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This newsletter is organized to align with the six Social Determinants of Health found in the *Ending the Epidemics Integrated Statewide Strategic Plan*, addressing the syndemic of HIV, HCV, and STIs in California. More about the *Strategic Plan* is available on the [Office of AIDS \(OA\) website](#).

STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Please join us in congratulating **Angelique (Angie) Skinner** on her promotion to a Health Program Specialist II position, in Division. She will serve as the Division Policy and Health Compliance, Fiscal Specialist.

Angie started with OA January 2019, as an Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA). During that time, she participated on high priority work groups to assist Division Chief Marisa Ramos. She functioned as a liaison with multi-disciplinary OA staff and Branch Chiefs and was tasked with coordinating and scheduling a variety of meetings for Division, various OA programs, and was a member of the Office of yAy, All Staff Planning committee.

In November 2020, she promoted to a Health Program Specialist I. In addition to her AGPA duties, she assisted in the development of the grant application for CDC Notice of Funding Opportunity PS20-2010. She worked closely with the six Phase I Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) jurisdictions with their annual budgets, invoices, and provided guidance to ensure programmatic goals were met. Working on the EHE Project expanded her skillset to include procurement and contract development. She developed scopes of work, budgets, and managed 7 additional contracts totaling over \$10 million as part of the EHE Project. In her new role, she will continue to work with the EHE jurisdictions and other



Angie

contracts providing fiscal assistance, supporting all aspects of grant management, and ensuring grantees comply with state and federal funding regulations. In addition, Angie will support Julie Criddle, with legislative and regulatory activities for OA with state and federal HIV/AIDS public health policies.

Outside of work, Angie enjoys spending time with friends, Max (her best 4-legged friend), watching NBA basketball, and supporting Tilted Mash, her favorite local brewery. She's slowly getting back into running after a knee injury but marathon running days are over!

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

➤ PrEP Support Project: Alameda County

The EHE counties of Alameda, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Diego are working with UCLA to implement a variety of social marketing strategies to connect EHE priority populations to integrated testing and PrEP services in their communities. Each county is doing work to address the specific needs of their communities.



During the months of March and April, **Alameda County** chose to focus their efforts on communities not predominantly reached through gay dating apps by featuring Trans and Cis-gender Black and Latinx community leaders on bus shelter

advertisements to promote testing and PrEP services.

OA applauds the efforts of all counties and stakeholders who are helping California achieve the goal of reaching 50% of eligible adults with PrEP. Please let us know how you are promoting PrEP; especially to the priority populations in our *Integrated Strategic Plan* so we can feature your work too.

HIV AWARENESS

April 10th is National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NYHAAD). HIV stigma

continues to discourage young people from getting tested, access to prevention methods, and disclosing their HIV status. HIV education is paramount to responsiveness and prevention. NYHAAD is meant to raise awareness and promote discussions about the impact of HIV on young people. Engaging in such conversations provides increased knowledge of HIV prevention methods, helps to develop and maintain safe practices and helps young people realize they have the power to change the course of the HIV epidemic.

CDPH is committed to ensuring its youth have access to information, prevention, and treatment services. For more information, refer to our [Youth Community Health webpage](#).

April 18th is the National Transgender HIV Testing Day (NTHTD). NTHTD is observed to recognize the importance of routine HIV testing among transgender and non-binary people. Transgender women of color, especially Black/African American and Latinx women experience disproportionately high rates of HIV. NTHTD encourages transgender individuals to know their status and to focus on HIV prevention, care, and treatment efforts among their community.

CDPH is committed to ensuring its Transgender and non-binary people have access to information, prevention, and treatment services. For more information, refer to our [Transgender Community Health webpage](#).

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.

