

HIV Outbreak Response Coordination at Philadelphia Dept of Public Health

ANNA THOMAS-FERRAIOLI, MPH
EHE ADVISOR
DIVISION OF HIV HEALTH(DHH)

DANICA KUNCIO, MPH
VIRAL HEPATITIS PROGRAM MANAGER
DIVISION OF DISEASE CONTROL (DDC)

Outbreak Response Partners

PDPH Partners

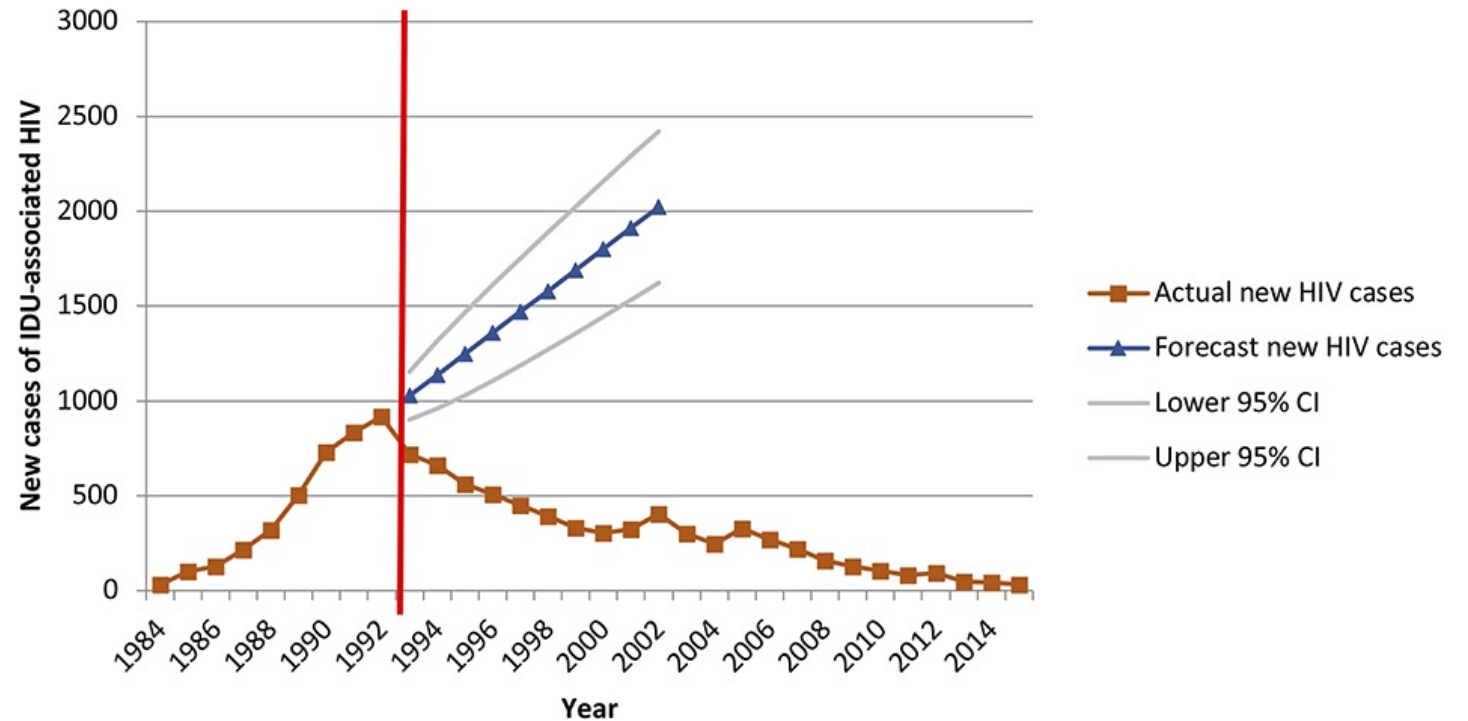
- Division of HIV Health
- Communications
- COVID Containment Health Hub Team
- DDC Immunization Program
- DDC STD Program
- DDC Viral Hepatitis Program, including Technical Advisory Committee
- Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction Program Outreach Environmental Team and NAS Program
- EIS Officer assigned across PDPH divisions

Other City Agency Partners

- Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services/Community Behavioral Health
- Office of Homeless Services, including Streets Team
- Philadelphia Department of Prisons

