

HIV SERVICES NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

WHAT'S INSIDE:

World AIDS Day

Ryan White Part A

- Clinical Quality Management
- Program Updates

HIV Prevention

- DIS Recognition Day

Ending the HIV Epidemic

- Program Updates
- Community Advisory Group
- Social Media & Marketing

Epidemiology Updates

Planning Council Corner

- 2026 Meeting Schedule
- Member Spotlight
- Membership, Retention, & Marketing

Feedback



WORLD AIDS DAY



OVERCOMING DISRUPTION: *TRANSFORMING THE AIDS RESPONSE*

December 1, 2025 marks the 38th World AIDS Day with the theme “Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response.”

Since 1988, World AIDS Day has been commemorated to recognize all those who are living and who have passed from HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS-related illnesses; to raise awareness for the epidemic; and to call for the continuation of established and innovative HIV response methods. This year’s theme focuses on “sustained political leadership, international cooperation, and human rights-centered approaches to end AIDS by 2030.” In 2024, there was an estimated 40.8 million people living with HIV globally, and approximately 1.3 million people acquired HIV (WHO, 2025).

Overall, HIV rates have declined, but this trend cannot continue to decrease with the cutting of funding and programs that support HIV education, promotion, and awareness. Although there has been substantial progress towards the fight against HIV/AIDS, it is important to acknowledge that there is a lot of work that still lies ahead.

LEARN MORE ABOUT WORLD AIDS DAY

To read more about the history of World AIDS Day, this year’s theme, and the progress made in previous years, visit these sites:



[World Health Organization](https://www.who.int)

[WorldAIDSday.org](https://www.worldaidsday.org)

[UNAIDS](https://www.unaids.org)



RYAN WHITE PART A



CLINICAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Clinical Quality Management (CQM) Committee is excited to share that our region (Region 3) has sustained a 3% increase in Retention in Care since implementing our Cleveland Transitional Grant Area (TGA) Project last year. This improvement reflects the dedication of our partner agencies and their efforts to ensure individuals are supported as they navigate the HIV care system.

As we move into the new year, the CQM program will continue to use data to better understand patient engagement, identify opportunities for improvement, and launch new initiatives aligned with the Ryan White Program 2030 goal of prioritizing efforts to reach people with HIV who are out of care or not virally suppressed.

GET INVOLVED!

Participating in the CQM Committee is a great way to stay informed about current quality improvement (QI) initiatives, including our retention in care and linkage to care initiatives. You will also gain access to training opportunities and collaborative discussions. No prior QI experience is needed, just a shared commitment to improving care for people living with HIV/AIDS in the Cleveland TGA!

If you're interested in joining the CQM Committee or learning more about our work, please contact Melissa Hansen at mhansen@ccbh.net to be added to our listserv or to get more information.

RYAN WHITE PART A



PROGRAM UPDATES

The Ryan White Part A Program at CCBH welcomes a new Program Manager!

Elly Falter is a graduate of Kent State University, where she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Public Health. She brings experience in HIV health disparities research and community-based program development and implementation.

Previously, Elly worked under the Ohio Personal Responsibility and Education Program (PREP) Grant, delivering comprehensive sexual health and adulthood preparation curricula to youth ages 12–20 across 14 counties in Northeast Ohio. Passionate about serving communities with the greatest public health needs, Elly is excited to continue this work through the Ryan White Part A Program.



NEW RYAN WHITE SUPERVISOR

Anastassia Idov, the Ryan White Program's previous Program Manager, has been promoted to the Ryan White Supervisor position. She is now the point of contact for all Ryan White Part A financial and programmatic questions. Congratulations to our new Ryan White staff!



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!**

PROGRAM UPDATES

The HIV Prevention Program at CCBH is proud to announce that it is fully funded through May 2026! This year has been unprecedented and unpredictable, and we want to extend a huge thank-you to our subrecipient agencies: AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland, The Centers (formerly Circle Health Services), Family Planning Services of Lorain County, Medina County Health Department, and Signature Health. These organizations have continued to support and provide for the HIV/AIDS community all throughout Region 3 without a hitch. We are very grateful to work with such dedicated and passionate people.

ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC



EHE: CARE

After an uncertain winter and spring, the EHE Team is proud to say that **EHE Care providers are fully funded and carrying out services to our community!** We are happy to be doing this work alongside all of you.