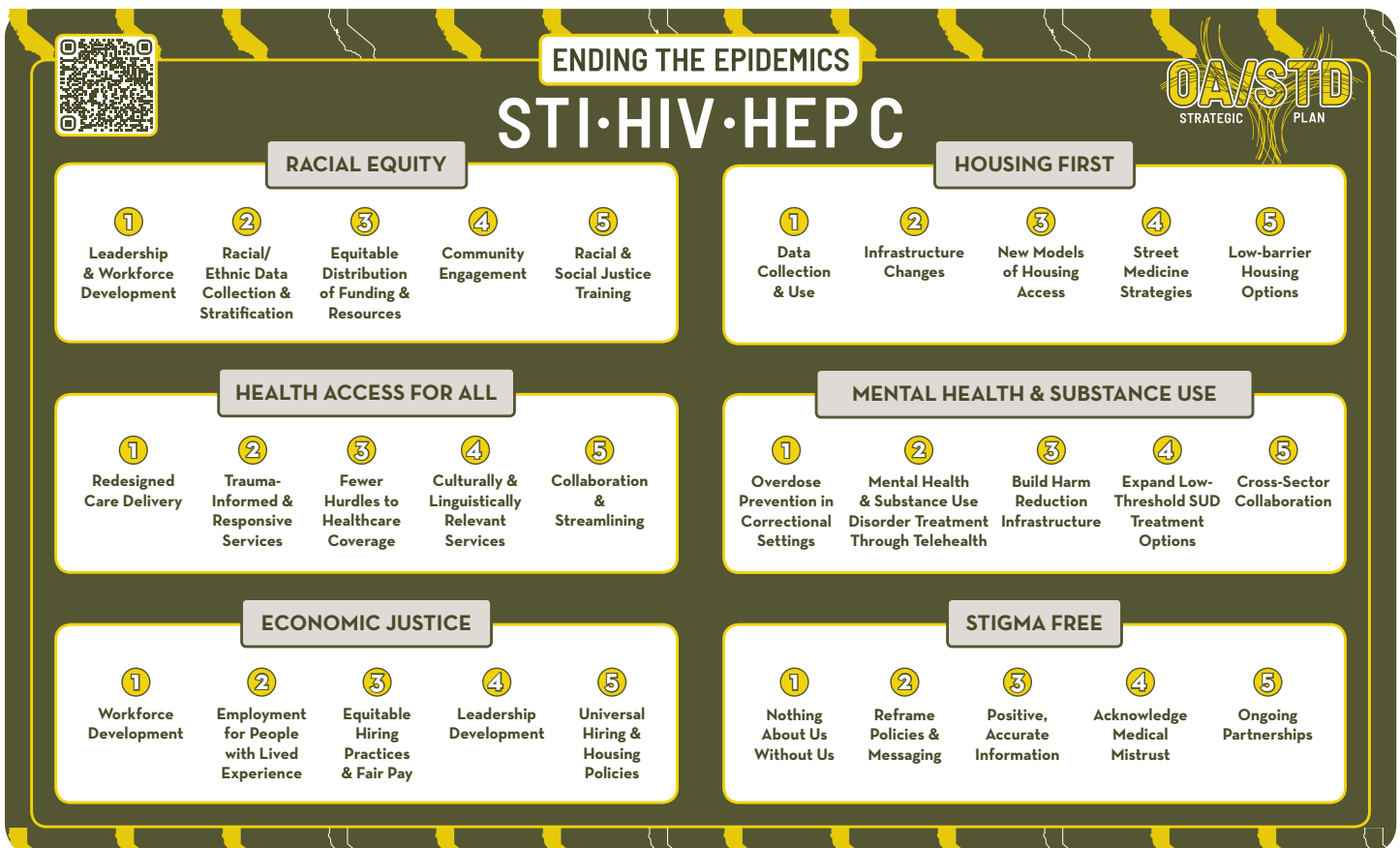
> Mpox

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 on DCDC's [Campaign Toolkit](#) website.

> HIV/STD/HCV Integration

Now that the Emergency Declaration has ended and the COVID-19 response is winding down, we are re-initiating 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!



The **visual above** is a high-level summary of our *Strategic Plan* that organizes 30 Strategies across six Social Determinants of Health (SDoH).

CDPH OA and STD Control Branch would like you to continue to use and share the [Strategic Plan](#) and the [Implementation Blueprint](#). These

documents address HIV as a syndemic with HCV and other STIs, through a SDoH lens.

OA and STD Control Branch, in partnership with [Facente Consulting](#), finished Session Three of a four-part series aimed at helping communities understand and use the *Strategic Plan* and the

Implementation Blueprint.

On March 25th, CDPH held a webinar on Asset-Based Community Mapping. Public health work is often based in deficits. CDPH believes that in order to make the most progress in addressing the sydemic of HIV, HCV, and STIs, we need to start with individual and community strengths. Please read the *Strategic Plan* and the *Implementation Blueprint* to get the best suggestion of community and lived-experience experts on how to do this work.

