeMeHome kits are outlined in the chart on page 7.

(continued on page 7)

Active PrEP-AP Clients by Age and Insurance Coverage:

Current Age	PrEP-AP Only		PrEP-AP With Medi-Cal		PrEP-AP With Medicare		PrEP-AP With Private Insurance		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 - 24	285	8%	---	---	---	---	29	1%	314	9%
25 - 34	1,146	32%	1	0%	1	0%	245	7%	1,393	39%
35 - 44	897	25%	---	---	2	0%	164	5%	1,063	30%
45 - 64	484	13%	1	0%	20	1%	99	3%	604	17%
65+	22	1%	---	---	193	5%	8	0%	223	6%
TOTAL	2,834	79%	2	0%	216	6%	545	15%	3,597	100%

Active PrEP-AP Clients by Age and Race/Ethnicity:

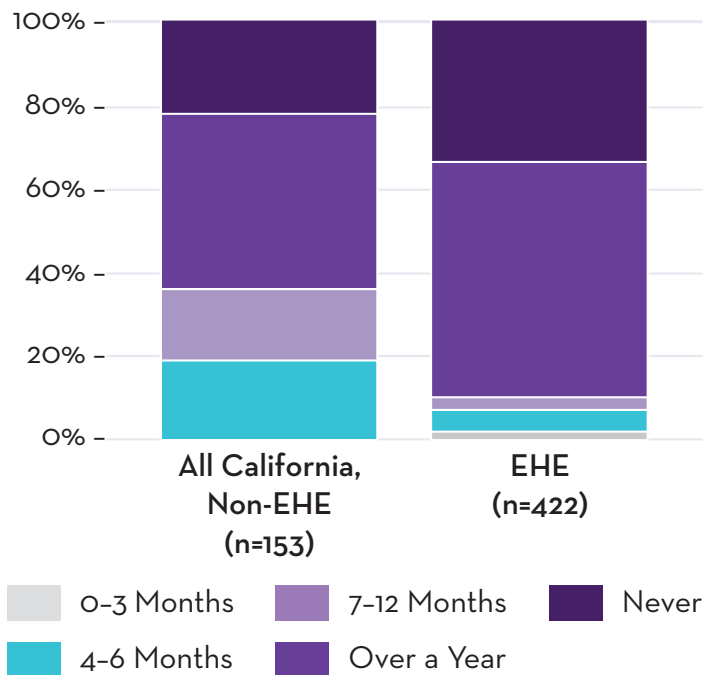
Current Age	Latinx		American Indian or Alaskan Native		Asian		Black or African American		Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander		White		More Than One Race Reported		Decline to Provide		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
18 - 24	181	5%	---	---	36	1%	12	0%	1	0%	56	2%	2	0%	26	1%	314	9%
25 - 34	834	23%	2	0%	121	3%	82	2%	3	0%	270	8%	9	0%	72	2%	1,393	39%
35 - 44	695	19%	3	0%	83	2%	39	1%	2	0%	195	5%	5	0%	41	1%	1,063	30%
45 - 64	394	11%	2	0%	37	1%	17	0%	1	0%	132	4%	2	0%	19	1%	604	17%
65+	22	1%	1	0%	3	0%	3	0%	---	---	187	5%	---	---	7	0%	223	6%
TOTAL	2,126	59%	8	0%	280	8%	153	4%	7	0%	840	23%	18	1%	165	5%	3,597	100%

Active PrEP-AP Clients by Gender and Race/Ethnicity:

Gender	Latinx		American Indian or Alaskan Native		Asian		Black or African American		Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander		White		More Than One Race Reported		Decline to Provide		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	177	5%	---	---	4	0%	8	0%	1	0%	13	0%	---	---	5	0%	208	6%
Male	1,749	49%	8	0%	256	7%	141	4%	6	0%	803	22%	18	1%	142	4%	3,123	87%
Trans	180	5%	---	---	17	0%	4	0%	---	---	14	0%	---	---	6	0%	221	6%
Unknown	20	1%	---	---	3	0%	---	---	---	---	10	0%	---	---	12	0%	45	1%
TOTAL	2,126	59%	8	0%	280	8%	153	4%	7	0%	840	23%	18	1%	165	5%	3,597	100%

All PrEP-AP charts prepared by: ADAP Fiscal Forecasting Evaluation and Monitoring (AFFEM) Section, ADAP and Care Evaluation and Informatics Branch, Office of AIDS. Client was eligible for PrEP-AP as of run date: 05/31/2023 at 12:01:12 AM
Data source: ADAP Enrollment System. Site assignments are based on the site that submitted the most recent application.

