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.

INSIDE:

- Strategy A
- Strategy B
- Strategy F
- Strategy G
- Strategy J
- Strategy K

STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Last month, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) came to California for their joint PS18-1802/20-2010 site visit. OA hosted CDC Project Officer, Kevin Ramos, and CDC Epidemiologist, Katie Curran, as they spent three days gaining a better understanding of our PS18-1802/20-2010 programs and activities, learning more about our administrative systems and practices, and hearing about the strengths, challenges, and needed technical/capacity building assistance throughout the State.

This site visit was different from those past in that it included visits to Sacramento County's Public Health Department, Sunburst Projects in Sacramento, and Alameda's Public Health Department, featuring a presentation on East Bay Getting to Zero. Overall, the feedback we received was extremely positive, and Kevin even hopes to use this site visit's agenda and format as a model for upcoming site visits!

Congratulations, OA and participating LHJs on a huge success!

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

Thanks to all who attended the **2023 Ending the Syndemic Symposium** and helped to make it a success! We the conference organizers want to thank you for the work you are doing to address the syndemic of HIV/STIs/HCV. Special thanks to Facente Consulting for helping with the logistics of the Symposium. Recordings of each

session and conference materials can be found at: https://facenteconsulting.com/ending-the-syndemic-symposium/.

"WHAT'S UP, DOC?"
with Dr. Peters

This new section of the *OA Voice* newsletter will feature medical updates by OA's **Dr. Philip Peters.** Be sure to keep an eye out for it in the near future!

STRATEGY A

Improve Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Utilization:

> PrEP-Assistance Program (AP)

As of July 28, 2023, there are 204 PrEP-AP enrollment sites and 189 clinical provider sites 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 3 of this newsletter.

> PrEP-AP Telehealth Services Through Color Health

PrEP-AP has partnered with **Color Health** to provide a fully telehealth option for eligible Californians to enroll in and utilize PrEP-AP services. Color Health will provide PrEP-AP enrollment support, telehealth prescribing, and at-home testing options to Californians 18 and

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	315	8%	---	---	---	---	35	1%	350	9%
25 - 34	1,218	33%	1	0%	1	0%	246	7%	1,466	39%
35 - 44	919	25%	---	---	2	0%	170	5%	1,091	29%
45 - 64	477	13%	1	0%	22	1%	95	3%	595	16%
65+	22	1%	---	---	194	5%	8	0%	224	6%
TOTAL	2,951	79%	2	0%	219	6%	554	15%	3,726	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	199	5%	---	---	39	1%	16	0%	2	0%	62	2%	1	0%	31	1%	350	9%
25 - 34	885	24%	2	0%	128	3%	87	2%	4	0%	273	7%	11	0%	76	2%	1,466	39%
35 - 44	709	19%	3	0%	85	2%	42	1%	4	0%	202	5%	6	0%	40	1%	1,091	29%
45 - 64	386	10%	1	0%	40	1%	16	0%	1	0%	133	4%	1	0%	17	0%	595	16%
65+	23	1%	---	---	2	0%	3	0%	---	---	190	5%	---	---	6	0%	224	6%
TOTAL	2,202	59%	6	0%	294	8%	164	4%	11	0%	860	23%	19	1%	170	5%	3,726	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	205	6%	---	---	4	0%	9	0%	1	0%	16	0%	---	---	7	0%	242	6%
Male	1,793	48%	5	0%	269	7%	149	4%	10	0%	815	22%	19	1%	146	4%	3,206	86%
Trans	183	5%	---	---	18	0%	5	0%	---	---	16	0%	---	---	6	0%	228	6%
Unknown	21	1%	1	0%	3	0%	1	0%	---	---	13	0%	---	---	11	0%	50	1%
TOTAL	2,202	59%	6	0%	294	8%	164	4%	11	0%	860	23%	19	1%	170	5%	3,726	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: 07/31/2023 at 12:01:18 AM Data source: ADAP Enrollment System. Site assignments are based on the site that submitted the most recent application.

older who meet PrEP-AP eligibility criteria. Color Health will be adding services for minors (12-17 years old) in a future update. Individuals can visit Color Health's webpage to set up a secure account, get help enrolling in PrEP-AP, and access PrEP-AP services remotely.

Color Health's trained PrEP-AP Enrollment Workers will work with clients to enroll in PrEP-AP and any required pharmaceutical assistance program. Color Health's providers will conduct timely telehealth visits to assess clients for PrEP or PEP clinical eligibility and provide prescriptions which can be filled at PrEP-AP Magellan Rx network pharmacies.

PrEP-AP clients accessing services through Color Health will have the option to order a self-testing kit to the address of their choice or visit a lab in their area to conduct necessary labs for PrEP and PEP initiation and maintenance.