If you were unable to attend Session One through Session Three, you can access the recordings at the links provided below. **Note:** You can still register for Session Four linked below.

Session One: [Customizing the Blueprint and Aligning Local Plans Including Ending the HIV Epidemic \(EHE\)](https://youtu.be/Qqpa980zjsk), is available at <https://youtu.be/Qqpa980zjsk>

Session Two: [Prioritization and Feasibility Exercises](https://youtu.be/gzBGf0CiiWQ), is available at <https://youtu.be/gzBGf0CiiWQ>

Session Three: [Community Mapping Model for Collaborating](https://youtu.be/7j2T4SZam30), is available at <https://youtu.be/7j2T4SZam30>

Session Four: [Communicating the Blueprint and Other Community Engagement Activities](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/71rROTHM8ox8yN) will take place on **May 6th at 2 pm** at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/71rROTHM8ox8yN>

We look forward to seeing you on May 6th!

HEALTH ACCESS FOR ALL

➤ Strategy 1: Redesigned Care Delivery

OA continues to implement its BHOC-TMH self-testing program to allow for rapid OraQuick

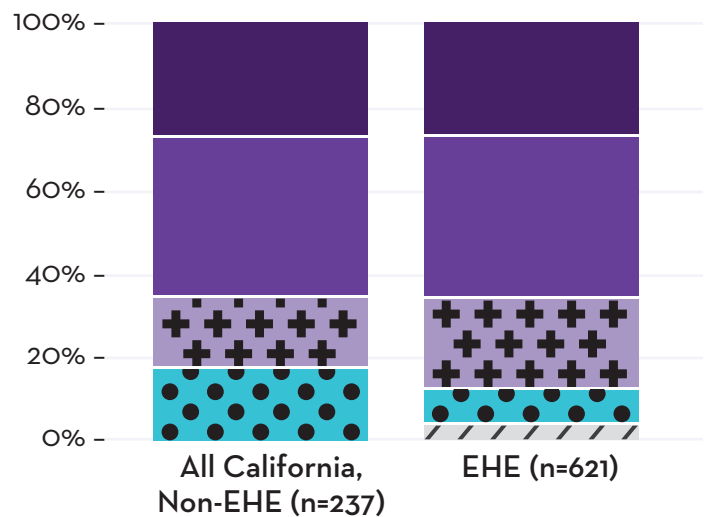
test orders in all jurisdictions in California. The program, [TakeMeHome](https://takemehome.org/)[®], (<https://takemehome.org/>) is advertised on gay dating apps, where users see an ad for home testing and are offered a free HIV-home test kit.

In February, 237 individuals in 38 counties ordered self-test kits, with 145 (61.2%) 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 42 months, between September 1, 2020, and February 29, 2024, 10,082 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 344 (55.4%) of the 621 total tests distributed in EHE counties. Of those ordering rapid tests, 181 (65.3%) ordered 2 tests.

TAKEMEHOME



HIV Test History Among Individuals Who Ordered TakeMeHome Kits, Feb. 2024



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	53.4%	55.4%
Of those sharing their race or ethnicity, identify as Hispanic or Latinx	37.7%	45.2%
Were 17-29 years old	48.8%	49.4%
Of those sharing their number of sex partners, reported 3 or more in the past year	44.0%	45.6%

Since September 2020, 1,128 test kit recipients have completed the anonymous follow up survey from EHE counties; there have been 396 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	94.5%	95.0%
Identify as a man who has sex with other men	55.1%	59.1%
Reported having been diagnosed with an STI in the past year	8.6%	9.3%

➤ Strategy 3: Fewer Hurdles to Healthcare Coverage

As of March 29, 2024, there are 201 PrEP-AP enrollment sites and 198 clinical provider sites that currently make up the [PrEP-AP Provider network](#).

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

As of March 29, 2024, the [number of ADAP clients enrolled in each respective ADAP Insurance Assistance Program](#) are shown in the table on the top of page 7.

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE

➤ Strategy 3: Build Harm Reduction Infrastructure

OPPORTUNITY: Fentanyl Test Strips now available for free through the DHCS Naloxone Distribution Project

DHCS created the Naloxone Distribution Project (NDP) to combat opioid overdose-related deaths throughout California. The NDP aims to address the overdose crisis by reducing opioid overdose deaths through the provision of free naloxone. Last month, the NDP included fentanyl test strips as an item available for free for community distribution.

