

HIV SERVICES NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024

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WORLD AIDS DAY



COLLECTIVE ACTION:

SUSTAIN AND ACCELERATE HIV PROGRESS

Each year, the world gathers to commemorate World AIDS Day on December 1st. On this day, we honor the 32 million people worldwide who have died from AIDS-related illnesses.

We take this time to reflect on the progress that we have made in HIV care and treatments, and acknowledge the steps that we still have to take. It is a reminder that we must remain persistent in our efforts to provide essential services to the HIV communities that we serve, as well as continuing the commitment of preventing new infections.

In 2024, we recognize the 37th World AIDS Day with the theme “Collective Action: Sustain and Accelerate HIV Progress.”

SO, HOW DO WE SUSTAIN AND ACCELERATE HIV PROGRESS?

The World AIDS Day theme this year strives to acknowledge the progress that has been made in HIV programs across the globe. New projects have been developed and adapted based on scientific advancements, and the biggest lessons learned have often been found within the fields of work that initiate these programs.

One important call to action in 2024 was the continued administration of the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This plan addresses the HIV service equity gaps for populations of focus, such as safe and affordable housing, mental health support, and access to care. Additionally, PEPFAR has helped to fund the rollout of long-acting, injectable PrEP, which has served as another form of treatment for PLWH, and has assisted in preventing new HIV infections.

RYAN WHITE PART A



PROGRAM UPDATES

2024 has been a very busy year for Ryan White Part A (RWPA) at CCBH. As a fully staffed team, we successfully completed our monitoring season and continued work towards achieving regional quality management goals.

In September, the RWPA Team submitted a competitive grant proposal to administer the Ryan White Part A Program for FY2025 - FY2027. The RWPA recipient office developed and submitted an exceptional body of work that addresses the needs of people living with HIV (PLWH), and ensures that they are more likely to get linked to care and stay engaged in their prescribed course of treatment. This will ultimately work towards improved health outcomes and overall improved quality of life. In the coming months, we look forward to hearing feedback on this proposal from the federal funder of the project, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

In addition to submitting our proposal, the Ryan White Part A Recipient office has released two Request for Proposals (RFPs) for FY2025 - FY2027. An RFP for direct services seeks responses from HIV service providers within our six-county jurisdiction (Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina) to provide high quality services, and help with improved health outcomes and overall quality of life for PLWH.

The RFP for Planning Council Facilitation/Management seeks responses from highly qualified and passionate entities to help bring forth the concerns and elevate the voices of PLWH, through participation and membership in the Cuyahoga County Regional HIV Prevention and Care Planning Council.

Both RFPs are open now and close in January. They can be found on our website at <https://ccbh.net/new-rfqs/>. We look forward to our continued partnerships and welcome newcomers to join in our efforts!

RYAN WHITE PART A



CLINICAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Clinical Quality Management (CQM) Program continues to build capacity and work toward driving improvements in patient care, health outcomes, and patient satisfaction through collaboration. Recently, our Clinical Quality Management Committee (CQMC) has identified retention in care to be our Transitional Grant Area (TGA) project focus for CY2025.

In addition to planning and implementing our CY2025 project, our CQM program hopes to expand our reach and engage with more stakeholders in our six-county region. We are actively building a network of folks interested in making lasting impacts on the health of PLWH. Joining the Clinical Quality Management Committee is a great way to stay informed about upcoming training opportunities and project updates. **Whether you're a seasoned quality improvement (QI) expert or new to QI, we welcome your participation!**

INTERESTED IN JOINING CQMC?

If you'd like to be part of the Clinical Quality Management Committee, reach out to us to stay informed of our upcoming meetings. Together, we can make a greater impact on the health and well-being of the people we serve.

For more information or to join our next committee meeting, please contact Melissa Hansen at mhansen@ccbh.net.



HIV PREVENTION

DISEASE INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS RECOGNITION DAY

Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) Recognition Day is celebrated on the first Friday of October. DIS are public health outreach workers who are responsible for finding and counseling people with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and their contacts. DIS are a critical part of the public health infrastructure and building the link to healthcare.

