

- Updates
- Strategic Plan
- Health Access for All
- Racial Equity

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 me in welcoming back **Will Graening**, our new Quality Assurance and Training Coordinator/Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA) within the AIDS Drugs Assistance Program (ADAP) Branch's Quality Assurance and Training (QAT) Unit. Will comes from the Department of Education as an AGPA where he was a part of the Child Nutrition Program (CNP). He maintained a caseload of local agencies in specified regions responding to inquiries on eligibility requirements to participate in the CNP. He provided technical assistance to local agency organizations and reviewed and approved requests for program participation changes. He also provided analytical assistance to other units in the Nutrition Services Division on program and operations, including policy and regulation interpretation, program requirements, and compliance issues.

Prior to joining the Department of Education, Will was a Staff Services Analyst (SSA)/Client Services Lead in the ADAP Client Services Unit (CSU), where he monitored phone coverage and responded to questions about program and eligibility as a subject matter expert in both ADAP and the Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Assistance Program (PrEP-AP). In this role, he also served as the grievance coordinator for the ADAP Branch, conducted monthly quality assurance (QA) on the call center staff, completed monthly aggregate reports for QA and grievances, and assisted in training and onboarding of



Will & Children

new staff. Before being promoted to an SSA, Will started his journey in the ADAP CSU as a Program Technician II answering calls from clients, enrollment workers (EW), providers, and pharmacies, as well as processing work items, and assisted in training new hires in the CSU through side-by-side observation. Prior to joining state service, Will worked at Faneuil where he was a supervisor handling escalation and QA for his team who was responsible for taking calls for the Covered California Health Benefits Exchange. Prior to that, Will had experience at other call centers, including Teledirect and Kelly

Services (HealthNet), as well as several years of customer service and retail experience.

Will likes short walks on the beach. He's a family man and spending time with his kids is especially his favorite thing in the world. He loves all things Marvel, Walking Dead, and recently started appreciating LEGO. On a lighter note, he mentioned if anyone knows how to get his 12-year-old to smell less bad or his 5-year-old to curse less, he would appreciate the advice. :) All jokes aside, he is really excited to be back in OA and is looking forward to continuing supporting our clients.

Once Will completes his training, he will be working alongside Lori and Juanita conducting QA reviews of ADAP and PrEP-AP applications, performing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) remediation on documents in preparation for website contribution, performing user acceptance testing for the ADAP Enrollment System (AES), creating and maintaining job aids for the AES, and creating and maintaining on-demand training for staff, EWs, and contractors.

Please join us in welcoming Will back to ADAP and the newest team member in the QAT Unit!

GENERAL UPDATES

➤ 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.

Digital assets are available for LHJs and CBOs on DCDC's [Campaign Toolkits](#) website.

➤ HIV/STI/HCV Integration

We continue to move 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 as new information comes in.

ENDING THE EPIDEMICS STRATEGIC PLAN OA/STD

The [visual at the top of page three](#) is a high-level summary of our *Strategic Plan* that organizes 30 Strategies across six Social Determinants of Health (SDoH).

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.

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

In November, 379 individuals in 41 counties ordered self-test kits, with 263 (69.4%)

ENDING THE EPIDEMICS
STI·HIV·HEPC

OA/STD
STRATEGIC PLAN

RACIAL EQUITY

- 1 Leadership & Workforce Development
- 2 Racial/Ethnic Data Collection & Stratification
- 3 Equitable Distribution of Funding & Resources
- 4 Community Engagement
- 5 Racial & Social Justice Training

HOUSING FIRST

- 1 Data Collection & Use
- 2 Infrastructure Changes
- 3 New Models of Housing Access
- 4 Street Medicine Strategies
- 5 Low-barrier Housing Options

HEALTH ACCESS FOR ALL

- 1 Redesigned Care Delivery
- 2 Trauma-Informed & Responsive Services
- 3 Fewer Hurdles to Healthcare Coverage
- 4 Culturally & Linguistically Relevant Services
- 5 Collaboration & Streamlining

MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE

- 1 Overdose Prevention in Correctional Settings
- 2 Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Treatment Through Telehealth
- 3 Build Harm Reduction Infrastructure
- 4 Expand Low-Threshold SUD Treatment Options
- 5 Cross-Sector Collaboration

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

- 1 Workforce Development
- 2 Employment for People with Lived Experience
- 3 Equitable Hiring Practices & Fair Pay
- 4 Leadership Development
- 5 Universal Hiring & Housing Policies

