Beyond the Basics:
A Comprehensive Approach to Advancing Transgender HIV Prevention and Care

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California Endowment
Center for Healthy Communities
County of Los Angeles

Square Miles: 4,086
Population: 10.3 Million

Latino/a: 47.0%
White: 28.9%
Asian/PI: 12.6%
African-American: 9.0%
Native American: 0.3%

Proportion of California Population: 29%
Proportion of California AIDS Cases: 36%
Proportion of U.S. AIDS Cases: 5%

Living with HIV/AIDS: 60,000 (Estimated)

1 United Way, Los Angeles (2008)
2 U.S. Department of Commerce (2008)
3 Los Angeles County HIV Epidemiology Program (2008)
Transgenders in LAC

• 2009-2013 HIV Prevention Plan estimates there are 4,400 Transgender individuals in Los Angeles County (0.43%)
  – 926 estimated living with HIV/AIDS (21%)
  – TGs make up of 1.53% of PLWHA
Number of Persons Living with AIDS by City/Area of LAC

Issues Faced by Transgender Individuals

- Stigma
- Cultural barriers
- High risk for HIV
- Low HIV prevention services utilization
- Sexual trauma
- Threats of violence
- Financial instability
Issues Faced by Transgender Individuals

- Incarceration
- Social and geographical isolation
- Lack of health insurance
- Gender discrimination
- Fear of disclosure/exposure
- History of negative experience with care and service providers
Impediments to Quality HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment Services

- Provider discomfort/prejudice (religious and/or moral concerns)
- Low level of knowledge and familiarity with transgender community
- Lack of evidence-based research
What We Know from Limited Data

- Significant proportions of TGs test HIV positive
- MtF Transgenders have the highest HIV risk of any subgroup
- Drug use and sex with primary partners are among the most vulnerable situations for HIV transmission in TG population
- Many TGs are involved in sex work
  - High HIV prevalence among both sex workers and non sex workers
- MtF transgender women are less likely to receive HAART than non-transgender individuals
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>New Positives $^2$ (n)</th>
<th>New Positivity Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of HIV Tests</td>
<td>33,367</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>1.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>1,959</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Populations $^3$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV Positive Individuals $^4$</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>451</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (12-24 years)</td>
<td>8,592</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>22,086</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>1.73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gay men</td>
<td>8,289</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non- gay identified men who have sex with men $^5$</td>
<td>3,639</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>11,054</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender Individuals</td>
<td>223 (0.67%)</td>
<td>11 (2.44%)</td>
<td>4.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who Share Needles/Works</td>
<td>4,379</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positivity Rates among 2007 HCTW Target Populations*

* HCTW Target Populations African American and Latino men 18 – 44 years are not mutually exclusive from the BRGs.
Prioritizing Transgender Population for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services

- 2002: State & County forms included 4 gender options (M, F, MTF, FTM)
- 2004: Prevention Plan prioritizes TGs as a BRG
- 2004: PPC recommends funding increase from 2% to 8%
- 2008: In the 2009-2013 Prevention Plan, the PPC further increased the recommended allocation to 9.9%
- 2008: October, the PPC established the TG Task Force
OAPP HIV Prevention Services

• 6 agencies have an HE/RR project targeted solely to Transgender individuals
  – Programs include adaptation of Popular Opinion Leader, SISTA, and MPowerment (DEBI)
  – Intervention types include Individual and Group level risk reduction counseling and CRCS
  – Program Partners: Bienestar, CHLA, LAGLC, FRI, MAP, and SSG

• 2008 HIV Testing Week initiative supported a Transgender testing event
HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment Utilization

• Currently, there are 313 Transgenders in LAC care and treatment services (~2% of all clients)*

* Ryan White Program-funded system.
Lessons Learned

• Targeted HIV testing essential
• Improvement in surveillance activities needed, including behavioral surveillance
• Improved trust between population and service providers is critical
• Capacity of service providers must be increased
• Necessary to develop and maintain relationships with law enforcement agencies
Next Steps

• Incorporate lessons learned into planning and programming
• Improve HCT return rates
• Evaluate impact of HE/RR interventions
• Assess and address gaps in services
• Develop programs that address basic needs and co-factors
• Improve access to medical care services (e.g., decrease incentive to become HIV positive)
• Address cultural barriers