

This newsletter is currently organized to align 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.

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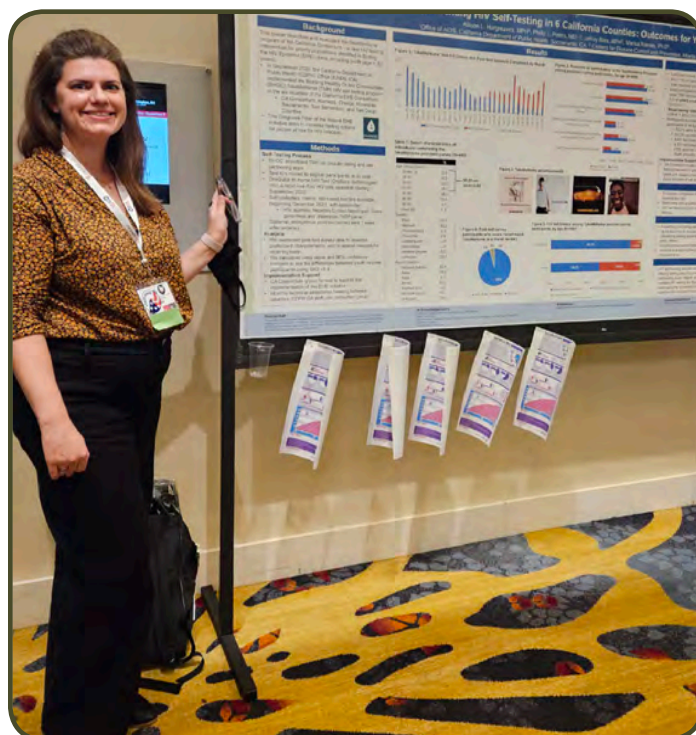
## STAFF HIGHLIGHT

**Allison Hargreaves** (she/her), Research Scientist II on OA's Division Team, recently attended the US Conference on HIV/AIDS (USCHA) in Washington, D.C, from September 6-9. The conference theme was "A Love Letter to Black Women", and brought together community members, activists, and public health workers engaged in HIV work. Allison presented a poster entitled "HIV Self-Testing in 6 California Counties): Outcomes for Youth", which describes the Building Healthy Online Communities TakeMeHome program implementation in the California Ending the HIV Epidemic Consortium, and its ability to reach young participants. A [virtual copy of her poster](#) is now available.

Alongside the poster, Allison also highlighted an infographic previously published by OA [describing TakeMeHome](#) by bringing handouts for conference attendees.

On September 18th and 19th, the **Collaboration in Care Conference: Improving HIV and Aging Services**, took place in Sacramento, California.

The conference brought together a truly interdisciplinary audience, all with the goal of providing better care for people aging with HIV. Attendees were from HIV and Aging services across the Western U.S. and included keynote speaker Harold J. Phillips, Director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy and OA-



alumnus, Keshia Lynch, who is now the HIV Program Director at One Community Health.

Over 180 people with expertise and/or lived experience in the field of HIV and Aging were able to come together and build their knowledge, develop their skills, and share best practices. Although the conference content only included a fraction of high-impact topics relevant to HIV and Aging service providers, attendees were looking forward to building on this conference with more learning opportunities in the future.

**Phil Peters** (he/him), OA's Medical Officer, provided a review of OA's activities related to



Photo Credit: Keshia Lynch



Photo Credit: Elena Rosenberg-Carlson

aging at the conference including an overview of Project Cornerstone, a demonstration project developed to address the comprehensive needs for people living with HIV over 50. [More information on Project Cornerstone](#) can be found on OA's webpage.

A [more detailed summary of the Collaboration in Care Conference](#) is available on CHIPTS website for National HIV and Aging Awareness Day.

## COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

### California Planning Group (CPG) – Fall Meeting Announcement

The CPG and OA will be hosting the Fall In-Person CPG Meeting from November 13 – 15 in Sacramento. On November 13, we will host a CPG Leadership Academy, which focuses on skills and capacity building for our current CPG members only. A public comment period will be held on November 14 and 15.

Since the early 1980's, many advocacy efforts were made to protect the rights of people living

with HIV (PLWH). In 1983, thousands of people marched in the AIDS Candlelight Vigil in San Francisco and New York. This was the first public demonstration of people with AIDS, and it raised awareness of the growing epidemic. It was followed by the passing of the first US congressional bill that included funding for AIDS research and treatment in that same year. Advocacy in the early days of the epidemic paved the way for increased services and resources for PLWH and communities most impacted by HIV today. However, challenges with basic human rights still persist.

In recent years, a record number of anti-LGBTQ laws have been enacted that threaten the health and safety of LGBTQ people and families. Abortion laws have also been enacted across the nation as a result of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. These interconnecting issues – along with many important racial health equity issues – directly impact the health and wellbeing of the HIV community. As such, this meeting's theme is focused on advocacy and community mobilization and organization. It will feature community-led and state-led presentations on meaningful community engagement. It will also spotlight grassroots work on reaching communities most impacted by HIV as well as

programs focused on community engagement, reducing stigma, and mobilizing resources.

