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STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Glorietta Kundeti, Research Scientist Supervisor, of the Data Management Unit, in the Surveillance and Prevention Evaluation and Reporting Branch, had the opportunity to share insights into the 2021 epidemiological trends of HIV among the Latinx population in California. This presentation was hosted by The Pacific AIDS Education & Training Center (Pacific AETC), a vital part of a nationwide network dedicated to the enhancement of the healthcare workforce in providing equitable HIV care and related services. The session was a segment of an ongoing educational series examining HIV, stigma, and substance use within the Latinx community. Our audience was composed of healthcare providers and public health professionals from Northern California.

Glorietta's presentation focused on contrasting national and California-specific HIV trends with an emphasis on the state's Latinx population. This included a comparative analysis of demographic profiles, incidence rates, and the spectrum of care. Additionally, we benefited from contributions by a representative from the Substance and Addiction Prevention Branch, who shared critical data on the regional and demographic patterns of fatal drug overdoses. Moreover, a medical expert enriched our discussion by highlighting the risk factors for HIV linked to substance use. The links to the presentation are provided below. And a special



2021 State of HIV in the California Latinx Community

Glorietta Kundeti, MPH
OA Surveillance Data
Management Unit Chief

thanks to Stephanie Taylor, Triston Mosbacher, and Deanna Sykes for all their help and support.

[Registration to access the recordings.](#)

[Direct YouTube link to the presentation.](#)

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

➤ Sonoma Spotlight

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) OA would like to recognize **Sonoma County's Department of Health Services** for excellence in the prevention of perinatal HIV transmission. Although perinatal HIV transmission is effectively prevented with antiretroviral therapy, consistent HIV treatment during pregnancy can be challenging for people experiencing homelessness, mental health problems, and substance use. Sonoma county's public health nurses and HIV prevention staff literally and figuratively go the extra mile to meet pregnant people with HIV where they are and address social determinants of health that are barriers to HIV care. They also provide leadership and direction to medical and social service providers in Sonoma to develop coordinated care plans that include offering housing, substance use treatment, harm reduction services, HIV and prenatal care, and a birth plan.

Great job Sonoma team! Your hard work has had a major HIV prevention impact and we are proud to be your colleagues.

HIV AWARENESS

➤ Celebrating National Latinx Awareness Day and the Ending the HIV in the U.S. Initiative

Representatives from OA, the Office of Infectious Disease and HIV/AIDS Policy (OIDP), the Latino Commission on AIDS, VIDA (an HIV services provider), the Los Angeles Family Network and Gilead Sciences commemorated the National Latinx Awareness Day (NLADD) October 13th-15th in San Diego County.



*Sonoma County Public Health Department
HIV Prevention Team
(L-R): Miranda Patrick, Mark O'Neil, and Fabiola Acosta Lora*

This year's NLAAD theme, "Do it your way. Do it right." encourages people to take advantage of the many available options to protect themselves from HIV, highlighting that they can choose what is right for them. This year was the 20-year anniversary since NLAAD was created and it is the 10-year anniversary of the start of the HIV/AIDS services provider VIDA.

On October 13th, OA and community partners had a chance to visit San Ysidro Health, an Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. Initiative (EHE) funding recipient. San Ysidro Health is using this funding to support HIV screening, linkage to PrEP, HIV treatment and other supportive services especially focused on the LGBTQ+ community in San Diego. San Diego County is making significant strides with the EHE Initiative and other prevention and care services funding. Other providers visited during this site visit included La Maestra Community Health Centers, Mama's Kitchen, the Mother, Child & Adolescent HIV Program at UC San Diego, and Christie's Place. Thank you to all these service providers for their important work to get to zero HIV infections, zero HIV deaths and zero HIV stigma in San Diego.

➤ November is Transgender Awareness Month

During the month of November, the transgender and gender nonconforming (GNC) communities raise awareness for their community through education, advocacy actions and reflection.

With trans rights being rolled back across the United States and globally, including attempts in California, a historic number of anti-bills introduced and passed in state legislatures across the nation, many targeting transgender youth. Some school boards have passed policies outing trans and gender diverse students. California has seen a 55% increase in hate crimes motivated by anti-trans or anti-gender non-conforming bias between 2021 and 2022. It is more important than ever to uplift, support, and stand with our trans and gender diverse communities.

Trans Parent Day is observed November 5.

Trans Parent Day is an annual event established in 2009 that honors transgender parents as well as parents who have trans children. It always falls on the first Sunday of the month. In the United States, around one in three trans people are parents. Beyond the common challenges of embarking on a parenting journey, there are additional challenges one might face when becoming a trans parent. The day is about providing a nongendered holiday instead of the traditional Mother's and Father's Day, which may not be inclusive for many trans people.