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.
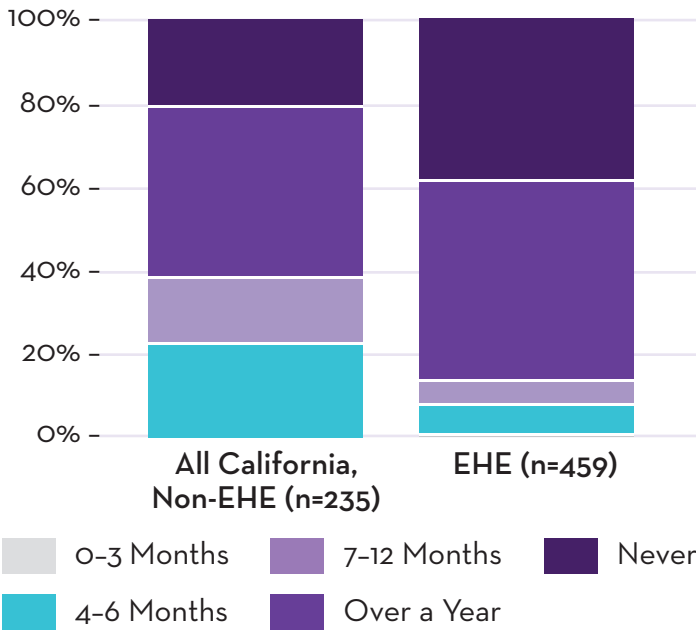
TAKEMEHOME

The program, **TakeMeHome**, (https://takeme home.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 June, 235 individuals in 35 counties ordered self-test kits, with 204 (86.8%) 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 34 months, between September 1, 2020, and June 30, 2023, 6545 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 258 (56.2%) of the 459 total tests distributed in EHE counties.

HIV Test History Among Individuals Who Ordered TakeMeHome Kits, June 2023

Legend		
0–3 Months	7–12 Months	Never
4–6 Months	Over a Year	

Additional Key Characteristics	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Of those sharing their gender, were cisgender men	62.5%	74.3%
Of those sharing their race or ethnicity, identify as Hispanic or Latinx	41.7%	49.7%
Were 17-29 years old	52.5%	35.7%
Of those sharing their number of sex partners, reported 3 or more in the past year	46.1%	48.1%

Since September 2020, 723 test kit recipients have completed the anonymous follow up survey from EHE counties; there have been 150 responses from the California expansion since January 2023. Highlights from the survey results include:

	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Would recommend TakeMeHome to a friend	94.2%	94.0%
Identify as a man who has sex with other men	66.3%	70.7%
Reported having been diagnosed with an STI in the past year	9.4%	8.7%

STRATEGY F

Improve Overall Quality of HIV-Related Care:

OA is postponing the HIV Care Connect (HCC) go-live date until April 2024 to accommodate the following factors, as requested by service providers:

- Start using HCC after completing the 2023 Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Services Report (RSR) report in ARIES. This will allow a smooth transition and avoid any disruption to the reporting process.

- Accommodate HCC Import functionality changes and provide the technical XML schema file before go-live date. This will allow providers to setup their internal systems to meet HCC Import requirement.

Some advantages of a later go-live date include allowing more time for development and thorough testing of HCC functions, such as reports, budget/invoices, duplicate merges, and the import processes; and avoid burdening RWHAP service providers with learning a new system (HCC) while under the pressure of completing the 2023 RSR. For more information and updates, please visit the HIV Data Systems page for all Data System Notices and HCC FAQs.

STRATEGY G

Improve Availability of HIV Care:

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) will release its draft of the 2022-23 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for public comment prior to submittal to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The CAPER reports on specified federal housing and economic assistance allocated by the state, which includes the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program, for the period July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023.

The CAPER draft will be available on HCD's website at https://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-and-research/plans-and-reports, for public comment from September 1 through September 17, 2023 at 5 PM PST. Questions and public comments can be submitted to CAPER@hcd.ca.gov. More information is available on their website.

STRATEGY J

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

As of July 28, 2023, the number of ADAP clients enrolled in each respective ADAP Insurance Assistance Program are shown in the chart at the top of page 6.

ADAP Insurance Assistance Program	Number of Clients Enrolled	Percentage Change from June
Employer Based Health Insurance Premium Payment (EB-HIPP) Program	511	- 1.16%
Office of AIDS Health Insurance Premium Payment (OA-HIPP) Program	5,475	- 1.51%
Medicare Part D Premium Payment (MDPP) Program	555	- 22.27%
Total	**6,541**	**- 3.67%**

Source: ADAP Enrollment System

STRATEGY K

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

> Stimulant Safety: Getting Amped Up to Reduce Harms When Using Stimulants

A new guide created by the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) Drug User Health aims to educate individuals and organizations that provide services to people who use methamphetamine and other stimulants to help reduce stigma, minimize harm, and improve services for people who use drugs. It can be used by community-based organizations, grassroots programs, health departments, and other harm reduction service providers that work with people who use drugs or support SSPs.

Download the toolkit at https://nastad.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/PDF-Stimulants-Toolkit.pdf

> Training: Health Equity in the Response to Drug Overdose

The National Association for County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) will be conducting a live facilitation of their online training, Health Equity in the Response to Drug Overdose. This 6-session, 90-minute weekly training is meant to support staff in localities that are addressing health inequities in fatal and non-fatal overdoses in their communities. Reach out to Jasmine Akuffo at jakuffo@naccho.org for additional information. Session dates are Wednesdays from 3-4:30pm EST, Wednesday, August 23rd – Wednesday, September 27th. Register by August 11th.

> Awards Announcement

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) awarded $12.1 million to 54 entities through the Opioid and Stimulant Use Disorder Prevention for Communities of Color Project. The project directs funding to entities that have demonstrated they can effectively and equitably serve individuals in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities who are disproportionately impacted by the negative consequences of drug use and the criminalization of substance use disorders (SUD).

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