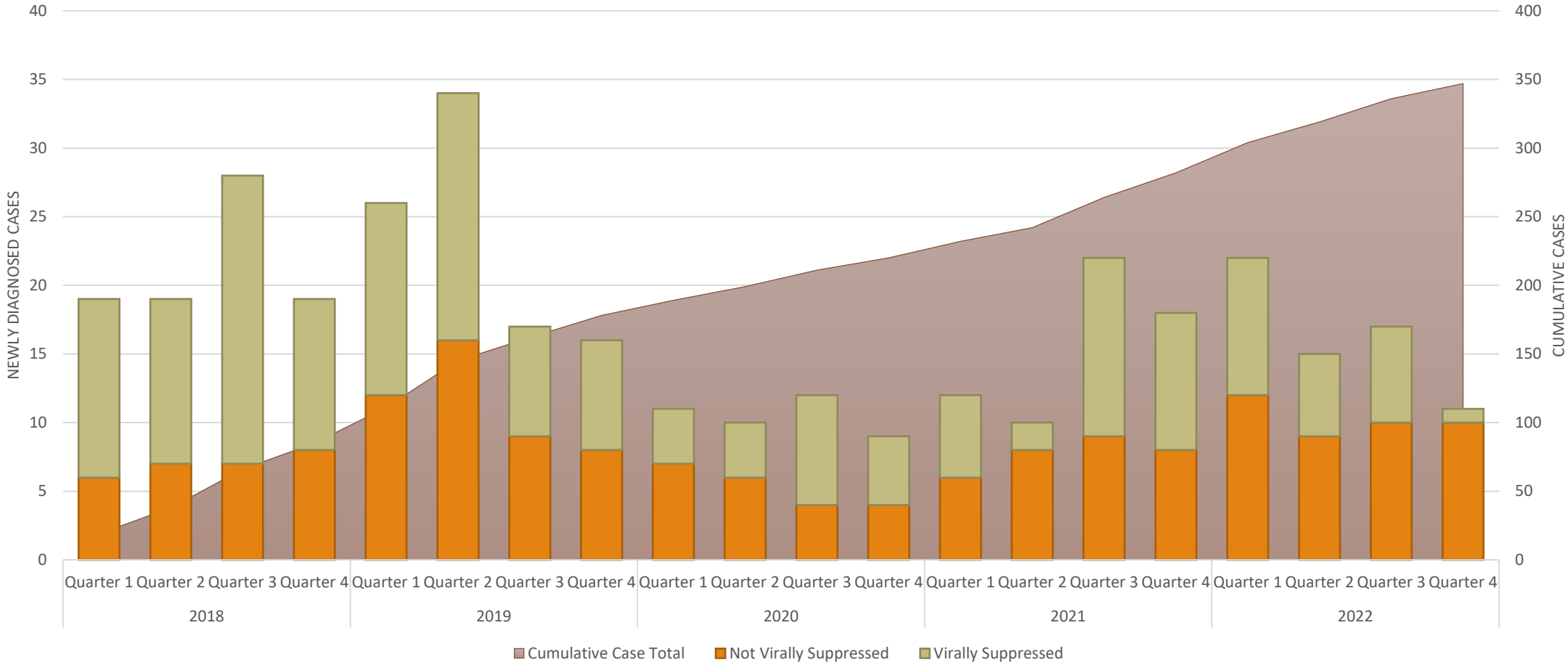
HIV Outbreak among PWID in Philadelphia

- PWID were historically heavily impacted in Philadelphia.
 - Syringe Services Programs (SSPs) began legally operating in Philadelphia in 1992, after then-Mayor Ed Rendell signed Executive Order 4-92, authorizing SSPs as a public health tool to address HIV.
 - HIV cases peaked the same year (819 new cases)
 - Since 1992, new cases fell continuously until 2016, when there were 32 new cases.
- In 2018, an outbreak was identified among PWID, and there has been an active response since that time.



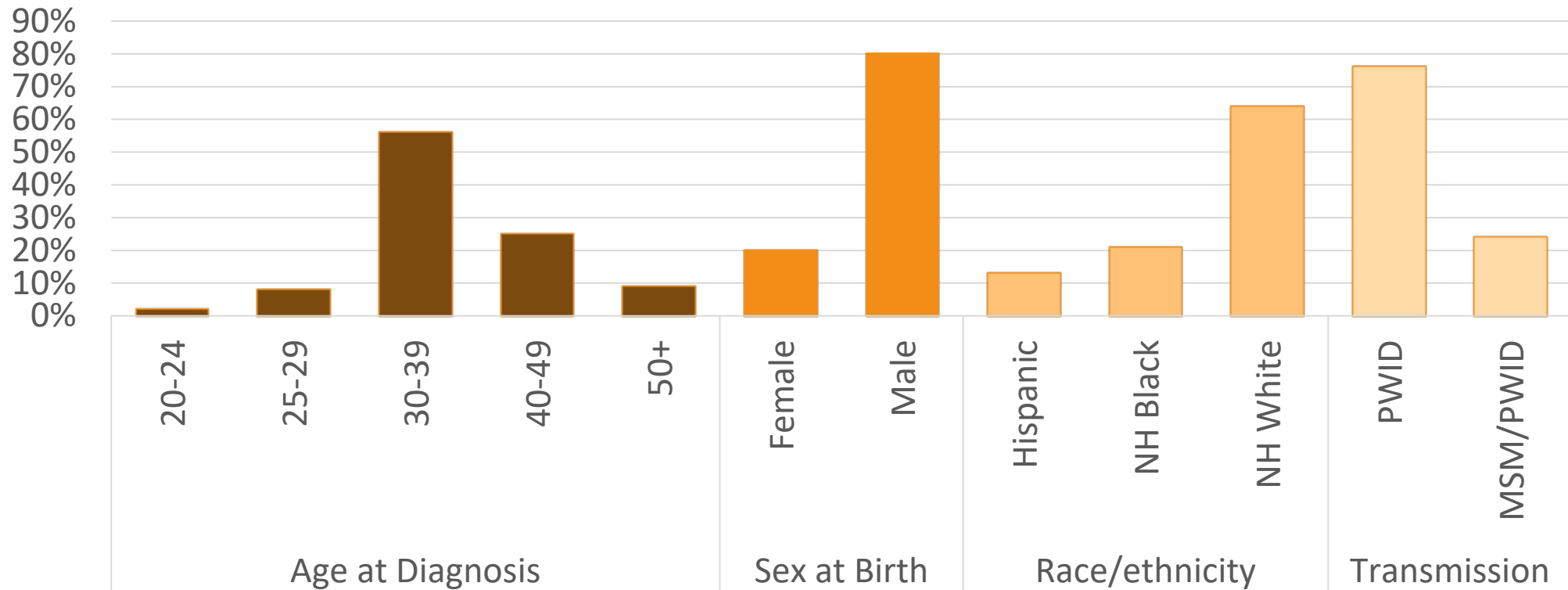
Source: Philadelphia Department of Public Health. The Effectiveness of Syringe Services Programs. CHART 2022;7(1):1-8.