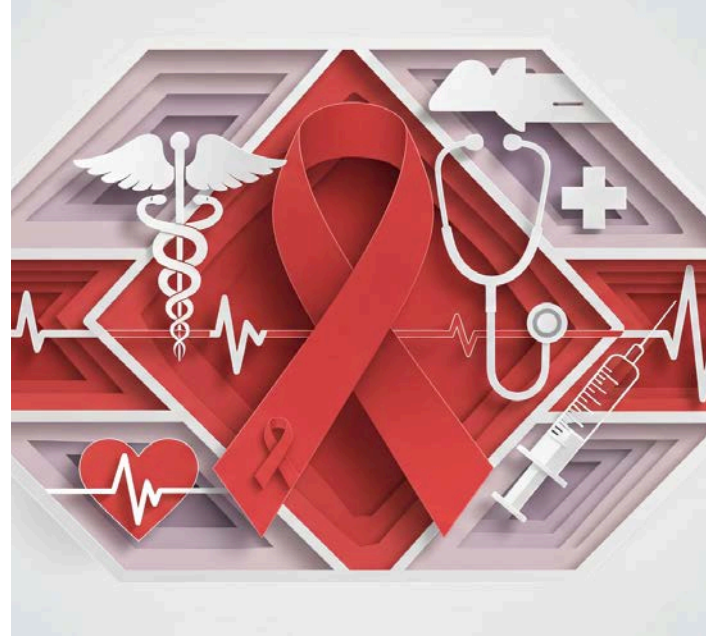
Monitoring visits for fiscal year 2024 were completed this fall. Thank you to all our providers for their hospitality and teamwork during these visits. **810 clients were provided EHE Care services during the first half of the grant year.** Our new services of Legal and Mobile Health Clinics have moved from their planning stages into their implementation stages.

Our other funded services of Rapid Start, Peer Navigation, Medical Transportation, Psychosocial Support, Intensive Medical and Nonmedical Case Management, and Emergency Financial Assistance continue to improve health outcomes of those we serve.

SPECIAL SHOUT-OUT

We'd like to extend a special shout-out to We Think 4 A Change, who pivoted towards putting data into CAREWare this grant year. Thank you for the hard work to learn this system!

ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC



EHE: PREVENTION

EHE Prevention continues to expand services and partnerships in Cuyahoga County. Currently, EHE provides HIV self-test kits free of charge to twelve partnering agencies operating as HIV self-test kit distributors.

In 2025 thus far, CCBH and partners distributed 1,048* HIV self-test kits in Cuyahoga County. The majority of self-test kit distribution partners also offer rapid HIV testing, giving individuals the opportunity to choose the type of test that best fits their needs and comfort level.

For the 2025 grant year, CCBH prioritized providing high-impact HIV prevention and surveillance programs within Cuyahoga County, with a focus on bridging HIV testing gaps in the following settings: syringe service providers; emergency departments; correctional centers; and community outreach agencies.

One specific area where EHE rapid testing increased was jails, prisons, correctional facilities, reentry programs, and diversion programs. Rapid testing partners in these areas include the MetroHealth at the Cuyahoga County Correctional Center, the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center, Fannie M. Lewis Community Corrections & Treatment Center, Cuyahoga County Diversion Center, the Community-Based Correctional Facility, and North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource. Recently, EHE DIS Sonji Deal also began engagement and outreach with the Northeast Reintegration Center (NERC).

**Data includes most recent available at the time of report; January – September 2025.*

HOST AN HIV OUTREACH EVENT!

Innovative outreach efforts make HIV prevention accessible, inclusive, and empowering. **If you have a community space, event, or organization that could host HIV outreach or testing, contact Sonji Deal at sdeal@ccbh.net.**

ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC



COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

The CCBH EHE Community Advisory Group (CAG) is making progress on its community-led projects.

The Prevention Subcommittee met in August and October. In August, the CAG strategized on ideas for a CAG-led community event for 2026. This event is anticipated to be a collaboration of EHE providers meeting the people where they are, providing testing, community resources, and immediate linkage to care. Stay tuned for more updates as the CAG plans the event!

The Care Subcommittee met in September. CAG members formed six groups with community projects and created action plans to carry out the tasks. These projects are: (1) advocating for inclusive data fields on Opscans; (2) creating a website hyperlink for rapid re-engagement to care; (3) inviting a nonclinical service provider to the CAG; (4) increase retention of people released from incarceration; (5) increase CAG membership with people with lived experience; and (6) implement education and condom distribution with youth at local schools.