The DIS role was initially established to work in the field of STI prevention. However, these public health professionals have ground-level investigative skills that have also become key components of public health infectious disease threats, COVID-19, tuberculosis outbreak response, HIV exposure notification, other infectious disease control efforts, and emergency response.

As the healthcare landscape evolves, DIS are needed even more as patient navigators and network builders to ensure patients are linked to care through expanded relationships with healthcare providers. **We thank all of the DIS for their dedication and continuous hard work - we could not do it without you!**

WELCOMING TWO NEW DIS AT CCBH

Y. PRISCILLA CLARK

Priscilla has been with CCBH since October 2007. She has served as administrative support for the agency in various service areas. Priscilla was promoted to the DIS role in October 2024. She is excited to be returning to a position that allows her to fulfill her passion of helping people. Priscilla loves music and has learned to play four instruments and enjoys singing.

ANGELIQUE GARCIA

Angelique joined CCBH on November 4, 2024 as a DIS. She has a Bachelor's degree in Biology and another in Health and Science. Angelique is coming from Preterm, a small women's health clinic, and the lab at ROSS Incineration Services, which focuses on waste disposal. She is pre-med and will be going back to school in the spring. In her free time, Angelique is a professional shopper. She also likes to read, go to the gym, spend time with family, and is a dog mom.

ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC



EHE: CARE

In October 2024, the Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) Team submitted their grant application for Phase II: FY2025 - 2029. We anticipate hearing from HRSA within the next few months. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on November 19, 2024. Please visit our webpage <https://ccbh.net/new-rfqs/> for more information.

EHE Care continues to expand services in Cuyahoga County. **We hope to continue this momentum into Phase II by introducing new service categories, including housing for rehabilitation services, legal and other professional services, and expanding treatment access into local medical deserts.**

The EHE Team at CCBH has taken the opportunity to strengthen their skills through conferences and learning communities. In August 2024, the team joined TGAs and jurisdictions across the country at the National Ryan White Conference in Washington, D.C. In October, the team met with colleagues in Denver for a second in-person training from TAP-in's Housing as Healthcare, learning more about how housing first practices engage clients into care and fits within a harm reduction framework. Special shoutout to Leon Hall from the AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland for joining the team in our 15-month learning community!

EHE: PREVENTION

EHE Prevention continues to expand services and partnerships in Cuyahoga County. Utilizing CDC guidance, CCBH has prioritized HIV self-test kit distribution as an innovative and essential role in ending the HIV epidemic. Currently, EHE provides HIV self-test kits free of charge to 10 partnering agencies operating as HIV self-test kit distributors. **From January to September 2024, CCBH and partners distributed 1,679 HIV self-test kits in Cuyahoga County.**

Expanding HIV testing in nontraditional spaces has also been a priority for CCBH in 2024, with partners including the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center and Cleveland Job Corps Center. Additionally, the EHE Team released a Request for Quotes (RFQ) in October 2024 for the addition of two new HIV testing locations/events, with a focus on those operating in nontraditional spaces. New partners will look to begin services in the new year.

ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC



EHE DIS: OUTREACH

The EHE Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) has made significant strides with the completion of the 2024 Data to Care (D2C) project. With the project wrapped up, EHE outreach efforts are being refocused on key locations such as Correctional and Treatment Facilities, Job Corps, and the Rocket Mortgage Field House, where there is a diverse population that could greatly benefit from EHE services.

