

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](#).

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STAFF HIGHLIGHT

➤ Alejandro Contreras

OA is pleased to announce the promotion of **Alejandro Contreras** to Supervisor II and Chief of the newly established PrEP-AP & Strategic Projects Section within the AIDS Drug Assistance Program Branch.

Alej previously served as Supervisor I, Chief of the Strategic Development Unit. In that role, they led initiatives focused on strengthening HIV prevention services, medication access, program operations, and the systems that support providers and clients throughout California. Their promotion formalizes section-level leadership for work they have already played a central role in developing and coordinating.

The new PrEP-AP & Strategic Projects Section brings together two complementary units:

- The **PrEP-AP Unit**, which administers California's Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Assistance Program. PrEP-AP helps eligible Californians access medications and related medical services for HIV prevention, including PrEP and PEP.
- The **Strategic Projects Unit**, which develops and implements statewide initiatives intended to expand access, address gaps in HIV prevention and care,



and translate emerging policies, evidence, and funding priorities into sustainable programs.

As Section Chief, Alejandro will oversee PrEP-AP operations and policy, the PrEP-AP and ADAP formularies, the Medical Advisory Committee, contracting and fiscal coordination of sites and initiatives and a portfolio of strategic initiatives. This portfolio includes the PrEP and PEP Initiation and Retention Initiative, Minority AIDS Initiative programming, TelePrEP, PrEP access in correctional settings, long-acting injectable PrEP implementation, and other

efforts to reduce barriers to HIV prevention and medication access. They will also be hiring, training staff and establishing the foundations for the new section.

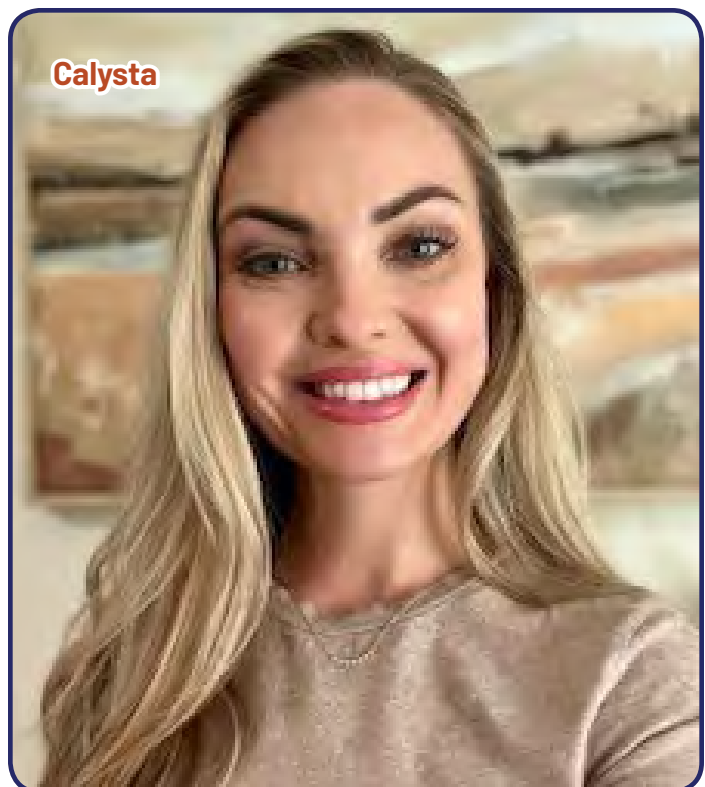
Alej began their career in direct service, including casework, benefits enrollment, and HIV navigation. They earned a Master of Social Work from the University of Southern California, with a concentration in Social Change and Innovation. Their approach to leadership is grounded in understanding client and provider pathways, translating complex requirements into workable systems, and building clear structures for accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

Please join us in congratulating Alej on their promotion and welcoming them into this new role!

➤ Calysta Loza

We are also pleased to share exciting news that **Calysta Loza** has been selected as the new Invoice and Fiscal Unit (IFU) Chief in the ADAP Branch's Program Integrity and Operations Section.