Transgender Awareness Week is observed November 13–19th. This weeklong observation is recognized by the transgender community, allies, and organizations around the world. It is meant to educate and bring awareness to the discrimination, intolerance, and acts of violence members of the community face. The observation also provides the opportunity to uplift and empower the lives of transgender and GNC communities.

To conclude Transgender Awareness Month, the annual **Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is observed on November 20th.**

TDOR provides space to memorialize transgender victims whose lives were taken due to transphobia and anti-transgender violence. This day also highlights the disproportionate acts of violence against transwomen of color, predominately in Black and Latinx transgender women. For additional Trans data and resources please visit our [OA Transgender Community Health website](#).

“Transgender Day of Remembrance seeks to highlight the losses we face due to anti-transgender bigotry and violence. I am no stranger to the need to fight for our rights, and the right to simply exist is first and foremost. With so many seeking to erase transgender people — sometimes in the most brutal ways possible — it is vitally important that those we lose are remembered, and that we continue to fight for justice.”

— Transgender Day of Remembrance founder, Gwendolyn Ann Smith

➤ November is Native American Heritage Month

Native American Heritage Month was originally established as a week-long observance, and over time it has evolved to a month-long celebration dedicated to honoring Native American peoples. The celebration is meant to honor, educate, and appreciate the various indigenous cultures and acknowledge the many contributions, to include agriculture and environmental stewardship, that has shaped our society.

Native American Heritage Day is celebrated on November 24th. There are many educational events, film screenings and cultural festivals to showcase traditional dance, music, and art, to honor the Native American Heritage.

[Learn what Indigenous territories, treaties and languages you are on.](#)

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.

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 Ending the HIV Epidemic counties of Alameda, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Diego completed their End of Year 3 Reports to the CDC. Thank you for another year of expanding services for HIV testing, PrEP and linkage to HIV medical care to EHE priority populations! [More information about the EHE Initiative.](#)

STRATEGY A

Improve Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Utilization:

➤ PrEP-Assistance Program (AP)

As of October 31, 2023, there are 200 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 7 of this newsletter.

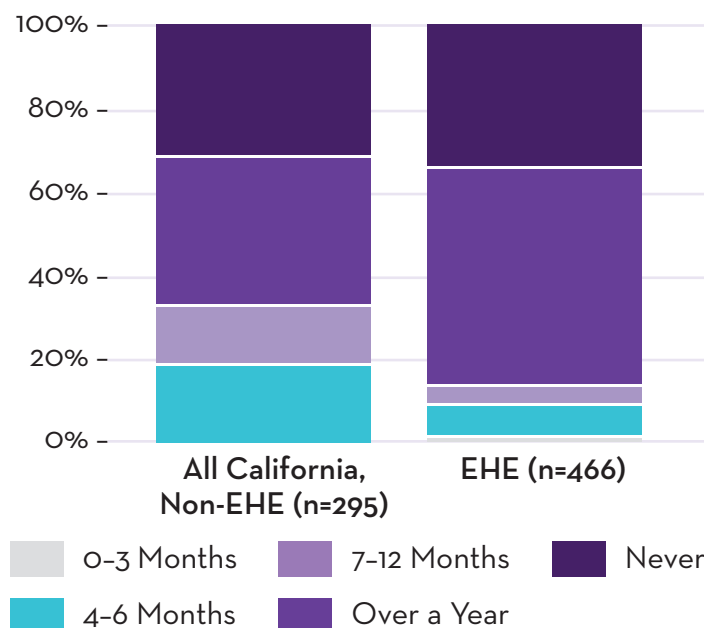
STRATEGY B

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. 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.

In September, 295 individuals in 31 counties ordered self-test kits, with 235 (79.7%) 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 37 months, between September 1, 2020, and September 30, 2023, 7459 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 311 (66.7%) of the 466 total tests distributed in EHE counties.

HIV Test History Among Individuals Who Ordered TakeMeHome Kits, Sept. 2023



STRATEGY J

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

As of October 31, 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:

➤ **WEBINAR - The Power of Collaboration: Success Stories of Harm Reduction and Public Safety Partnerships to Prevent Overdose**

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing will host a webinar, November 9th to share successes and lessons learned from a pilot that integrated harm reduction strategies and public safety initiatives across the country.

Register to attend the webinar or receive a copy of the webinar recording.