Newly Diagnosed HIV Cases by Quarter Among Persons Who Inject Drugs, Philadelphia, 2018-2022



Diagnoses were among PWID and PWID/MSM

Characteristics of PWID Diagnosed in Philadelphia 2021 - 2022*



*YTD

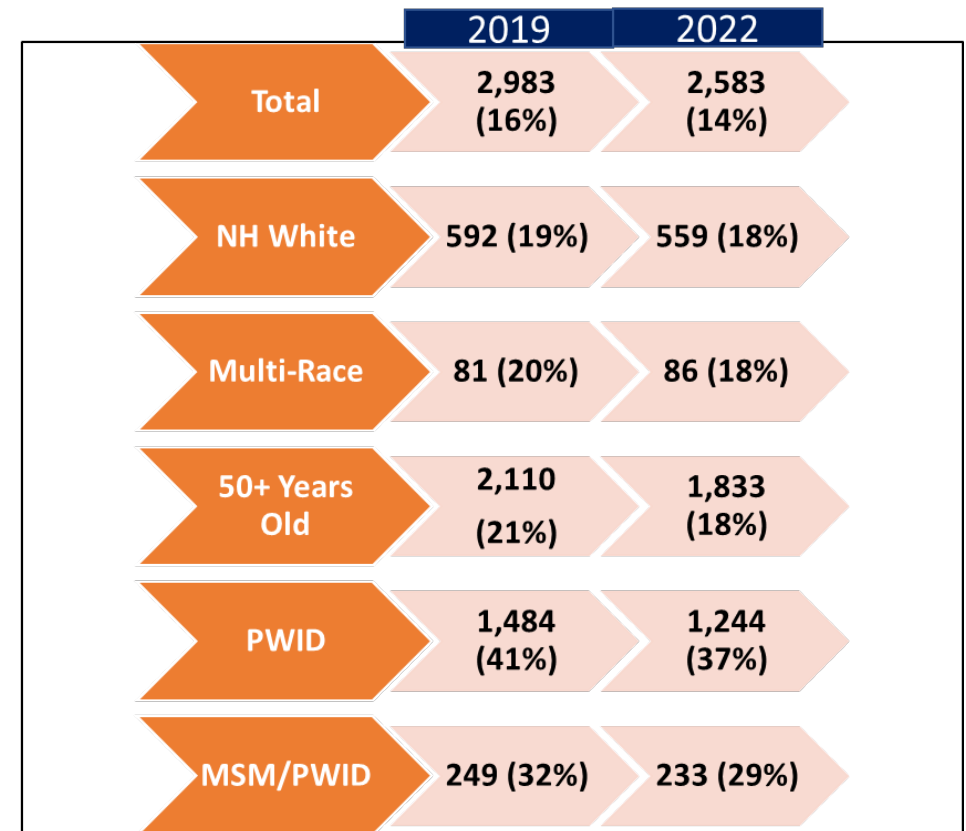
Note: Data collected through Mar 31, 2022; Cases include PWID/MSM diagnosed in Philadelphia

Hepatitis C and HIV Coinfection Data

In 2022, 13.8% of PLWH are coinfecting with HCV

- Higher rates associated with Age of PLWH: 2.5% among 20-24 years and 17.5% among 50+ Years
- 37% among PWID PLWH and 30% among PWID/MSM PLWH
- Have been improvements over time...

HCV Coinfections Among PLWH in 2019 & 2022



Source: Division of HIV Health and Viral Hepatitis Program at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, 2023.

What is PDPH Doing?

- Diagnose
 - Working with CBH to implement routine HIV screening at entry into Substance Use Disorder treatment intake
 - Worked with mobile PWUD providers to expand HIV testing in these settings
 - PDPH Substance Use Prevention Harm Reduction (SUPHR)'s Harm Reduction Field Nurse planned provision of HIV testing and wound care services
 - DHH's Prevention Clinical Associate conducted outreach to Emergency Departments to increase HIV testing
 - Expanded capacity for existing DHH-funded community-based status neutral testing sites to implement HIV testing

What is PDPH Doing?

- Treat

- Funding of the Sana Clinic, a low barrier HIV treatment clinic for PWID
- One Stop Shops – Other DHH funded sites that PWID can be referred to. These sites provide services not limited to HIV treatment, PrEP, PEP, Hepatitis C treatment, MAT, distribution of or prescriptions for Naloxone
- DHH Field Services Program, through the Data to Care initiative, conducts outreach, linkage, and re-engagement services to PWID who have been diagnosed with HIV who are not in care or in care but not virally suppressed.
- PDPH DHH is implemented requirements for Immediate Antiretroviral Treatment (iART) within 96 hours of an HIV diagnosis across the prevention and care system.