HIV Test History Among Individuals Ordering TakeMeHome Kits, April 2023



Since September 2020, 626 test kit recipients have completed the anonymous follow up survey from EHE counties; there have been 101 responses from the California expansion since January 2023. Highlights from the survey results include:

	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Of those sharing their gender, were cisgender men	66.3%	67.3%
Of those sharing their race or ethnicity, identify as Hispanic or Latinx	34.4%	39.4%
Were 17-29 years old	48.1%	45.8%
Of those sharing their number of sex partners, reported 3 or more in the past year	51.0%	43.4%

	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Would recommend TakeMeHome to a friend	94.3%	94.1%
Identify as a man who has sex with other men	69.7%	73.3%
Reported having been diagnosed with an STI in the past year	9.1%	7.9%

STRATEGY J

Increase Rates of Insurance/Benefits Coverage for PLWH or on PrEP:

As of May 24, 2023, the number of ADAP clients enrolled in each respective ADAP Insurance Assistance Program are shown in the [chart at the top of page 8](#).

STRATEGY K

Increase and Improve HIV Prevention and Support Services for People Who Use Drugs:

➤ Overdose Among Top Causes of Death for People Experiencing Homelessness in Los Angeles County

The Los Angeles (LA) County Department of Public Health released its [comprehensive report](#) on mortality rates and causes of death among people experiencing homelessness (PEH) in LA County. People experiencing homelessness died from different causes at rates greater than the general population in LA County.

ADAP Insurance Assistance Program	Number of Clients Enrolled	Percentage Change from April
Employer Based Health Insurance Premium Payment (EB-HIPP) Program	500	+ 2.25%
Office of AIDS Health Insurance Premium Payment (OA-HIPP) Program	5,662	- 1.29%
Medicare Part D Premium Payment (MDPP) Program	901	- 13.28%
Total	7,063	- 2.76%

Source: ADAP Enrollment System

The crude mortality rate among LA County PEH increased by 55% from 2019 to 2021. Drug overdose was the primary driver of the increase in organization.

An infographic can be found at http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/chie/docs/PEH_infographic2023.pdf

➤ WEBINAR: Opioid Settlements in CA

It is estimated that California will receive approximately \$2.05 billion from the California opioid settlement agreements over the next 18 years. The California Department of Health Care Services and Aurrera Health Group will facilitate a webinar to provide an overview of how settlement funds are being distributed across the state, guidelines for their use on high-impact interventions, and ways you can connect with leaders in your community on local investment of funds.

Register for June 27th webinar at <https://nopn.org/webinars/opioid-settlements-in-ca>

➤ SELF-PACED TRAINING: Building Successful Overdose Prevention and Response Programs in Community Corrections

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing, with

support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has created a series of free, self-paced courses with essential information to help people successfully implement overdose prevention and response practices within their work.

For more information, [register for their webinar](#).

STRATEGY M

Improve Usability of Collected Data:

The California HIV Surveillance Report - 2021 and the Supplemental Tables to the California HIV Surveillance Report - 2021 are now available on the OA Case Surveillance Reports page. The report includes statewide summary tables and summary tables by local health jurisdiction of new diagnoses of HIV infection, persons living with HIV infection, and deaths among persons with diagnosed HIV infection for years 2017-2021. Statewide summary tables also include data by selected demographics and transmission category.

For questions regarding this issue of The OA Voice, please send an e-mail to angelique.skinner@cdph.ca.gov.