These outreach initiatives include providing education about HIV prevention, testing, and treatment options, as well as connecting individuals with healthcare resources. Engaging with communities in these venues is crucial for building trust and ensuring that those who need assistance feel comfortable seeking help. EHE Outreach has attended the Just Heal Bro Tour, Cleveland All-Star Fitness Expo, Metro Men's Health Fair, UH Black Men's Wellness Day, Euclid Back to School Bash, and One World Day. **Year-to-date, the EHE Outreach Team has attended 50+ events in Cuyahoga County.**

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

The EHE Prevention and Care Community Advisory Groups (CAG) have been meeting bi-monthly since July 2024. The Prevention Subcommittee has raised awareness around the need to prioritize a whole-person approach to health, while the Care Subcommittee has focused on the need for more mobile clinics to reach those not in care. These meetings hold space for individuals living with HIV, along with a culmination of over 20 community organizations and health department staff. The Prevention Subcommittee will meet again on January 28, 2025 and the Care Subcommittee will meet in the winter of 2025.

The EHE CAG will hold its combined group gathering on Tuesday, December 17, 2024 from 9 AM – 12 PM in the T.E.H. Conference Room at CCBH. We encourage our CAG partners to bring a friend to the meeting, especially people living with HIV and those from populations of focus.

Please contact Brian Lutz at blutz@ccbh.net or Erin Janowski at ejanowski@ccbh.net if you wish to be added to the CAG contact list.

ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC



NEW CAMPAIGN: ***FOR OUR FUTURE***

Introducing the new EHE campaign, For Our Future.

In this campaign, male couples share intimacy and connection in a new world without HIV fear, stigma, or infection. It is a call to action for Cuyahoga County to do our part to end the epidemic. By doing so, these couples and our community can reap the benefits of a world with no new HIV infections. The new campaign launched on World AIDS Day: December 1, 2024.

VIEW THE CAMPAIGN NOW!

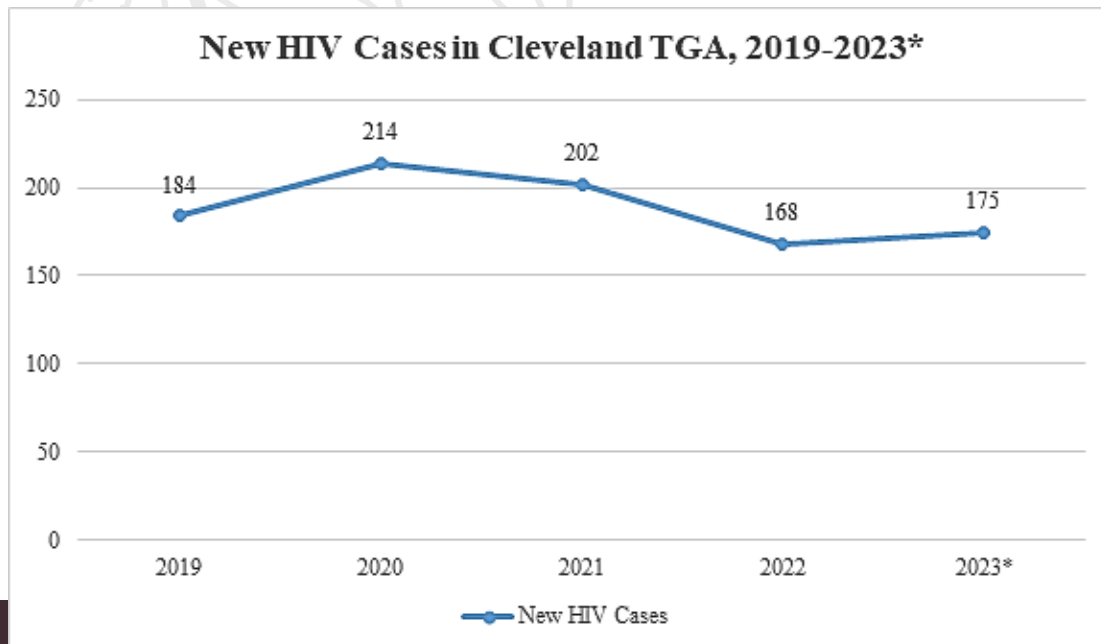
Featuring local models, the For Our Future campaign is LIVE on the Love Leads Here website. To view all photos and informational materials, visit the link now!