STIGMA FREE

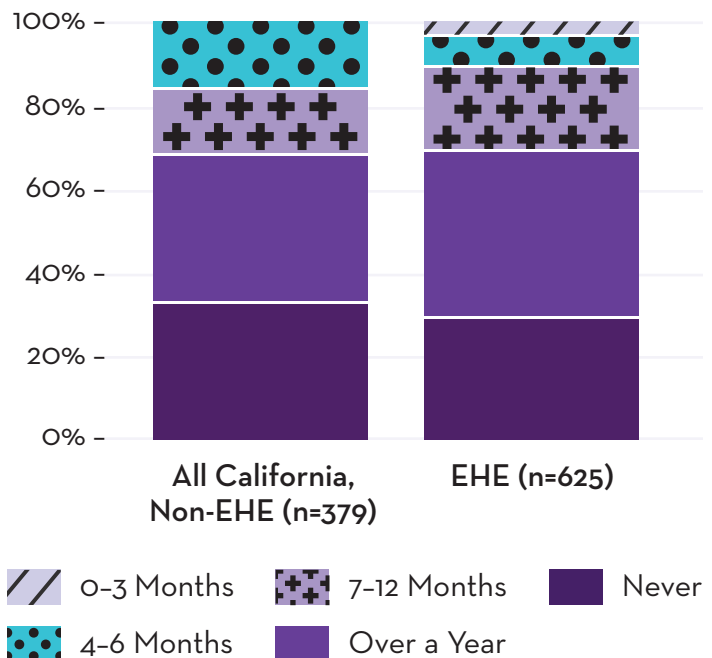
- 1 Nothing About Us Without Us
- 2 Reframe Policies & Messaging
- 3 Positive, Accurate Information
- 4 Acknowledge Medical Mistrust
- 5 Ongoing Partnerships

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. Between the program's initiation in September 1, 2020, and November 30, 2024, 14,671 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 231 (37.0%) of the 625 total tests distributed in EHE counties. Of those ordering rapid tests, 303 (76.90%) ordered 2 tests.

TAKEMEHOME

Since September 2020, 1,638 test kit recipients have completed the anonymous follow up survey from EHE counties; there have been 731 responses from the California expansion since January 2023.

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



Additional Key Characteristics	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Of those sharing their gender, were cisgender men	61.3%	58.8%
Of those sharing their race or ethnicity, identify as Hispanic or Latinx	37.3%	42.1%
Were 17-29 years old	42.2%	45.1%
Of those sharing their number of sex partners, reported 3 or more in the past year	47.5%	47.1%

Survey Highlights	EHE	All California, Non-EHE
Would recommend TakeMeHome to a friend	94.3%	93.8%
Identify as a man who has sex with other men	50.1%	52.1%
Reported having been diagnosed with an STI in the past year	8.4%	10.4%

➤ Strategy 3: Fewer Hurdles to Healthcare Coverage

As of December 31, 2024, there are 278 PrEP-AP enrollment sites and 229 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 five of this newsletter.

As of December 31, 2024, the number of ADAP clients enrolled in each respective ADAP Insurance Assistance Program are shown in the chart at the top of page six.

➤ Strategy 3: Fewer Hurdles to Healthcare Coverage

Pacific AETC is excited to announce that they have launched the California Rural Health Provider Toolkit. The toolkit is a collection of national, state, and local resources to support healthcare providers in rural and underserved counties in the state. The main page includes an interactive map of California that users can click on to access region-specific resources and lists of other healthcare organizations in those areas that provide health and support services to these communities, as well as be connected to the Pacific AETC local partner site that supports their county. This toolkit can be continuously updated as new and updated resources become available.

➤ Strategy 4: Community Engagement

HOPWA Consolidated Plan Public Comment Period

California’s Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) is developing its Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) for 2025-2029. This document outlines how U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding will be used to address affordable housing needs within their jurisdiction. OA’s Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) Program is one of the programs included in the ConPlan.

HCD is hosting a Public Hearing Webinar on February 6, 2025, from 2:00 – 3:30 PM. The hearing will summarize the 2025-2029 ConPlan and updates to the 2025-2026 Annual Action Plan (AAP), provide public comment opportunity, and allow time for questions.

[Register for the Webinar.](#)

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	382	12%	---	---	---	---	23	1%	405	12%
25 - 34	1,127	34%	---	---	---	---	164	5%	1,291	39%
35 - 44	741	23%	---	---	1	0%	128	4%	870	26%
45 - 64	404	12%	---	---	11	0%	97	3%	512	16%
65+	30	1%	---	---	174	5%	5	0%	209	6%
TOTAL	2,684	82%	0	0%	186	6%	417	13%	3,287	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	217	7%	4	0%	55	2%	19	1%	1	0%	66	2%	3	0%	40	1%	405	12%
25 - 34	717	22%	4	0%	121	4%	93	3%	7	0%	258	8%	12	0%	79	2%	1,291	39%
35 - 44	481	15%	4	0%	79	2%	51	2%	4	0%	190	6%	5	0%	56	2%	870	26%
45 - 64	268	8%	---	---	47	1%	18	1%	1	0%	136	4%	---	---	42	1%	512	16%
65+	19	1%	---	---	3	0%	5	0%	---	---	171	5%	---	---	11	0%	209	6%
TOTAL	1,702	52%	12	0%	305	9%	186	6%	13	0%	821	25%	20	1%	228	7%	3,287	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%	---	---	5	0%	10	0%	1	0%	10	0%	---	---	4	0%	87	3%
Male	1,538	47%	11	0%	279	8%	171	5%	12	0%	781	24%	19	1%	200	6%	3,011	92%
Trans	84	3%	---	---	14	0%	5	0%	---	---	14	0%	1	0%	6	0%	124	4%
Unknown	23	1%	1	0%	7	0%	---	---	---	---	16	0%	---	---	18	1%	65	2%
TOTAL	1,702	52%	12	0%	305	9%	186	6%	13	0%	821	25%	20	1%	228	7%	3,287	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: 12/31/2024 at 12:02:58 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 November
Employer Based Health Insurance Premium Payment (EB-HIPP) Program	545	- 1.62%
Office of AIDS Health Insurance Premium Payment (OA-HIPP) Program	5,489	+ 1.57%
Medicare Premium Payment Program (MPPP)	2,124	- 3.63%
Total	8,158	- 0.05%