Sana Clinic

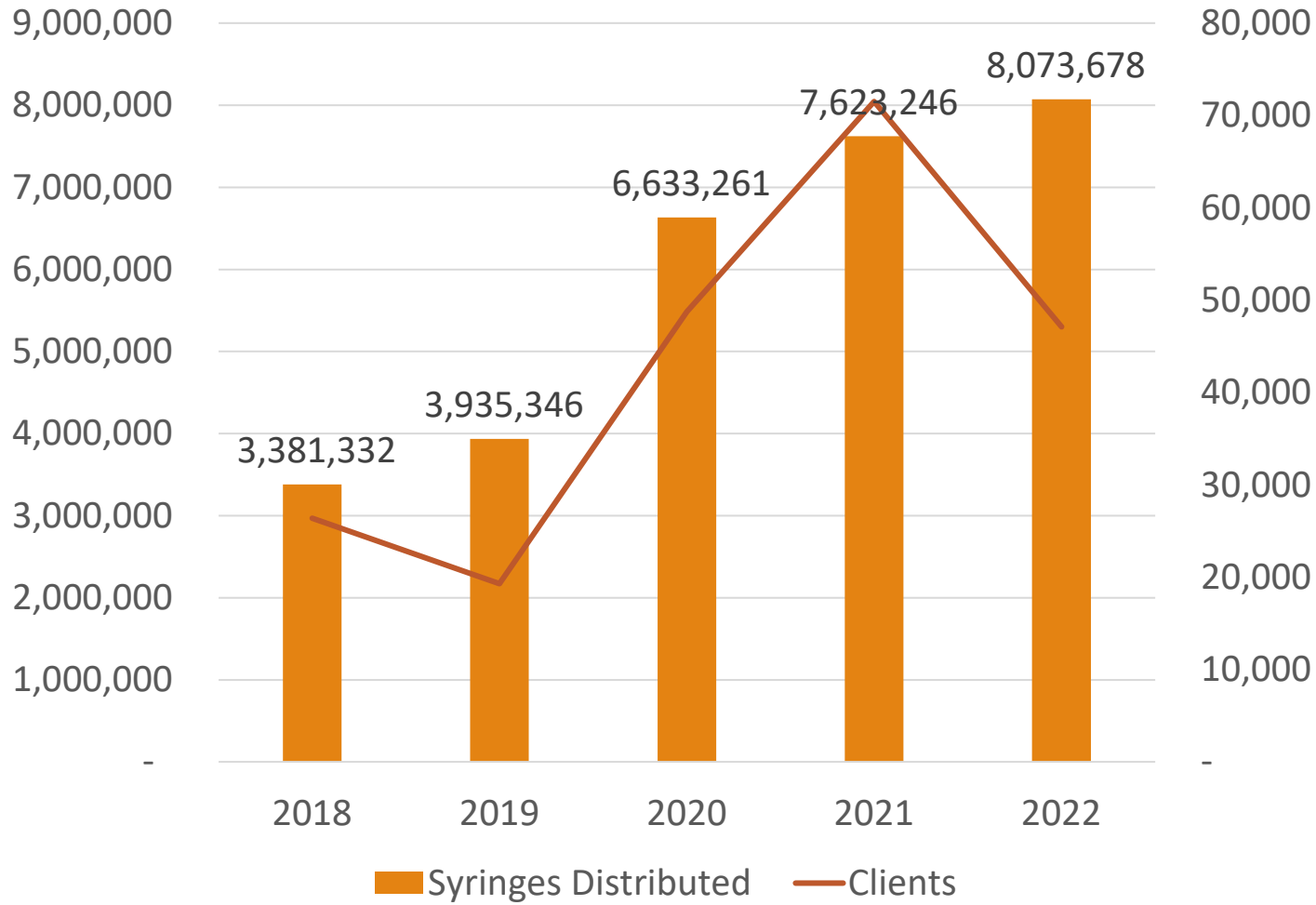
In response to the ongoing outbreak of HIV infection among people who inject drugs (PWID) in Philadelphia, PDPH AACO is funding a low-threshold storefront HIV treatment clinic called Sana Clinic at Prevention Point Philadelphia (PPP), a local syringe services program (SSP).

- PPP noted an increase in viral suppression and adherence to medication as more clinic patients have transitioned to injectable ART.
- As of March 2023, 11 of 55 patients (20%) are on injectable ART, and 23 of 55 (42%) patients were virally suppressed at the time of the report.
- At last count, 17 Sana patients were provided mpox vaccine.
- We are observing a decrease in visits from the program high of 65 active participants down to 38 in the most recent reporting period.

What is PDPH Doing?

- Prevent
 - PDPH DHH's Prevention Team provides technical assistance to PrEP providers
 - PDPH DHH's Prevention Clinical Associate is conducting outreach to medical providers to expand the number of providers who are prescribing PrEP
 - There has been a critical need to expand syringe services in Philadelphia. See the [CHART](#) released by the PDPH.
 - Jefferson has received approval to distribute syringes and harm reduction supplies to persons identified as PWID in their emergency rooms. All patients are also offered referral to treatment.
 - DHH expanded distribution of syringes from 3.4M in 2018 to 8.1M in 2022
 - PDPH DHH is implementing public health vending machines that we hope will provide syringes and works in the future

Syringe Distribution in Philadelphia



PPP Syringe Distribution and Disposal

DHH administers local funds for local syringe distribution efforts. In response to identified additional need, DHH has increased funding for distribution.

