



OC In+Care

Newsletter for providers serving people living with HIV/AIDS in Orange County

In the last issue of the In+Care newsletter, we discussed the importance of engaging clients in medical care. In this issue, we will talk about the Continuum of Care, also known as the Treatment Cascade, and how you can help your patients/clients understand the importance of HIV viral load suppression.

The Continuum of Care explains the following stages of HIV care:

HIV Infected the total number of people who are estimated to be HIV positive.

HIV Diagnosed is the total number of people who have been diagnosed with HIV disease.

In HIV Care is the total number of people who see their doctor regularly (at least once every 6 months).

Undetectable HIV Viral Load is a HIV viral load count below 200 copies/mL in the blood.

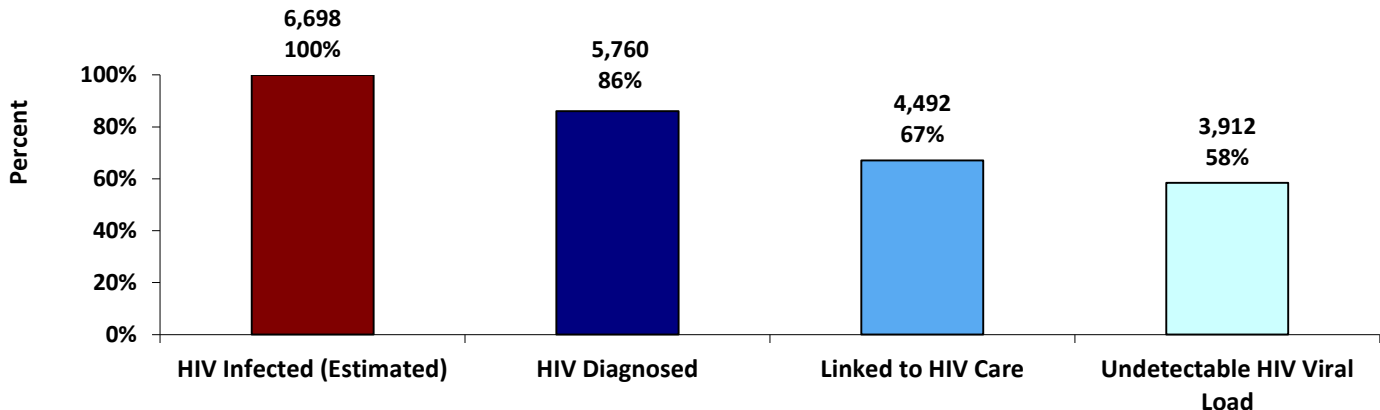
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 14% (or about one in seven) of all people living with HIV disease (PLWHD) in the United States (US) do not know they are positive. Furthermore, about half (52%) of all PLWHD are in HIV care and only 40% of all are virally suppressed in the US.

In Orange County, an estimated 6,698 individuals were living with HIV as of 2014. Of that, 67% (4,492 of 6,698) were linked to a HIV primary care provider and 58% (3,912 of 6,698) had an undetectable HIV viral load. In comparison to national and California data, Orange County fairs better in all stages of the cascade.

Orange County goal for PLWHD by the end of 2015 are:

- 85% will be in HIV care
- 67% with undetectable HIV viral load

Orange County Treatment Cascade* 2014



*Data presented in the Orange County Treatment Cascade reflect those who are currently living with HIV disease in Orange County.

Viral load suppression is the key to staying healthy. If your patients/clients have been prescribed antiretroviral therapy, help remind them the importance of taking their HIV medication as prescribed.

According to the CDC, those who are currently on HIV medication will live more than twice as long as individuals who are not on HIV medication.¹ Furthermore, suppressed viral load reduces the risk of transmitting the virus to others. A suppressed viral load may also slow the progression towards AIDS.²

In late 2014, Orange County implemented a campaign to remind PLWHD of the importance of seeing their doctor regularly. Due to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), nearly 700 PLWHD have transitioned from Ryan White-funded medical care to public and private insurance. This transition has significantly changed how PLWHD access medical care. As a service provider, it is important to support and facilitate continued medical care access and adherence. The following are simple tips to promote medical care adherence:

If you are a medical provider, ask your patients...

- What questions do you have about your health?
- Do you understand your numbers (viral load, CD4, etc.)?

As a provider, you can also...

- Do reminder calls before visits
- Follow up on missed visits
- Coordinate care/adherence with the patient's Ryan White case manager, when appropriate



If you are a support service provider, ask your clients...

- When did you last see your HIV doctor?
- Do you know your numbers (HIV viral load and CD4)?
- Is your next appointment with your HIV doctor within 6 months?
- Do you have any questions for your doctor?

The HIV Planning and Coordination website has resources for persons living with HIV. The website can be accessed via the link below:

<http://ochealthinfo.com/phs/about/dcepi/hiv/libehiv>

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Vital Signs, November 2014

² <http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/html/1/adult-and-adolescent-arv-guidelines/458/plasma-hiv-1-rna--viral-load--and-cd4-count-monitoring>

ORANGE COUNTY HIV QUALITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Our+Care OC is a project of the Orange County HIV Quality Management Committee. The HIV Quality Management Committee works to increase the quality of Ryan White services. For more information about the committee, please call (714) 834-8063. If you have feedback or suggestions for future newsletters, please contact Mindy He at MHe@ochca.com.