During the large group CAG general meeting in June, CCBH Epidemiologists provided a data update with 2023 ODH data. Dr. Andre Brown also provided a presentation on the importance of data-informed community engagement. During two prevention and care subcommittee meetings, Dr. Justin Yax gave a presentation on the REDMap project that is in collaboration with our Epidemiology, Surveillance, and Informatics (ESI) service area and our main hospital systems.

JOIN US AT THE NEXT MEETING!

The next general CAG meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2025. **For more information about the EHE CAG, please reach out to EHE Program Managers Erin Janowski at ejanowski@ccbh.net and Brian Lutz at blutz@ccbh.net.**

ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC



SOCIAL MEDIA & MARKETING

Love Leads Here (loveleadshere.org) is the Cuyahoga County Board of Health's HIV Prevention & Care resource website. Since 2021, the Love Leads Here website has housed information on: U = U, PrEP, HIV testing, HIV stigma, and syphilis; HIV testing and PrEP resources; downloadable campaign images; and social media toolkits.

In May, a new and improved Love Leads Here website was relaunched with a new landing page, storytelling videos from members of the Cuyahoga County HIV workforce, a Cuyahoga Community Corner, and more. Campaign resources and social media toolkits, FAQs, and Resources are all still accessible on the website.

Throughout the next year, the EHE Team will continue to expand the website to include storytelling videos from community members, expanded resourced, and more. **From May 2025 – July 2025, in celebration of Pride Month, the Love Leads Here logo was displayed on billboards across Cuyahoga County.** You can still find the logo up in several bus shelters throughout the city of Cleveland.

SHARE US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Explore the website, share campaign content, and be sure to follow Love Leads Here on social media!