What is PDPH Doing?

- Respond
 - Activities described under Diagnose, Treat, and Prevent
 - Epi and Surveillance continued monitoring of the outbreak
 - Communications
 - Most Recent Health Advisory: [Increase in HIV Diagnoses in People Who Inject Drugs](#)
 - Plain language Outbreak Advisory—distributed to PDPH DHH prevention and treatment providers, Emergency Departments, mobile PWUD sites, and through SUPHR and the Division of Disease Control Viral Hepatitis Program, Resource Hubs, STD program
 - Health Alert flyer for the population (English and Spanish) –distributed as above
 - Evaluation: working with CDC partners to evaluate the response to identify effective strategies/ better understand the current population

Outreach Materials

Health Alert: Available in English and Spanish

Health Alert
For People Who Inject Drugs

HIV is increasing in Philadelphia
Here are steps you can take to reduce your risk

Know your status
Get tested for HIV at your medical provider or one of the walk-in testing sites listed on the back of this flyer.

Use new syringes and works
Get new syringes from a harm reduction provider near you. Avoid sharing injection equipment and works, including needles, cotton, cookers and water.

Take PrEP
PrEP is a medication that prevents a person from getting HIV. It can be taken as a daily pill or as a less frequent injection.

Use Condoms
Use a condom every time during sex. Free condoms are available.

If you test positive, start ART right away
Treatment for HIV prevents people with HIV from getting sick and people who remain in treatment reduce their risk of passing HIV to others. New treatment options are available, including less frequent injectable options.

For help finding local resources, including free HIV testing, PrEP, HIV treatment, and free condoms, call the Health Information Line at 215-985-2437, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

HIV Testing, Prevention, and Care Resources

Find a Free HIV Test Near You!
All locations offer free walk-in HIV testing

Kensington

- Prevention Point 2913 Kensington Ave 215-634-5272
- Preventing HIV Project/Get Up 3130 Kensington Ave 215-888-2448
- Congreso de Latinos Unidos 216 W Somerset St 215-763-8870

North Philadelphia / North of Center City

- ODAAT 2532 N. Broad St 215-226-7860
- Bebashi 1235 Spring Garden St 215-769-3561

South Philadelphia

- Health Center #1 1900 S. Broad St
- Mazzoni Center 1348 Bainbridge St 215-563-0652

Southwest / West Philadelphia

- Haven Youth Center 6934 Woodland Ave 215-985-2510

Find HIV Care!
Everyone with HIV in Philadelphia can get the care and medication they need, even if they can't pay or don't have insurance. To find a provider, call the PDPH Health Information Line at 215-985-2437, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Find PrEP!
Ask your HIV testing provider to connect you to PrEP. You can also call the PDPH Health Information Line at 215-985-2437 or visit <https://phillykeeponloving.com/hiv-prep/> to find a PrEP provider near you.

Spread the word about the increase in HIV!


Your Health MATTERS
FIND YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP
A list of free/low cost clinics offering care for your physical and mental health

Hepatitis Program-Produced Wallet Sized One Stop Shop Folded Card

DHH Health Information Helpline Card

FREE & ANONYMOUS
Health Information Helpline 215-985-2437

WE WANT TO HELP YOU.
Call Us!
Monday - Friday
8:30AM to 4:30PM
The Philadelphia Department of Public Health



Messaging to Providers: Providers Can Help!







- 1. Tell clients about the increase in HIV diagnoses.** Patients and clients who know their risk can take steps to prevent HIV.
- 2. Offer HIV testing for people who don't know their status.**
 - If a client tests **positive**, connect them to HIV treatment right away.
 - If a client tests **negative**, connect them to a provider for medicine to prevent HIV (PrEP).
- 3. Talk to clients about steps they can take to prevent the spread of HIV**
 - All Clients, regardless of HIV status:
 - Use clean syringes and supplies for each injection and safely dispose of needles. Syringe service programs offer sterile syringes, harm reduction supplies, and disposal services. Consider distributing syringes, works, and supplies to your clients.
 - Use condoms to prevent the spread of HIV through sex.
 - Clients who test HIV negative can take PrEP to prevent HIV.
 - Clients who are living with HIV can take ART to treat HIV.
- 4. Reduce stigma** Harm reduction services protect the health of Philadelphians and **DO NOT** encourage or increase drug use.

Messaging to Providers: Find Resources

- **Find HIV Testing:** Find a testing site at <https://phillykeeponloving.com/hiv-testing/>
- **Find PrEP:** Pre-exposure prophylaxis (or PrEP) is a kind of medicine that can help protect people from HIV.
 - Individuals can get PrEP from Health Center #1 on 1930 S. Broad Street.
 - Other PrEP providers can be found at <https://phillykeeponloving.com/hiv-prep/>.
- **Connect to HIV Treatment** If a person has HIV and is not in care, get help by calling the PDPH Health Information Helpline at (215) 985-2437, 8:30am-5:30pm.
- **Find Harm Reduction Resources** at <https://www.substanceusephilly.com/harmreduction>