Nearly two years as the Health Program Specialist I in the Contracts and Grants Unit, Calysta has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership, technical expertise, and commitment to supporting both her unit and the broader ADAP Branch. Her ability to manage complex contracts and grants – including the Pharmacy Benefit Manager renewal, scope of work updates for ADAP and PrEP-AP enrollment sites, and budget revisions for PrEP and PEP Initiation and Retention Initiative (PPIRI) vendors – has been instrumental in advancing key program priorities. She has also served as a critical partner to the ACEI Branch on contractual and legislative changes impacting the ADAP Estimate, in addition to coordinating statewide survey responses for NASTAD and the annual CA ADAP/PrEP-AP Pharmacy Survey.



During significant staffing shortages, Calysta went above and beyond her core duties, assisting with invoice processing for Prime, PPIRI, and Project Cornerstone vendors. Her hands-on experience maintaining cash balance spreadsheets, invoice trackers, and reporting ADAP Actuals has uniquely prepared her to lead IFU.

Before joining ADAP, Calysta brought more than eight years of public sector analytical experience—including roles with California Correctional Health Care Services and the Department of Water Resources—where she served as a lead analyst, procurement expert, and small business/disabled veterans business enterprise advocate. This background in fiscal management, acquisitions, policy development, and cross-functional collaboration will serve the IFU exceptionally well.

Outside of work, Calysta stays busy with her husband and two boys. She enjoys hiking, paddle boarding, cheering on her boys at baseball games, and exploring family events

around Placer County. She also enjoys gardening, visiting the coast, and baking cookies. At home, there's almost always a DIY project in progress with her husband, who is a woodworker by trade but, ironically, would rather not work on their own house.

Please join us in congratulating Calysta on this exciting step in her career. We are fortunate to welcome her into this new leadership role and look forward to the continued excellence, collaboration, and integrity she brings to IFU!

➤ **Courtnee Mack**

OA is pleased to welcome **Courtnee Mack** to the Care Housing Unit in the HIV Care Branch's Special Programs Section. As the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program Advisor, Courtnee will be responsible for ensuring that our 20 HOPWA providers serving clients across 40 counties meet all state and federal compliance requirements. She'll analyze programmatic and fiscal data, develop policy letters, provide technical assistance and training, conduct on-site monitoring visits, and complete federal reports to ensure clients receive high-quality housing/supportive services and to improve overall HOPWA program effectiveness.

Courtnee brings with her a wealth of knowledge from an extensive career serving the California Community Colleges (CCC) – the largest system of higher education in the nation – including Sacramento City College (SCC), American River College (ARC), and Consumnes River College (CRC). Most recently, she served as a Student Services Supervisor for SCC's Disability Services, where she provided leadership and program oversight to support students with disabilities. Prior to SCC, Courtnee worked at ARC's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Cultural Engagement Center (UNITE Center), and her team received a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility award at the Leadership Institute for Tomorrow Conference for "River Tales," an actionable equity initiative designed to



strengthen belonging and connection on college campuses. Courtnee has also served as adjunct faculty for CRC's Interdisciplinary Studies, was nominated for CCC's Classified Employee of the Year, and was a keynote speaker during the CCC's Classified Senate Conference.

Courtnee holds a Master of Science in Leadership in Higher Education Administration, a Master of Education in Health and Wellness Education, and a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and Sports Medicine and has received college-level recognition for leadership, equity, and social justice. With more than 14 years of experience in education and public service, Courtnee's focus has been on supporting diverse communities, advancing equity and inclusion, improving access to services, and developing programs to help individuals overcome barriers to success. Her skills in providing oversight of program operations, ensuring overall compliance, coordinating resources, and collaborating with community partners are valuable additions to the Care Housing Unit Team.

Join us in welcoming Courtnee to OA!

HIV AWARENESS

➤ National Latinx HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

National Latinx HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD) is observed on **October 15th** to bring awareness to the impact of HIV/AIDS on the Latinx/Latine population. Social determinants of health such as systemic racism, discrimination, HIV stigma, and limited access to quality healthcare influence health outcomes including those related to HIV.