Instagram: @loveleadsherecle

Facebook: @loveleadsherecle

X: @loveleadshere



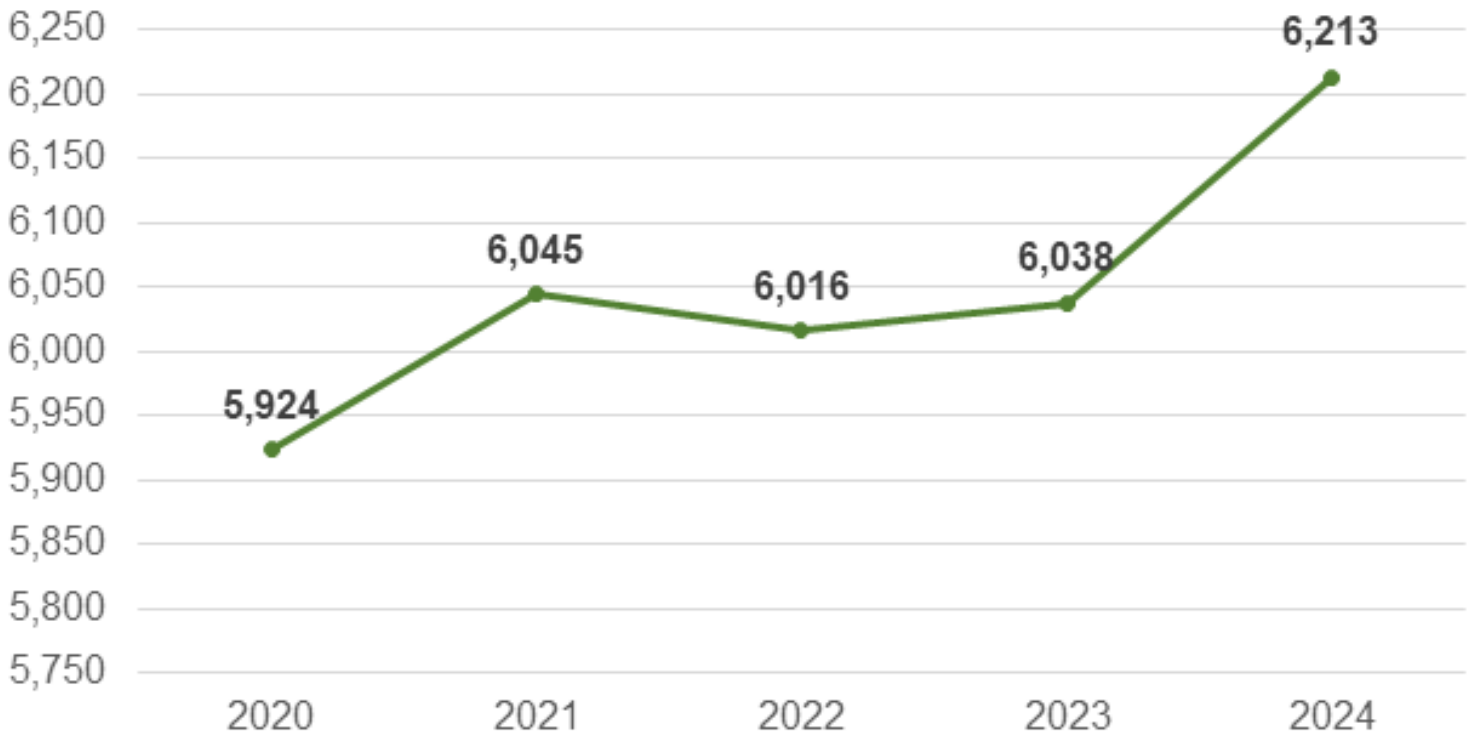
EPIDEMIOLOGY

PEOPLE WITH DIAGNOSED HIV

As of December 31, 2024, there were 6,213 people with diagnosed HIV who reside in the Cleveland TGA, which includes the counties of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina in Northeast Ohio.

Of those, **80%** are males, **53%** are 50 years old or older, and **52%** are Black/African American. A majority of those with previous diagnosed HIV are also males who had sexual contact with another male (MSM) **(68%)**.