Xylazine in the local street drug supply

- On December 8, 2022, Philadelphia Department of Public Health issued a Health Update regarding the increased presence of xylazine in the opioids, with increased concentrations of xylazine being observed in street drugs during 2022.
- Xylazine is associated with increasing fatal overdoses and extensive and severe wounds. Wound care needs can be emergent in nature, leaving HIV care discussions to a lower priority for patients.
- Substanceusephilly.com has published informational resources and has started to distribute xylazine test strips, which became available on the market in March 2023.

know what's in your drugs TRANQ XYLAZINE			
Xylazine is a veterinary tranquilizer that is cut in dope to give fentanyl longer legs. It's known as "anestesia de caballo" in Puerto Rico and "tranq" in Philly.			
Tranq was found in over 90% of dope samples tested in Philly in 2021	 When tranq is mixed with another drug (like fentanyl, heroin, or a benzo), the chance of overdose increases. If someone is overdosing administer naloxone like you normally would. If the person starts breathing again but is still sedated, they don't need more naloxone. Put them in rescue position and keep an eye on them.		
Dope with tranq was first seen in Puerto Rico. Today, it is being found in more and more places across the US.	 Tranq has been associated with severe wounds, which spread and worsen very quickly.		
 These wounds are seen regardless of how people use: smoking, snorting, or injecting. It's very difficult for these wounds to heal on their own so it is important to get medical attention if you have one.	What can you do if you think there is tranq in your dope? First, try to ask around and see how the drug is making other people feel before you buy or use it. Since tranq can cause a really heavy nod, try to use somewhere that you will be safe and won't fall and hurt yourself. Finally, if you think there is tranq in your dope let others know--including someone at your local exchange program--so folks know to be careful.		
 carry naran (naloxone)	 start low and go slow	 tell someone you're using	Never Use Alone English hotline: 800-484-3731 Spanish hotline: 800-928-5330 The Brave App download in the app store
Department of Public Health CITY OF PHILADELPHIA		Created by the Substance Use and Harm Reduction (SUPHR) division For more information on tranq in Philadelphia visit substanceusephilly.com/tranq	

Source: Philadelphia Department of Public Health. Xylazine (tranq) exposure among people who use substances in Philadelphia. Health Update, December 8, 2022. Accessed at https://hip.phila.gov/document/3154/PDPH-HAN_Update_13_Xylazine_12.08.2022.pdf; Substance Use Philly Website, <https://www.substanceusephilly.com/tranq>.

Housing Insecurity among PWID


- Ongoing crisis of affordability and supply of available units.
- For PWID, stigma leads to further limitations to housing access.
- PDPH DHH is in pre-implementation of a Pennsylvania State Rebate funded Transitional Housing Program
 - Employs a housing first approach--no sobriety preconditions for housing placement
 - Available for Ryan White-eligible individuals and households who are housing insecure or rent burdened.
 - Goal: transition participants to permanent housing

Implementation Challenges

- Destabilization and Stigma

Narcotics bust in Kensington nets \$1.4 million in drugs; 175 arrests made

Some of the seized items include 60 pounds of marijuana, 1,200 grams of heroin, 850 grams of fentanyl and \$100,000 in cash.

By [6abc Digital Staff](#) and [Sharifa Jackson](#) 

Tuesday, June 27, 2023



Inside Philly's 40-year war on homeless encampments



by Max Marin

February 23, 2021

Philadelphia City Council passes near-total ban on future safe consumption, overdose prevention sites

The city bill now goes to Mayor Jim Kenney for final passage. The ban comes as the nonprofit Safehouse continues its efforts to open a site.

By [Nicole Leonard](#) · Updated Sep. 14, 2023 6:31 pm

Areas of Collaboration in Outbreak Response

1. Shared outreach resources: the Hepatitis program-produced Your Health Matters distributed to share non-stigmatizing one-stop shop resources to address HIV, viral hepatitis, and other essential health needs
2. Shared partnerships: partnership with CBH and other entities that serve PWID
3. Shared data: using surveillance data matches to identify coinfection and shared populations of interest
4. Shared knowledge: shared knowledge and experiences, including regarding how national and local policies impact provision of services and sharing of data for PWID who are impacted by HIV and viral hepatitis

Partnering with CBH

Viral Hepatitis and DHH are working with the single county payer for behavioral health Medicaid

- Goal: To improve routine HCV & HIV screening requirements in SUD treatment settings
- A combination of relationships built during the COVID-19 respond and the work of the Viral Hepatitis team to pave the road with improved HCV pathways--> Reflex testing at intake for all patients
- HIV outbreak response able to leverage relationships and conversations about integration

Viral Hepatitis & HIV Integration Foundation



Department of

Public Health

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Existing Partnership → Immediate Response

- Over many years have built collaborations & programming to weave HCV into HIV activities
- Monthly leadership meetings, regular epidemiology meetings, and biweekly specific meetings
- Data Use Agreements and pathways are all in place
- Promote syndemics with providers
- When we have outbreaks or clusters, the framework is already in place to address coinfection not one or the other

Philadelphia Hepatitis B & Hepatitis C Outbreak Plan & Cluster Detection

Outbreak Plan

- In approval phase
- Healthcare acquired infections-oriented
- Limited capacity
- Includes Language to refer to HIV plan and team accordingly