Source: ADAP Enrollment System

The public comment period for the 2025–2029 ConPlan begins on February 10, 2025, and ends March 12, 2025. The ConPlan will be posted to <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-and-research/plans-and-reports>. Comments and questions can be emailed to ConsolidatedPlan@hcd.ca.gov.

Comments may also be mailed to: Department of Housing and Community Development, ATTN: Federal Community Development Branch – HUD Reporting 651 Bannon Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95811.

Requests for accommodation, translation services, and for auxiliary aides and services to allow non-English speaking attendees and attendees with disabilities to access the meeting may be submitted by email to ConsolidatedPlan@hcd.ca.gov or requested by phone to Alexis Navarro at (916) 776-7462. Please submit your requests by January 30, 2025, by 5:00 PM.

RACIAL EQUITY

➤ Strategy 4: Community Engagement

California Planning Group (CPG) Community Member Recruitment Announcement



CPG is looking for community members to join their committees! CPG is a statewide planning body that advises and partners with the OA and STD Control Branch (STDCB) to develop comprehensive plans and implement special projects to address community needs related to the HIV/STD/HCV syndemic. CPG has four committees, and information about their transformative work is detailed below. If you are interested in being a part of a committee, please email cpg@cdph.ca.gov for more information.

- **CPG Women’s Committee:**

The Women’s Committee’s mission is to address disparities in women, especially women of color, related to harm reduction, HIV, HCV, and STDs through education, representation, and advocacy. In March 2024, the committee hosted a 3-part webinar series on HIV prevention and care among women in the Central Valley. This series included topics such as an overview of the HIV epidemiologic and healthcare landscape of the Central Valley, key prevention strategies, and how to create responsive and compassionate HIV care systems for women. It uplifted the

stories of women with lived experience and created impactful change in around HIV prevention in the Central Valley.

The committee also uplifted the voices of women living with HIV by coordinating a presentation in recognition of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on March 10. The presentation included an overview of HIV and women in California and featured a presentation on the Dynamic Divas Program from Children's Hospital Oakland.

Currently, the Women's Committee is working on the creation of a client-focused and provider-focused infographic that highlights PrEP utilization among women. Additionally, their current advocacy efforts are focused on including cisgender women in doxyPEP guidance.

- **CPG Youth Committee:**

The Youth Committee's mission is to address disparities in HIV/STD/HCV prevention and care for adolescents and young adults up to 29 years of age, especially those who are often overlooked and marginalized. They believe in education, representation, and, most importantly, taking action! In 2024, the committee hosted a webinar in recognition of National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on April 10 featuring a training by Children's Hospital Los Angeles to unpack adultism and how we can disrupt it through multigenerational partnerships.

Currently, they are planning to recruit young people into their committee with the goal of uplifting their voices and equipping them with the tools to make informed choices about their health.

- **CPG HIV & Aging Committee:**

The HIV & Aging Committee's mission is to reduce disparities and improve health outcomes and quality of life for the aging community (aged 50 and more), those living with HIV, those who are HIV possible, and long-term survivors. In

2023, the committee published an infographic to education local health departments, service providers, and the community on the impact HIV has on people with HIV aged 50 or more ([HIV & Aging Infographic](#)). They also hosted a webinar in recognition of National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day on September 18 featuring a presentation about Medicare from the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program. Lastly, in 2024, they hosted another webinar about the CalFresh Program to learn more about resources that are important for the health of people aging with HIV and their families.

The committee is currently developing resource packets and capacity building presentations on various topics including insurance, housing, food, and care-giving.

- **CPG Drug User Health Committee:**

The Drug User Health Committee's mission is to address health and racial disparities in people who use drugs, especially men who have sex with men related to HIV, HCV, STIs, and fatal overdose, and inform and advise the CPG.

In 2024, the committee hosted a webinar in recognition of International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31. This webinar was facilitated by Damone Thomas, a CPG member, who created a safe space to share experiences and learn more about harm reduction.

Currently, they are recruiting community members into their group to plan next steps and projects for the upcoming year.

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

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

The 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 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! 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.