People with Diagnosed HIV in Cleveland TGA,
2020-2024

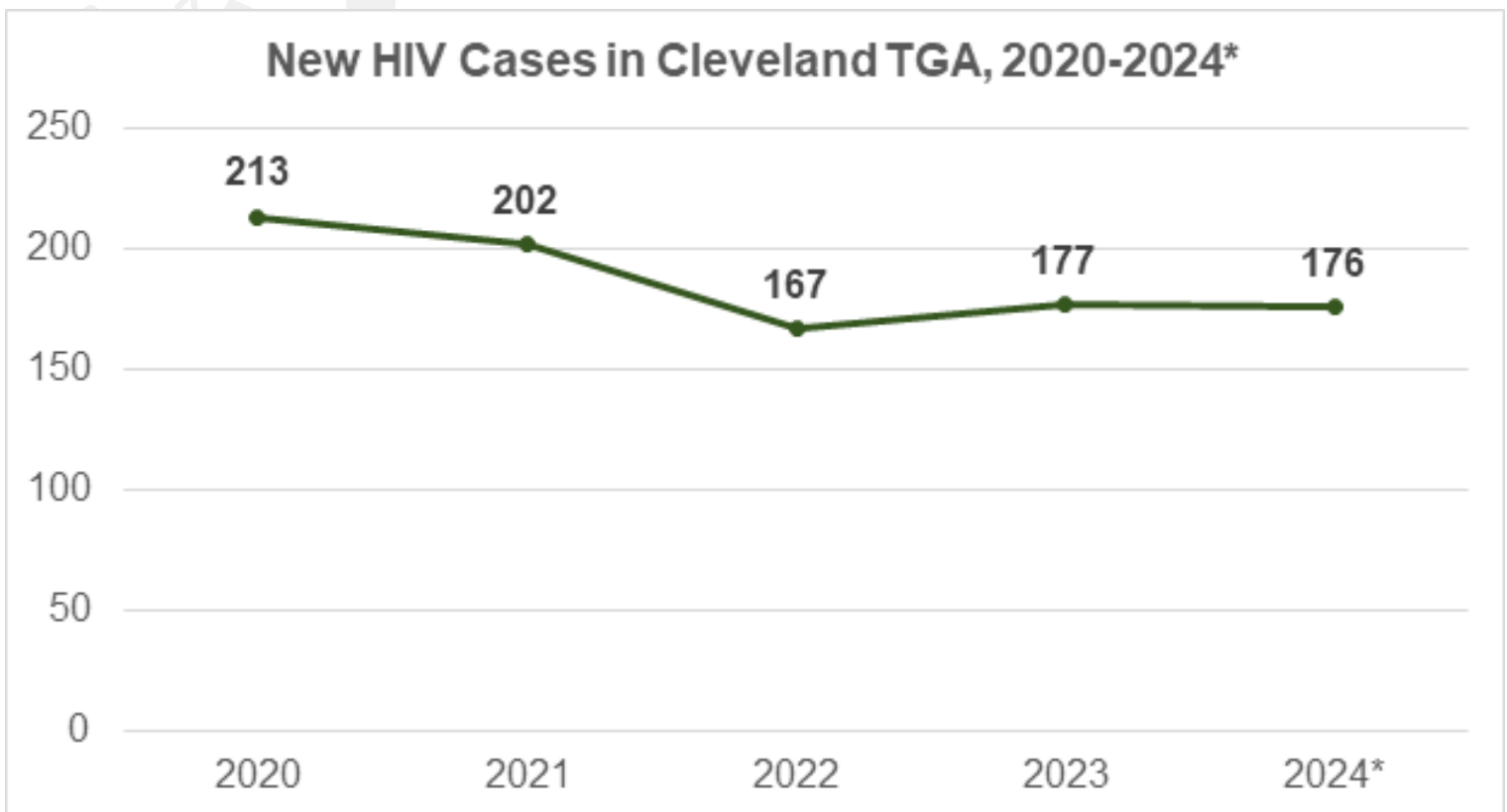


EPIDEMIOLOGY

NEW HIV CASES

In 2024*, there were **176 new cases of HIV** in the Cleveland TGA, which remains steady from the number of new HIV cases in 2023.

The **rate of new infections in the Cleveland TGA is 8.1 per 100,000**; this means that for every 100,000 people within the Cleveland TGA, there were 8 new cases of HIV.