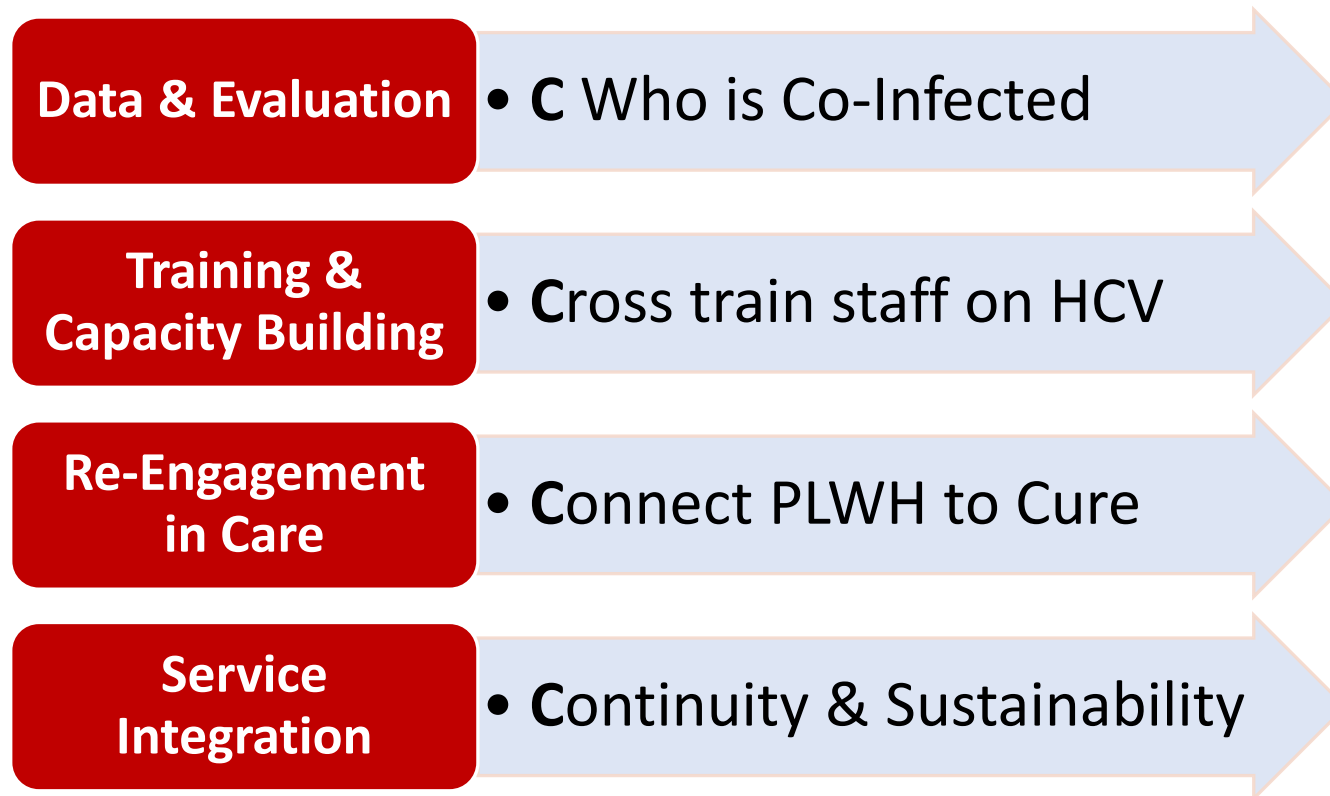
Cluster Detection

- Perform follow-up on any potential HAI or alternative setting oriented cluster
- No molecular work performed

Historical HIV/HCV Coinfection SPNS Project

Jurisdictional Approach to Curing HCV Among HIV/HCV Co-Infected People of Color (C-Ya)

- 3-year HRSA/SPNS cooperative agreement; September 2016 – September 2019



Key CYa Successes

- **Improved diagnosis of HCV in PLWH**
 - 90% of sites adopted HCV antibody testing with reflex to HCV RNA → 95% of HCV AB+ patients in the RW care system received confirmatory HCV RNA testing
- **Improved HCV treatment access & success among PLWH**
 - All sites had at least 1 provider trained to treat HCV
 - 75% of HCV RNA+ patients in care in the RW care system were cured of their HCV
- **Training developed by MA-AETC for providers to treat HCV**
- **Messaging in training activities emphasized harm reduction & strategies to treat PWUD**

Ryan White Performance Measures

EMA Aggregate as of December 31 of Year

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hepatitis C Screening	52%	60%	54%	59%	57%
HCV RNA Among HCV Ab+	93%	92%	89%	86%	89%