NLAAD promotes HIV testing, prevention and treatment methods, and education in Latine communities.

According to CDPH/OA surveillance data, in 2023 the Latine community accounted for 42% of living HIV cases and 57% of new HIV diagnoses.

For more data on the Latine community, please check out our [HIV/AIDS Epidemiology and Health Disparities in California - 2023](#) report.

The [two graphics on the next page](#) provide a glimpse of PrEP Assistance Program (PrEP-AP) use and preferred language distribution among Latine clients. For more information on PrEP-AP, please email PrEP.Support@cdph.ca.gov.

GENERAL UPDATES

➤ Mpox

OA continues its commitment 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.

Mpox digital assets continue to be available for

LHJs and CBOs on DCDC's [Campaign Toolkits](#) website.

Also, please refer to the [DCDC website](#) to stay informed of mpox updates.

➤ Office of STIs and Hepatitis C (OSH)

OSH has created an implementation guide for self-collection and self-testing programs for Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, and Hepatitis C Virus. Please use the following link for more information on the new [Self-Collection/Testing Implementation Guide](#).

In addition, OSH has created a new [Coverage Resources for Hepatitis C webpage](#) that provides information on testing and treatment.

➤ HIV/STI/HCV Integration

As we mentioned previously, **Dr. Marisa Ramos** has been selected as the new Syndemic Division Chief for the Division of HIV, HCV, and STIs (DoHHS).

In this role, Dr. Ramos will lead the new DoHHS as a whole, working in partnership with leaders and staff across both OA and OSH.

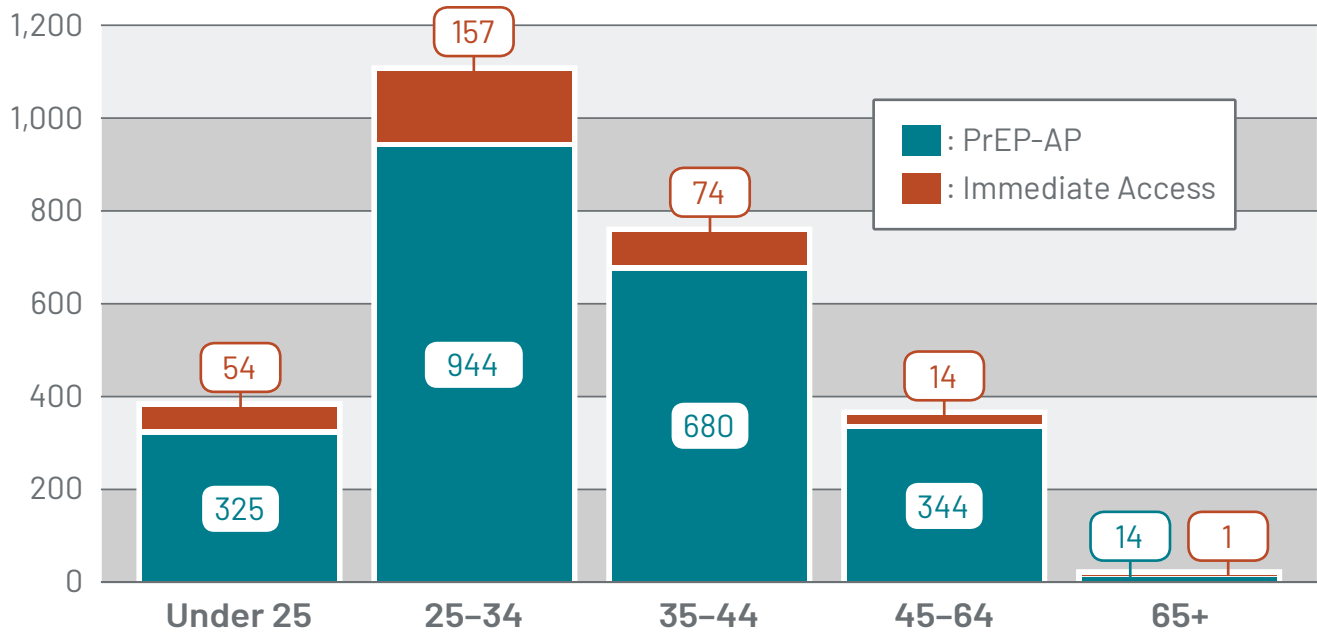
We will continue to keep you updated on any new events as we continue with the transition to better serve individuals at risk of acquiring HIV, STIs, and HCV in California.