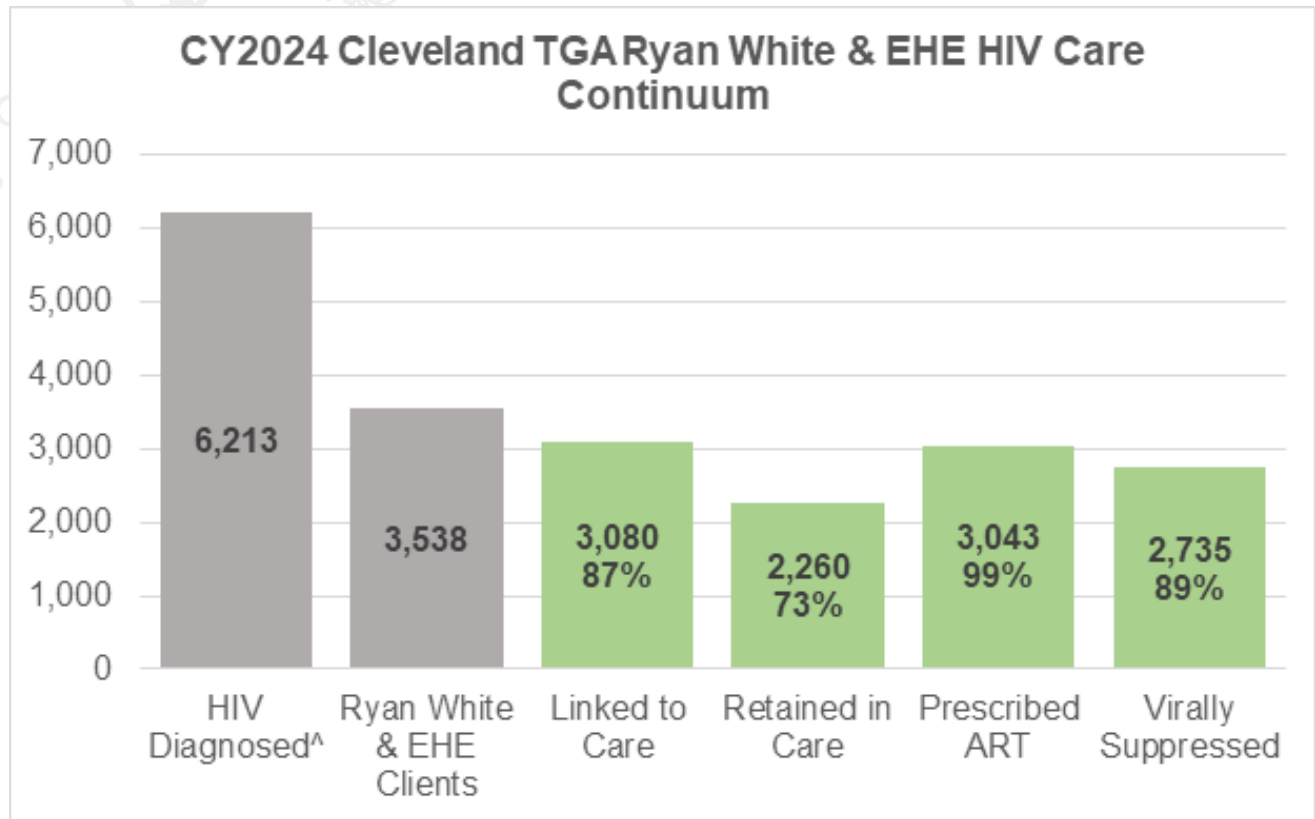


*2024 data as of June 30, 2025. Data is subject to change as updated information becomes available.

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS OF NEW CASES

- **57%** of cases were Black/African American.
- **88%** of cases were male, **13%** were female.
- **36%** of cases were under 30 years old at the time of diagnosis.
- **35%** of cases were between 30-39 years old at the time of diagnosis.
- Cases have **increased in Black/African American males** from 2023, increasing from 43% in 2023 to 49% in 2024*. Conversely, cases have **decreased in Black/African American females**, going from 10% in 2023 to 7% in 2024*.
- **64%** of new cases are in the MSM transmission category.
- There were **no cases of perinatal HIV** in 2024*.

EPIDEMIOLOGY



[^]Please note: most recent available prevalence data from ODH is as of December 31, 2024.

CY2024 HIV CARE CONTINUUM

HIV Diagnosed: diagnosed HIV prevalence in the Cleveland TGA as reported by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH).

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

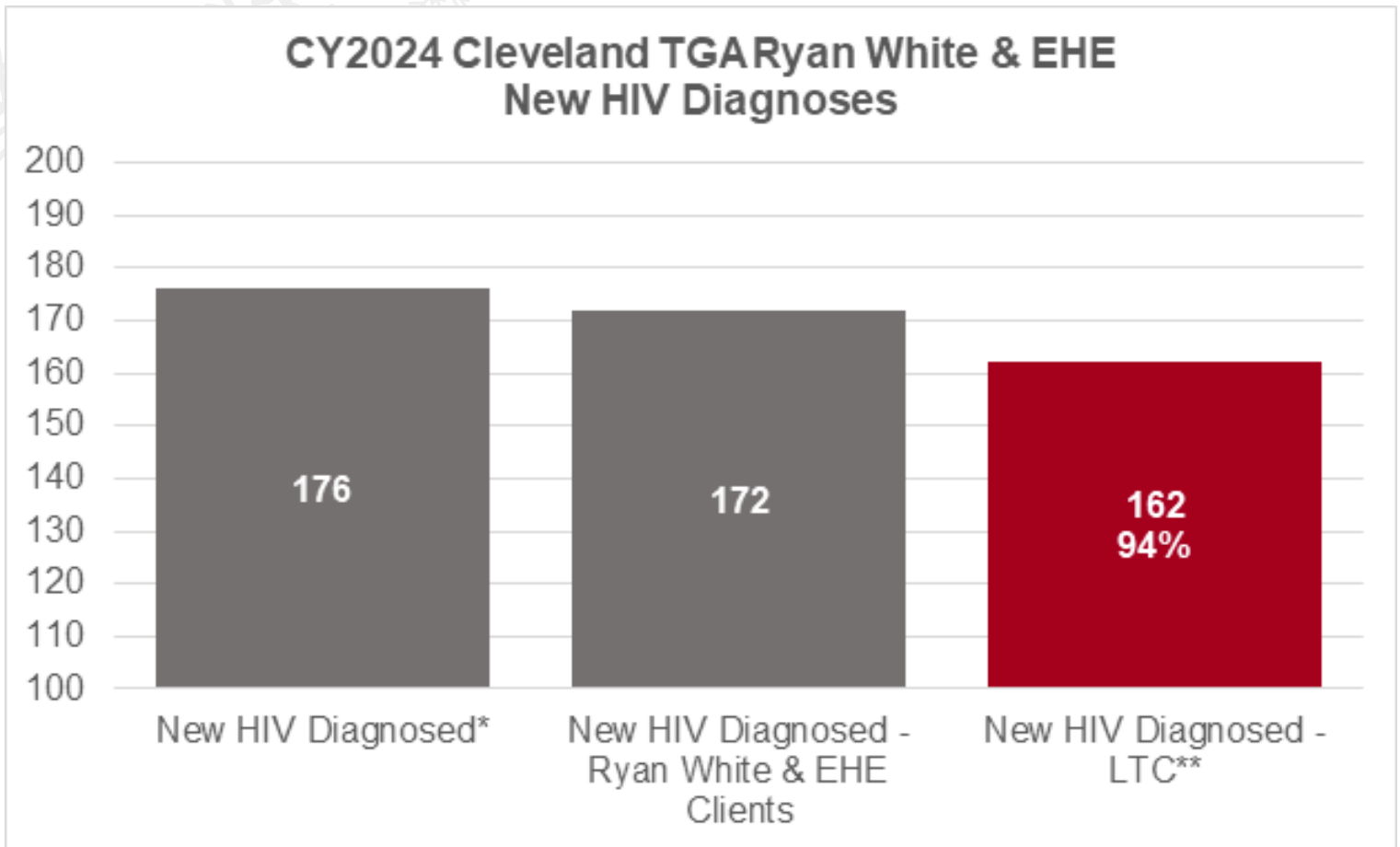
Linked to Care (LTC): number of RWPA-eligible clients that had at least one medical visit, viral load test, or CD4 test in the measurement year.