<http://www.loveleadshere.org/future/>

EPIDEMIOLOGY

As of December 31, 2023, there were **6,010 people living with HIV** (PLWH) in the Cleveland Transitional Grant Area (TGA), which includes the counties of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina in Northeast Ohio. Of those, **80%** were males, **27%** were 55-64 years old, and **52%** were Black/African American. A majority of PLWH were also in the men who have sex with men (MSM) transmission and exposure categories.

In 2023*, there were **175 new cases of HIV** in the Cleveland TGA, corresponding to a 5% increase in the number of new HIV cases from 2022. The rate of new infections in the Cleveland TGA is **8.1 per 100,000**; this means for every 100,000 people within the Cleveland TGA, there were 8 new cases of HIV.



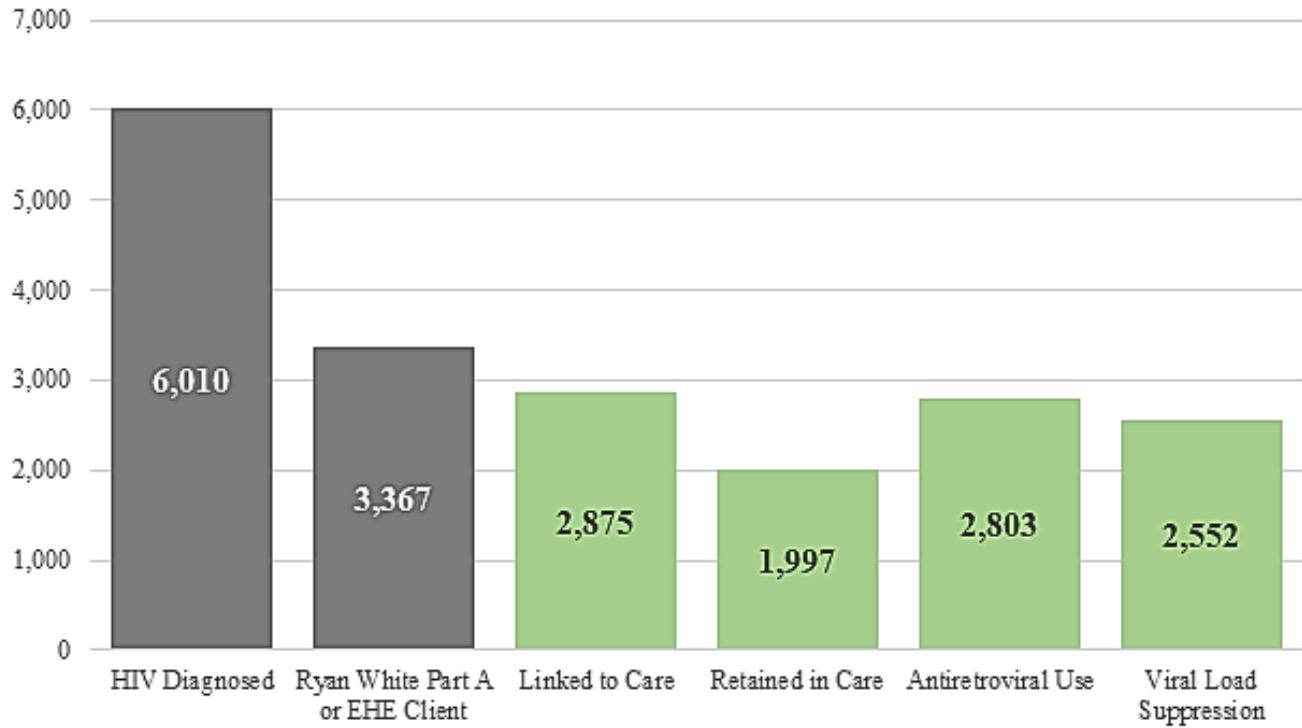
*2023 data as of June 30, 2024. Data is subject to change as more information becomes available.