ENDING THE EPIDEMICS STRATEGIC PLAN OA/OSH

The **visual on page six** is a high-level summary of our *Strategic Plan* that organizes 30 Strategies across six Social Determinants of Health. OA and OSH would like you to continue to use and share the [Strategic Plan](#) and the [Implementation Blueprint](#). These documents address HIV as

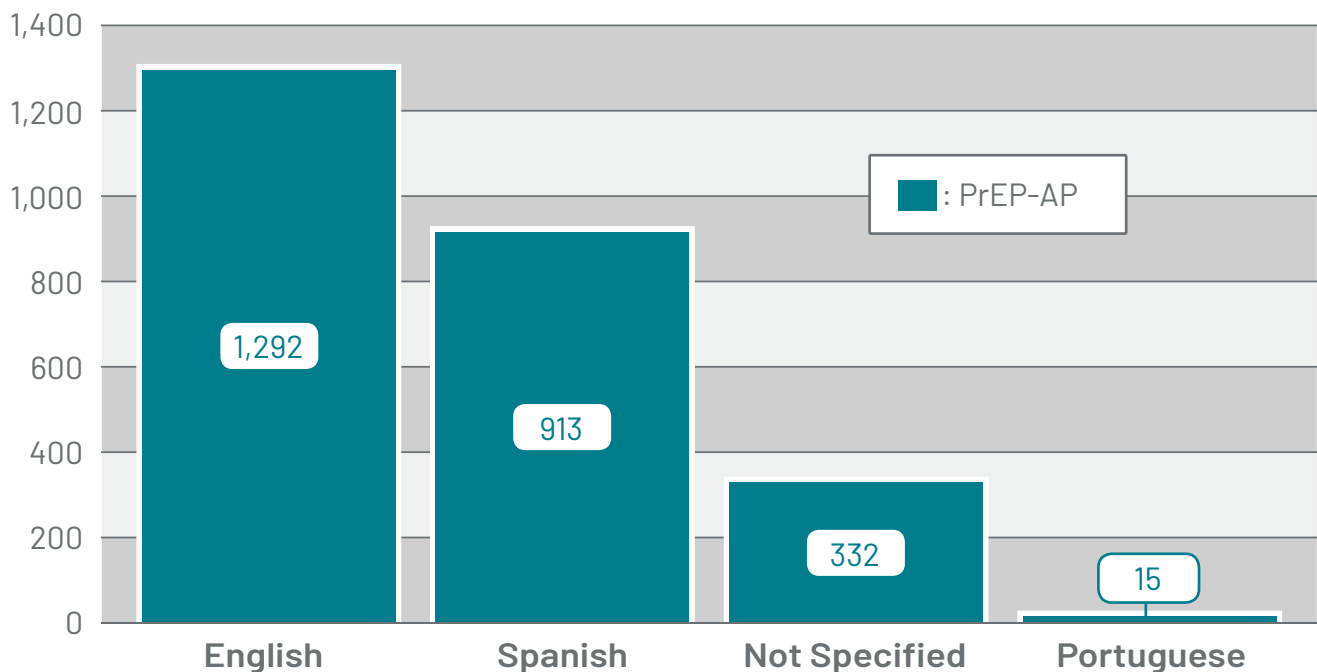
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Age Distribution of Active Latinx/Latine Clients in PrEP-AP in 2025