The all-in-one kits streamline the process of testing a drug for the presence of fentanyl, a powerful opioid that can be added to illicit pills and lead to a life-threatening or fatal overdose event. The kits package together a measuring scoop, the fentanyl test strip, a water pouch, and test instructions. When used correctly, fentanyl test strips can keep people safer along with

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	367	10%	---	---	---	---	24	1%	391	10%
25 - 34	1,268	34%	1	0%	---	---	174	5%	1,443	39%
35 - 44	934	25%	---	---	3	0%	155	4%	1,092	29%
45 - 64	434	12%	---	---	17	0%	109	3%	560	15%
65+	29	1%	---	---	218	6%	9	0%	256	7%
TOTAL	3,032	81%	1	0%	238	6%	471	13%	3,742	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	221	6%	1	0%	42	1%	18	0%	2	0%	66	2%	2	0%	39	1%	391	10%
25 - 34	842	23%	2	0%	138	4%	85	2%	8	0%	265	7%	9	0%	94	3%	1,443	39%
35 - 44	641	17%	5	0%	101	3%	55	1%	6	0%	220	6%	7	0%	57	2%	1,092	29%
45 - 64	314	8%	---	---	56	1%	17	0%	3	0%	136	4%	2	0%	32	1%	560	15%
65+	26	1%	---	---	3	0%	6	0%	---	---	210	6%	---	---	11	0%	256	7%
TOTAL	2,044	55%	8	0%	340	9%	181	5%	19	1%	897	24%	20	1%	233	6%	3,742	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	63	2%	---	---	8	0%	9	0%	1	0%	21	1%	---	---	8	0%	110	3%
Male	1,823	49%	7	0%	307	8%	163	4%	18	0%	848	23%	20	1%	202	5%	3,388	91%
Trans	129	3%	---	---	19	1%	7	0%	---	---	12	0%	---	---	8	0%	175	5%
Unknown	29	1%	1	0%	6	0%	2	0%	---	---	16	0%	---	---	15	0%	69	2%
TOTAL	2,044	55%	8	0%	340	9%	181	5%	19	1%	897	24%	20	1%	233	6%	3,742	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: 03/31/2024 at 12:01:39 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 February
Employer Based Health Insurance Premium Payment (EB-HIPP) Program	524	+ 1.55%
Office of AIDS Health Insurance Premium Payment (OA-HIPP) Program	5,642	- 0.58%
Medicare Part D Premium Payment (MDPP) Program	2,067	- 0.52%
Total	8,233	- 0.43%

Source: ADAP Enrollment System

time-tested harm reduction strategies such as carrying naloxone and never using alone.

To apply for fentanyl testing strips for community distribution, visit the NDP website at <https://californiaopioidresponse.org/matproject/naloxone-distribution-project/>

RESOURCE: Harm Reduction Laws in the United States

The Harm Reduction Legal Project, Network for Public Health Law, hosted a webinar last month detailing how state laws can impact health and legal risks and describing the current relevant legal landscape of the United States and how it has changed over time. There is great variation in the presence and specifics of laws regarding drug paraphernalia, naloxone access, and protections for people who call for help in an overdose, and these laws have changed over time. This can create confusion among both people who use drugs and individuals and organizations working to ensure that they have the resources and support they need to protect themselves and others.

To view the webinar, visit the Network for Public Health Law website at <https://www.networkforphl.org/resources/harm-reduction-laws-in-the-united-states-2024-update/>

RACIAL EQUITY

➤ **Strategy 5: Racial and Social Justice Training**

The Local Capacity Building and Program Development Unit has developed a new, fillable form to be used for all capacity building assistance (CBA) requests. The CDC offers free CBA through training, technical assistance, and other resources to reduce HIV infection and improve health outcomes for people with HIV in the United States. Its CBA Provider Network provides CBA on a vast variety of HIV preventions related topics, including enhancing cultural competency for a successful HIV program, cultural responsiveness and humility for people who inject drugs (PWID), diversity, equity, and inclusion, motivational interviewing, planning a condom distribution program, and so much more!

If you are interested in accessing this free resource, please reach out to us with a brief description of your request at CBA@cdph.ca.gov. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

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