IMPORTANT DEMOGRAPHICS OF NEW CASES

- **53%** of cases were Black/African American.
- **85%** of cases were male, 15% were female.
- **47%** of cases were under 30 years old at the time of diagnosis.
- Cases have been decreasing in the Black/African American male population since 2021. In 2021, Black/African American males comprised 58% of new cases of HIV, however in 2023, Black/African American males were only **43%** of new cases. Conversely, cases have been increasing in the Black/African American female population since 2020. In 2020, Black/African American females comprised 7% of new cases, while in 2023 Black/African American females were **10%** of new cases.
- **47%** were in the MSM exposure category.
- **There were no cases of perinatal HIV in 2023.**

EPIDEMIOLOGY

CY2023 Cleveland TGA Ryan White & EHE HIV Care Continuum January 1 - December 31, 2023



HIV CARE CONTINUUM DESCRIPTIONS

HIV Diagnosed: diagnosed HIV prevalence in the Cleveland TGA as reported by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). *Please note: most recent available prevalence data from ODH is as of December 31, 2023.

Ryan White Part A or EHE Clients: number of diagnosed individuals who received a RWPA or EHE initiative funded service in the measurement year.

Linked to Care (LTC): number of RWPA-eligible clients that had at least one medical visit, viral load test, or CD4 test in the measurement year.

Retained in Care (RIC): number of RWPA-eligible clients who had two or more medical visits, viral load tests, or CD4 tests in the measurement year.

Antiretroviral Use (ART): number of RWPA-eligible clients receiving medical care who have a documented antiretroviral therapy prescription on record in the measurement year.

Viral Suppression (VLS): number of RWPA-eligible clients receiving medical care whose most recent HIV viral load within the measurement year was less than 200 copies/mL.

PLANNING COUNCIL CORNER

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *FAITH ROSS*



PLANNING COUNCIL MEMBER SINCE 2020
CO-CHAIR FOR COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

Q: Why did you join the Planning Council?

A: I was diagnosed a full year before I was able to get the help I needed, like medication assistance, guidance, and connections to people who could help meet my needs. When I moved to NE Ohio, the nurse connected me to Ryan White services and many other resources. When I came to my first Planning Council meeting, I found that it was a place where people living with HIV could educate ourselves, connect with people who provide guidance, and advocate for what we need.

Q: How has the experience shaped you?

A: I have definitely found myself growing as a person. I have overcome my fear of public speaking, my fear of running meetings, and my fear that I am not good enough to have an opinion on things. I have met wonderful people that have helped me in terms of education and advocacy. I wouldn't change the experience for anything in the world. It is definitely one of a kind.

Q: What do you want other people, especially people living with HIV to know about the Planning Council?

A: In this world, especially nowadays, where we don't have as much power as we should, Planning Council is one little thing we can do to stand up as a people. When we participate in Planning Council, we are saying, "You will not disregard me because you think a certain way about me. This is who I am. This is what I need, and I am not going to be ashamed of saying that I need this."

Planning Council informs us about what services are available. It allows people to have better health and a better sense of community. It opens a lot of doors for people. We are part of the process that makes decisions about how money is spent for people living with HIV.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

If you are interested in learning more about Planning Council, call or text Lisa-Jean Sylvia at 216-264-9858 or email lisa jean@upwardspiralconsulting.com.

PLANNING COUNCIL CORNER



SEEKING NEW MEMBERS

The Planning Council is seeking new members, especially people living with HIV in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties. If you are interested in learning more, consider attending a meeting of the Full Planning Council or one of the subcommittees.



For meeting schedules and connection info:

<https://ccbh.net/ryan-white-hiv-aids-planning-co/>

For more information or for an application:

Lisa-Jean Sylvia

Planning Council Facilitator
216-264-9858

lisajeans@upwardspiralconsulting.com

Toni Mallory

Planning Council Support
amallory@ccbh.net

ARE YOU A PERSON LIVING WITH HIV?