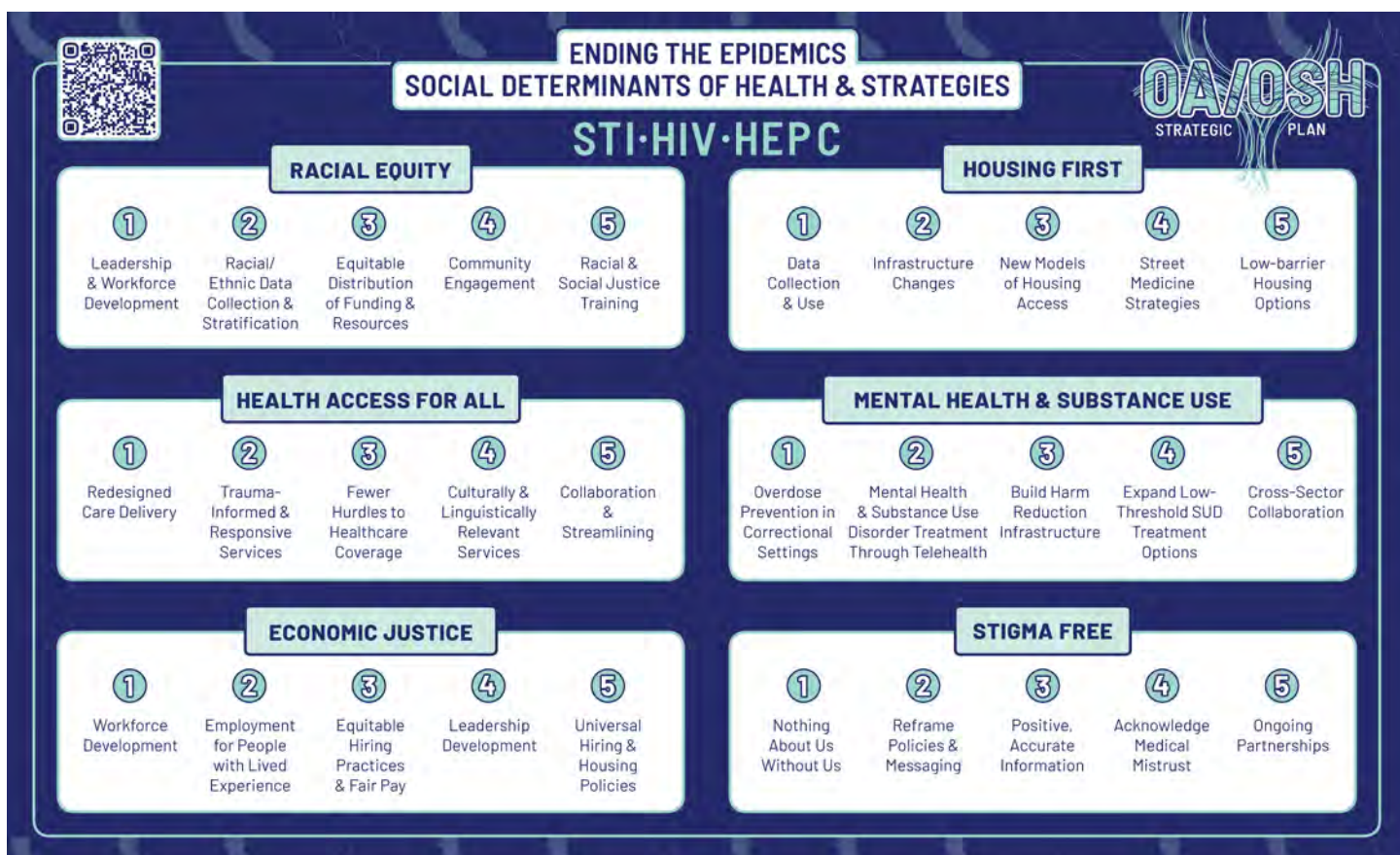


Active Client: Clients are considered active if they received a medication dispense, a medical-out-of-pocket expense, or both during the specified time period. The first full year of PrEP-AP was 2019. Immediate Access began in July 2022. Data include clients that specified race as Latinx of any race. Data may include nulls if clients prefer not to answer. **Prepared by:** ADAP Fiscal Forecasting (AFF) Section, ADAP and Care Evaluation and Informatics Branch, Office of AIDS. **Data source:** ADAP Enrollment System. **Run Date:** 09/28/2026.