CPG and OA welcome the participation and input of the general public. We highly encourage you to join us at the fall meeting and learn about how we can bring our communities together to advocate for the rights of PLWH and their families!

For more information, please visit the [CPG website](#).

## HIV AWARENESS

### October 15 is National Latinx HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD)

NLAAD is observed to bring awareness to the impact of HIV/AIDS on the Latinx population. This day promotes HIV testing, prevention and treatment methods, and education in Latinx communities.

## ENDING THE EPIDEMICS STRATEGIC PLAN OA/STD

Implementation of the ***Ending the Epidemics Strategic Plan***, which replaces our *Laying a Foundation for Getting to Zero: California's Integrated HIV Surveillance, Prevention, and Care Plan* (Integrated Plan), is continuing.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), OA, and the Sexually Transmitted Disease Control Branch (STDCB) introduced an ***Implementation Blueprint*** to the *Ending the Epidemics Strategic Plan* at an informational webinar on August 31st. The webinar was for HIV/STI/HCV Stakeholders throughout California.

The *Implementation Blueprint* and a recording

of the August 31st webinar can be found on [Facente Consulting's webpage](https://facenteconsulting.com/cdph-technical-assistance-request-portal/) at <https://facenteconsulting.com/cdph-technical-assistance-request-portal/>.

This webpage also allows you to request any technical assistance regarding the ***Ending the Epidemics Strategic Plan***.

Thank you for all you do to end the syndemic of HIV, STIs and HCV in California!

## 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.

[Mpox digital assets](#) are 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 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 (EHE)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced \$50 million in competitive funding for the **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA): Housing Interventions (HINT) to End the HIV Epidemic** program. Achieving and maintaining stable housing can be a powerful structural intervention in ending the HIV epidemic.

HUD expects to make approximately 20 awards nationally. County and city governments, as well as non-profit organizations, may apply. The funding announcement is posted on the [Grants.gov webpage](https://www.grants.gov/webpage). Applications are due **January 31, 2024**.

HUD is seeking projects with exemplary and innovative qualities, including the incorporation of Housing First principles, community-level coordination, data collection with an emphasis on stable housing and positive health outcomes, the use of cultural humility in providing housing and services, and a systemic approach to advance equity in underserved communities that can serve as a national place-based model. Selected communities will implement new projects that align with initiatives to end the HIV epidemic and elevate housing as an effective structural intervention in ending the epidemic.

HUD will conduct a pre-application webcast for anyone interested in applying. More information

on the webcast will be provided through the [HUD.gov HOPWA mailing list](https://www.hud.gov/HOPWA). To sign up for the mailing list, please visit the [HUD.gov HOPWA mailing list subscription page](https://www.hud.gov/HOPWA).

## STRATEGY A

### Improve Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Utilization:

#### ➤ PrEP-Assistance Program (AP)

As of September 27, 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](https://cdphdata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6878d3a1c9724418aebfea96878cd5b2) 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 5 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) (<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.

### 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	336	9%	---	---	---	---	35	1%	371	10%
25 - 34	1,251	35%	1	0%	1	0%	213	6%	1,466	41%
35 - 44	860	24%	---	---	3	0%	166	5%	1,029	29%
45 - 64	394	11%	1	0%	20	1%	94	3%	509	14%
65+	19	1%	---	---	198	5%	11	0%	228	6%
TOTAL	2,860	79%	2	0%	222	6%	519	14%	3,603	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	216	6%	---	---	41	1%	15	0%	2	0%	65	2%	1	0%	31	1%	371	10%
25 - 34	873	24%	2	0%	134	4%	90	2%	7	0%	277	8%	8	0%	75	2%	1,466	41%
35 - 44	629	17%	5	0%	97	3%	40	1%	5	0%	199	6%	8	0%	46	1%	1,029	29%
45 - 64	298	8%	---	---	41	1%	15	0%	2	0%	134	4%	1	0%	18	0%	509	14%
65+	21	1%	---	---	3	0%	3	0%	---	---	193	5%	---	---	8	0%	228	6%
TOTAL	2,037	57%	7	0%	316	9%	163	5%	16	0%	868	24%	18	0%	178	5%	3,603	100%

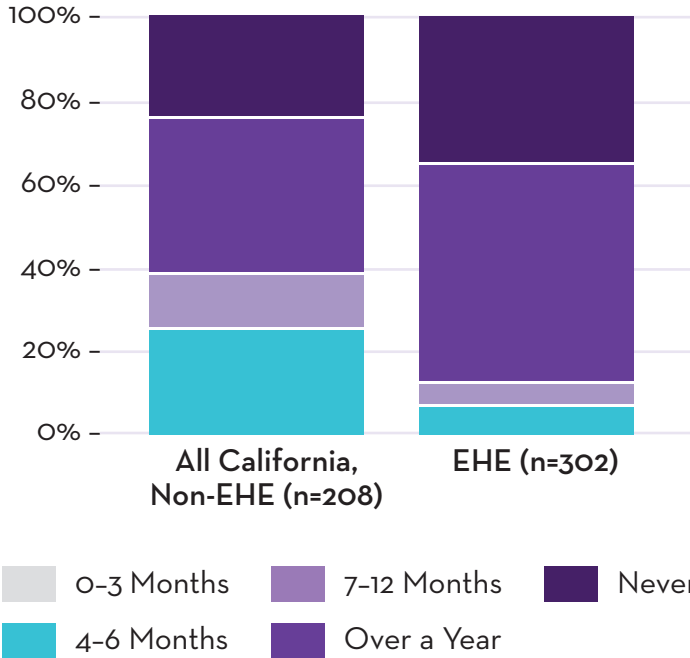
### Active PrEP-AP Clients by Gender and Race/Ethnicity:

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	77	2%	---	---	6	0%	8	0%	1	0%	15	0%	---	---	8	0%	115	3%
Male	1,748	49%	6	0%	288	8%	148	4%	15	0%	825	23%	17	0%	152	4%	3,199	89%
Trans	186	5%	---	---	18	0%	6	0%	---	---	16	0%	---	---	6	0%	232	6%
Unknown	26	1%	1	0%	4	0%	1	0%	---	---	12	0%	1	0%	12	0%	57	2%
TOTAL	2,037	57%	7	0%	316	9%	163	5%	16	0%	868	25%	18	0%	178	5%	3,603	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: 09/30/2023 at 12:01:08 AM  
Data source: ADAP Enrollment System. Site assignments are based on the site that submitted the most recent application.

In August, 208 individuals in 32 counties ordered self-test kits, with 170 (81.7%) 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 36 months, between September 1, 2020, and August 31, 2023, 6993 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 254 (84.1%) of the 302 total tests distributed in EHE counties. 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 83 (86.9%) of the 146 total tests distributed in EHE counties.

**HIV Test History Among Individuals Who Ordered TakeMeHome Kits, August 2023**



Additional Key Characteristics	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Of those sharing their gender, were cisgender men	46.8%	63.6%
Of those sharing their race or ethnicity, identify as Hispanic or Latinx	39.0%	37.4%
Were 17-29 years old	52.7%	43.3%
Of those sharing their number of sex partners, reported 3 or more in the past year	45.5%	54.8%

Since September 2020, 758 test kit recipients have completed the anonymous follow up survey from EHE counties; there have been 190 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	94.4%	94.2%
Identify as a man who has sex with other men	64.9%	68.0%
Reported having been diagnosed with an STI in the past year	9.0%	7.8%

## STRATEGY J

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

As of September 27, 2023, the number of ADAP clients enrolled in each respective ADAP Insurance Assistance Program are shown in the chart at the bottom of this page.

## STRATEGY K

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

#### ➤ Research: Estimated Reductions in Opioid Overdose Deaths With Sustainment of Public Health Interventions in Four U.S. States

A study led by Research Triangle Institute, International has found that a substantial scale-

up of medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) initiation and retention, along with increased naloxone distribution, is crucial for reducing overdose deaths. The study also highlighted that if the scale of interventions is reduced, opioid overdose deaths are likely to increase again.

#### ➤ Impact: Harm Reduction Programs and Community-Based Naloxone Distribution

The Naloxone Distribution Project (NDP) is administered by the Department of Health Care Services and aims to reduce overdose deaths in California through the provision of free naloxone. A [September 2023 report](#) shows that harm reduction programs received less than one-third of the over 3,000,000 naloxone doses yet accounted for 54% of the NDPs reported overdose reversals.

Get free naloxone with the [NDP application](#).

(continued on page 8)

ADAP Insurance Assistance Program	Number of Clients Enrolled	Percentage Change from August
Employer Based Health Insurance Premium Payment (EB-HIPP) Program	501	+ 0.80%
Office of AIDS Health Insurance Premium Payment (OA-HIPP) Program	5,329	- 0.41%
Medicare Part D Premium Payment (MDPP) Program	2,079	N/A*
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,909</b>	<b>N/A*</b>

Source: ADAP Enrollment System

\*Note: In January 2023, the Medicare Part D Premium Payment (MDPP) program was changed to the Medicare Premium Payment Program (MPPP). The new program name has been used in client data for new enrollments and re-enrollments. However, since then, the data reported here only reflected clients enrolled prior to January 2023 as MDPP clients. This data has been corrected to reflect MPPP and MDPP clients. Due to the data correction, the percentage change from August has been omitted.

## STRATEGY M

### Improve Usability of Collected Data:

OA has published two new infographics on diabetes mellitus and chronic kidney disease (CKD) using **California Medical Monitoring Project** data (2015-2020).

The **diabetes infographic** provides an estimated prevalence of diabetes mellitus in people living with diagnosed HIV (PLWDH) in California and characterizes the population in terms of demographics and clinical characteristics.

Chronic kidney disease involves a gradual loss of the kidney's capacity to filter blood which can result in health complications from excess fluid and waste accumulation. The **CKD infographic** provides an estimated prevalence of CKD in PLWDH in California and also characterizes the population in terms of demographics and clinical characteristics. Both infographics summarize best practices for screening and treatment and highlight opportunities to improve care for these two important chronic illnesses among PLWDH.

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