The **Community Liaison Committee (CLC)** is a place to connect and learn with other people who are living with HIV. The CLC works to make sure that the hopes and concerns of people living with HIV are at the center of the Planning Council's decisions. Join us to be part of the process!

The monthly meeting is open to all people living with HIV in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina counties. **Join us on the first Wednesday of each month from 12:00-1:30 PM for this virtual meeting.** To participate, contact Lisa-Jean Sylvia (contact information listed above).

PLANNING COUNCIL CORNER



COMPLETE THE CONSUMER SURVEY!

The annual consumer survey is one of the many ways we ensure that funding is used to meet the community's needs. **The survey is online until January 20, 2025.** Here are three ways you can help!

- If you are an individual who receives Part A services, **complete the survey now.**
- **Spread the word** – share on social media and in support groups.
- **Share directly with people you know** who receive Part A services.



LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

Complete the Ryan White Part A
Consumer Survey!

The Consumer Survey **DIRECTLY IMPACTS**
funding for HIV services.



Scan the code to complete the
survey now!

Survey closes on **January 20, 2025**
If you need help completing the survey,
contact Lj at (216)264-9858

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WORK GROUP

The Planning Council is looking for new ways to welcome and include people under 30 years old. All are welcome at this work group.

Join us at these Zoom sessions from 12:30-1:30 PM to help design opportunities for young voices!

January 15, 2024
February 12, 2024
March 12, 2024
April 9, 2024

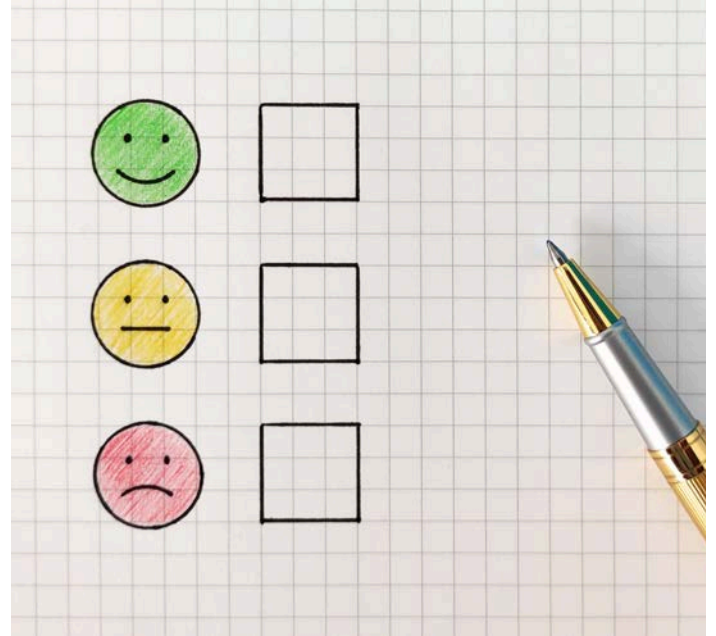
Meeting link:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83685736493?
pwd=7aIXioMj8TedaNF5jwjLYQV8xp59Ip.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83685736493?pwd=7aIXioMj8TedaNF5jwjLYQV8xp59Ip.1)

Meeting ID: 836 8573 6493

Passcode: 011774

FEEDBACK



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The HIV Services community is rapidly growing each year as we continue to welcome new consumers, providers, and community members. As support and services for HIV resources expand, so does the reach of the HIV Services Newsletter.

This bi-annual newsletter is geared toward YOU, and we want to ensure that your voices are heard.

What did you enjoy reading about in the December 2024 issue?
Which sections would you like to continue to see in future newsletters?
What new content do you think could be added?

Please email all comments and suggestions to Danielle LeGallee at dlegallee@ccbh.net.

We are looking forward to hearing your feedback!

RESOURCES

<https://www.ncsddc.org/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/world-aids-day/index.html>

<https://www.hiv.gov/blog/world-aids-day-2024-collective-action-sustain-and-accelerate-hiv-progress>

<https://www.loveleadshere.org/>