Provider Metrics for RW Care

CAREWare metrics for screening practices & HCV Care Continuum markers

Quality Improvement Projects

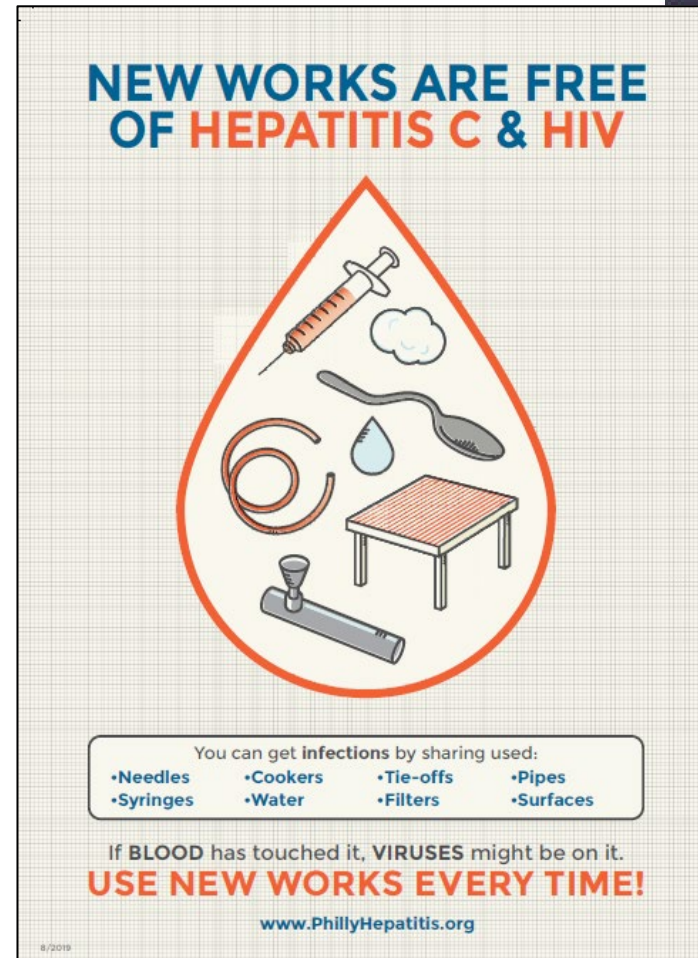
PDPH Works with Providers to improve metrics & processes

Viral Hepatitis Experience Among PWID

- Health Department responses to the Opioid epidemic started from Viral Hepatitis around 2014
- Work closely with local SSP, screening for HCV onsite
- Work with behavioral health providers since 2017 on integration of HCV treatment
- Have a Navigation program for people with SUD diagnosis and HCV

Coordinated Patient Education

- ✓ Website Inclusion & Integration
 - ✓ Share links and content
- ✓ New Works Cards
- ✓ One Stop Shop model is promoted
- ✓ Case Manager and comprehensive staff trainings are HIV and HCV inclusive
- ✓ New coinfecting individuals re-linked to HIV and viral hepatitis care



Coordinated Epidemiology

Regularly monitor coinfection in Philadelphia, identify new coinfections for enhanced outreach, etc.

- ✓ Monthly Surveillance Data Matches
- ✓ Syndemic EIS Officer
- ✓ NHBS PWID include HCV testing and extensive drug use related questions to inform epidemiology and programming
- ✓ Special projects looking at HIV & HCV care continuums amongst coinfecting individuals

Coordinated Provider & Care Provision Outreach

Prepare Healthcare providers to address HIV & viral hepatitis, as well as substance use

- ✓ HIV Data 2 Care Project
 - ✓ HCV integration for case conferences and outcome measurement
- ✓ Low Threshold Sexual Health Sites
 - ✓ HIV funded sites include HCV testing & linkage to care along with HAV/HBV vaccination
- ✓ HCV Treating Provider Preceptorship Model : started among HIV providers
- ✓ Performance Measures for RW continue to be used
- ✓ Philly InSync project....

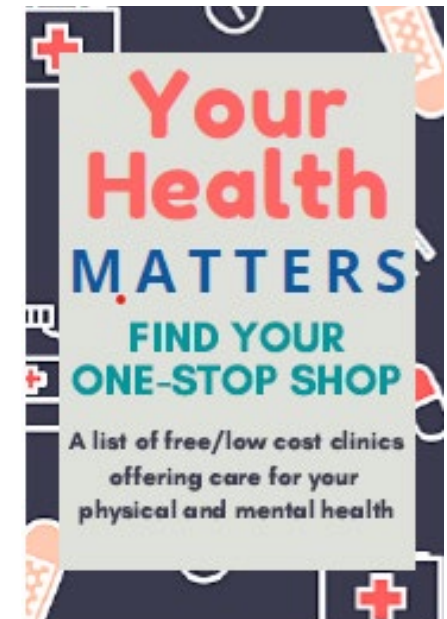
Tools for Service Integration

Philadelphia's Integration & Synchronization of Syndemic Services:

- Integration of behavioral health care with HIV, Viral Hep, STD & other services
- Provider Toolkit of local best practices
- TAC Meetings of local providers invested in integration, with PDPH program supports
- Enhanced TA available with PDPH contract
- Education for staff may be available
- RFPs

Continuing Education for Clinicians

- HCV Preceptorship (Spring 2023) → learn to treat
- HBV ECHO
- Health of PWUD Training Series
- Empire Liver Foundation



Key Takeaways

- There continues to be an outbreak of HIV among PWID and an epidemic of HCV among PWID
- HBV & HCV continue to be prevalent amongst PLWH in Philadelphia
- Historical work on HIV/HCV coinfection & integration has been impactful
- Outbreak responses are primed to be seamlessly syndemic oriented

A grayscale photograph of the Philadelphia City Hall building, a grand neoclassical structure with a prominent central dome and ornate facade. The building is the background for the text. In the foreground, there is a fountain with several water jets and a few people walking on the plaza.

Questions? Reach out to PDPH!

Danica Kuncio

Viral Hepatitis Program Manager

Danica.Kuncio@phila.gov

Anna Thomas-Ferraioli

EHE Advisor

Anna.thomasferraioli@phila.gov