➤ **WEBINAR - Exploring Value-Based Payment for Substance Use Disorder Services in the United States**

Value-Based Payment (VBP) models pay health care providers based on the value of their services provided rather than the volume of services. Learn more about VBP and how the model is applied to substance use disorder services. SAMHSA's Center for Financing Reform and Innovation will host a webinar, November 13th featuring experts sharing the use

(continued on page 8)

Additional Key Characteristics	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Of those sharing their gender, were cisgender men	46.3%	52.2%
Of those sharing their race or ethnicity, identify as Hispanic or Latinx	36.1%	42.0%
Were 17-29 years old	49.6%	44.4%
Of those sharing their number of sex partners, reported 3 or more in the past year	46.0%	43.2%

Since September 2020, 840 test kit recipients have completed the anonymous follow up survey from EHE counties; there have been 245 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%	93.9%
Identify as a man who has sex with other men	63.1%	65.3%
Reported having been diagnosed with an STI in the past year	8.9%	9.8%

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	369	10%	---	---	---	---	32	1%	401	11%
25 - 34	1,272	35%	1	0%	1	0%	211	6%	1,485	41%
35 - 44	872	24%	---	---	3	0%	165	5%	1,040	28%
45 - 64	387	11%	1	0%	21	1%	98	3%	507	14%
65+	23	1%	---	---	195	5%	10	0%	228	6%
TOTAL	2,923	80%	2	0%	220	6%	516	14%	3,661	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	229	6%	---	---	42	1%	16	0%	2	0%	71	2%	2	0%	39	1%	401	11%
25 - 34	888	24%	1	0%	130	4%	93	3%	8	0%	279	8%	9	0%	77	2%	1,485	41%
35 - 44	629	17%	4	0%	99	3%	42	1%	5	0%	204	6%	7	0%	50	1%	1,040	28%
45 - 64	290	8%	---	---	40	1%	17	0%	2	0%	135	4%	2	0%	21	1%	507	14%
65+	21	1%	---	---	3	0%	3	0%	---	---	192	5%	1	0%	8	0%	228	6%
TOTAL	2,057	56%	5	0%	314	9%	171	5%	17	0%	881	24%	21	1%	195	5%	3,661	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	81	2%	---	---	7	0%	8	0%	1	0%	15	0%	---	---	3	0%	115	3%
Male	1,773	48%	4	0%	285	8%	156	4%	16	0%	837	23%	21	1%	173	5%	3,265	89%
Trans	177	5%	---	---	18	0%	6	0%	---	---	16	0%	---	---	7	0%	224	6%
Unknown	26	1%	1	0%	4	0%	1	0%	---	---	13	0%	---	---	12	0%	57	2%
TOTAL	2,057	56%	5	0%	314	9%	171	5%	17	0%	881	24%	21	1%	195	5%	3,661	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: 10/31/2023 at 12:02:00 AM
Data source: ADAP Enrollment System. Site assignments are based on the site that submitted the most recent application.

ADAP Insurance Assistance Program	Number of Clients Enrolled	Percentage Change from September
Employer Based Health Insurance Premium Payment (EB-HIPP) Program	500	- 0.19%
Office of AIDS Health Insurance Premium Payment (OA-HIPP) Program	5,254	- 1.40%
Medicare Part D Premium Payment (MDPP) Program	2,053	- 1.25%
Total	7,807	- 1.28%

Source: ADAP Enrollment System

of VBP and will include national experts in the behavioral health field

Register to attend the webinar and receive a copy of the webinar recording.

resources, provide support, or share case studies of cases you are proud, please join us!

For more information, reach out to SHISCommunity@cdph.ca.gov.

STRATEGY N

Enhance Collaborations and Community Involvement:

➤ STD and HIV Information and Support (SHIS) Community Engagement Announcement and Flyer

The STDCB and OA have collaborated to bring forth a community space for all local Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) or public health workers conducting any case investigation or contact tracing for STIs and HIV. Our collaborative space is called the STD and HIV Information and Support (SHIS) Community Engagement Monthly calls! This is a space to share strategies for partner services, examine case studies, and celebrate the excellent work being done in California. We launched our first call in September and will continue our calls the last Wednesday of every month from 11am-12pm. If you are interested in coming to learn from the DIS community, share information,

STRATEGY O

Further Leverage Existing Resources to Better Meet the Needs of People at Risk for and Living with HIV in California:

In September, Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Awarded nearly \$18 million in FY 2023 Ending the HIV Epidemic-Primary Care HIV Prevention (PCHP) funding that will expand access to HIV prevention services that decrease the risk of HIV transmission in underserved communities in support of Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.

Seven of the Federally Qualified Health Centers receiving awards under this funding cycle were in California. More information about the award recipients.

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