Preferred Language Distribution Among Active Latinx/Latine Clients in PrEP-AP in 2025



Active Client: Clients are considered active if they received a medication dispense, a medical-out-of-pocket expense, or both during the specified time period. Data include clients enrolled in PrEP-AP, including those in PrEP and/or PEP Immediate Access. Data include clients that specified race as Latinx of any race. The Portuguese language preference includes European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese. **Prepared by:** ADAP Fiscal Forecasting (AFF) Section, ADAP and Care Evaluation and Informatics Branch, Office of AIDS. **Data source:** ADAP Enrollment System. **Run Date:** 09/28/2026.



a syndemic with HCV and other STIs, through Social Determinants of Health.

For technical assistance in implementing the *Strategic Plan*, California LHJs and CBOs can visit [Facente Consulting's webpage](#).

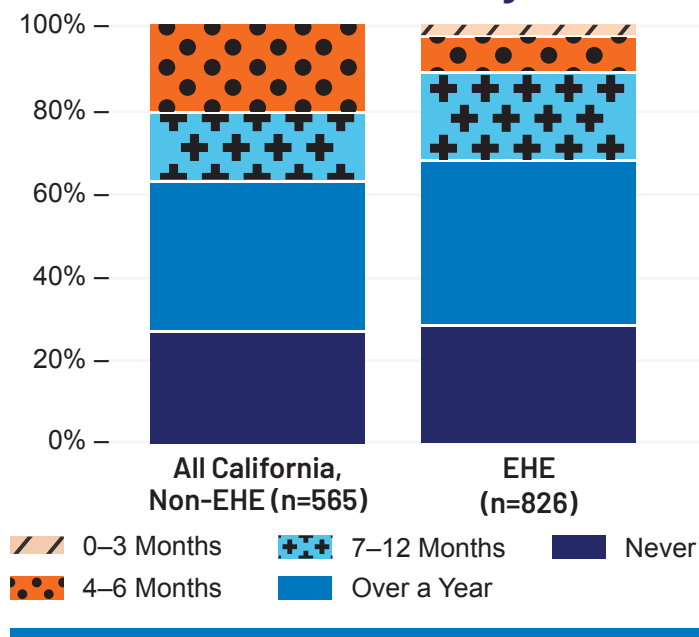
HEALTH ACCESS FOR ALL

➤ Strategy 1: Redesigned Care Delivery

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** (TMH) is advertised on gay dating apps, where users see an ad for home testing and are offered a free HIV-home test kit.

In August, 565 individuals in 37 counties ordered self-test kits, with 363 (64.3%) individuals

HIV Test History Among Individuals Who Ordered TakeMeHome Kits, August 2026



ordering 2 tests. Additionally, OA's existing TakeMeHome Program continues in the six California Consortium Phase I Ending the HIV Epidemic in America counties. Between the

program’s initiation in September 1, 2020, and August 31, 2026, 26,245 test kits have been distributed. This month, mail-in lab tests (including dried blood spot tests for syphilis, and Hepatitis C, as well as 3-site tests for gonorrhea and chlamydia) accounted for 370 (44.8%) of the 826 total tests distributed in EHE counties. Of those ordering rapid tests, 356 (78.1%) ordered 2 tests.

Since September 2020, 2,590 test kit recipients have completed the anonymous follow up survey from EHE counties; there have been 1,179 responses from the California expansion since January 2023.

Additional Key Characteristics	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Of those sharing their gender, were cisgender men	55.3%	50.5%
Of those sharing their race or ethnicity, identify as Hispanic or Latinx	38.5%	48.4%
Were 17-29 years old	37.9%	37.0%
Of those sharing their number of sex partners, reported 3 or more in the past year	45.2%	41.7%

Take Me Home Survey Highlights	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Would recommend TakeMeHome to a friend	95.3%	94.6%
Identify as a man who has sex with other men	43.9%	47.8%
Reported having been diagnosed with an STI in the past year	8.1%	8.7%

HEALTH ACCESS FOR ALL

➤ Strategy 3: Fewer Hurdles to Healthcare Coverage

As of September 30, 2026, there are 259 PrEP-AP enrollment sites and 249 clinical provider sites that currently make up the [PrEP-AP Provider network](#).

Of the 249 clinical provider sites, 122 also provided PrEP-AP enrollment services. When de-duplicated, there are 386 total sites.

****Note:** OA has identified an error in the previous methodology for counting enrollment sites and clinical provider sites going back to the November 2024 edition of *The OA Voice*, where sites that provided both service types were counted under both site types twice. The error has been corrected. Please reach out to PrEP.Support@cdph.ca.gov if you would like more information on this.

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

As of September 30, 2026, the number of ADAP clients enrolled in each respective ADAP Insurance Assistance Program are shown in the [table at the top of page nine](#).

RACIAL EQUITY

➤ Strategy 4: Community Engagement

California Planning Group (CPG) – Fall 2026 Meeting Announcement

The CPG and OA will host the Fall In-Person CPG Meeting from **November 17–19** at the Kimpton Rowan in Palm Springs, CA. The

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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	329	12%	---	---	---	---	8	0%	337	12%
25 - 34	909	33%	---	---	---	---	94	3%	1,003	37%
35 - 44	745	27%	1	0%	---	---	79	3%	825	30%
45 - 64	424	16%	---	---	2	0%	68	2%	494	18%
65+	19	1%	---	---	45	2%	4	0%	68	2%
TOTAL	2,426	89%	1	0%	47	2%	253	9%	2,727	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	191	7%	---	---	37	1%	24	1%	---	---	51	2%	5	0%	29	1%	337	12%
25 - 34	642	24%	2	0%	77	3%	58	2%	4	0%	153	6%	10	0%	57	2%	1,003	37%
35 - 44	556	20%	5	0%	48	2%	52	2%	1	0%	118	4%	5	0%	40	1%	825	30%
45 - 64	308	11%	1	0%	29	1%	21	1%	---	---	112	4%	3	0%	20	1%	494	18%
65+	16	1%	---	---	4	0%	3	0%	---	---	43	2%	---	---	2	0%	68	2%
TOTAL	1,713	63%	8	0%	195	7%	158	6%	5	0%	477	17%	23	1%	148	5%	2,727	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	57	2%	---	---	2	0%	11	0%	1	0%	12	0%	---	---	10	0%	93	3%
Male	1,557	57%	7	0%	179	7%	144	5%	3	0%	436	16%	20	1%	111	4%	2,457	90%
Trans	87	3%	---	---	10	0%	3	0%	1	0%	21	1%	2	0%	6	0%	130	5%
Unknown	12	0%	1	0%	4	0%	---	---	---	---	8	0%	1	0%	21	1%	47	2%
TOTAL	1,713	63%	8	0%	195	7%	158	6%	5	0%	477	17%	23	1%	148	5%	2,727	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: 09/30/2026 at 12:02:11 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 July
Employer Based Health Insurance Premium Payment (EB-HIPP) Program	593	1.37%
Office of AIDS Health Insurance Premium Payment (OA-HIPP) Program	6,217	-0.19%
Medicare Premium Payment Program (MPPP)	2,704	1.39%
Total	9,514	2.56%

Source: ADAP Enrollment System

meeting is open to the public. A Q&A session with the Division of HIV, HCV, and STIs will be held on November 17th.

The meeting content is focused on HIV and aging. It will feature a state-led presentation on Project Cornerstone, a community presentation on women aging with HIV, and a presentation on HIV and aging work by a CPG member. It will also include a capacity building session, including a HIV, STI, and HCV data presentation as well as a panel discussion and Q&A with medical experts. Additionally, committees will have dedicated time for an extended breakout session and team-building activities.

CPG and OA welcome the participation and input of the general public. We encourage you to join us at the fall meeting and learn about how we can address HIV and aging and bring our communities together to end the syndemic of HIV, STIs, and HCV.

For more information, please visit our [CPG webpage](#).

RACIAL EQUITY

➤ Strategy 5: Racial and Social Justice Training

Capacity Building Assistance

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers free capacity building assistance (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 prevention related topics!

To [submit a CBA request](#), please contact the Local Capacity Building and Program Development Unit at CBA@cdph.ca.gov.

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