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.

EPIDEMIOLOGY



**Please note: The most recent available incidence data from the Ohio Department of Health is as of December 31, 2024.*

***Please note the denominator for New HIV Diagnosed – LTC is different from the denominators used to calculate other steps in the continuum.*

RYAN WHITE & EHE: NEW HIV DIAGNOSES

New HIV Diagnosed: Diagnosed HIV incidence in the jurisdiction as reported by the Ohio Department of Health.

New HIV Diagnosed – Ryan White & EHE Clients: number of newly diagnosed individuals who received a Ryan White Part A or EHE initiative funded service in the measurement year.

New HIV Diagnosed – Linked to Care (LTC): Number of Ryan White or EHE eligible clients who received an HIV diagnosis in the measurement year that had at least one medical visit, viral load test, or CD4 test within ninety days of diagnosis.

PLANNING COUNCIL CORNER



2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Planning Council and its committees meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Meetings are online and open to the public. Please visit the [Ryan White Planning Council site](#) to download all schedules and meeting agendas.

Cuyahoga Regional HIV Prevention & Care Planning Council



2026 Schedule



JANUARY

Wednesday 1/7/26

Community Liaison Committee
noon to 1:30 pm

Strategy & Finance Committee
2:00 to 3:30 pm

Executive Committee
4:00 to 5:30 pm

Wednesday 1/21/26

Quality Improvement Committee
2:30 to 3:30 pm

Membership, Retention &
Marketing Committee
4:00 to 5:00 pm

Full Planning Council
5:30 to 7:00pm

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 2/4/26

Community Liaison Committee
noon to 1:30 pm

Strategy & Finance Committee
2:00 to 3:30 pm

Executive Committee
4:00 to 5:30 pm

Wednesday 2/18/26

Quality Improvement Committee
2:30 to 3:30 pm

Membership, Retention &
Marketing Committee
4:00 to 5:00 pm

Full Planning Council
5:30 to 7:00pm

MARCH

Wednesday 3/4/26

Community Liaison Committee
noon to 1:30 pm

Strategy & Finance Committee
2:00 to 3:30 pm

Prevention Committee
4:00 to 5:30 pm

Date TBD

Executive Committee
TBD

Wednesday 3/18/26

Quality Improvement Committee
2:30 to 3:30 pm

Membership, Retention &
Marketing Committee
4:00 to 5:00 pm

Full Planning Council
5:30 to 7:00pm

APRIL

Wednesday 4/1/26

Community Liaison Committee
noon to 1:30 pm

Strategy & Finance Committee
2:00 to 3:30 pm

Executive Committee
4:00 to 5:30 pm

Wednesday 4/15/26

Quality Improvement Committee
2:30 to 3:30 pm

Membership, Retention &
Marketing Committee
4:00 to 5:00 pm

Full Planning Council
5:30 to 7:00pm

MAY

Wednesday 5/6/26

Community Liaison Committee
noon to 1:30 pm

Strategy & Finance Committee
2:00 to 3:30 pm

Executive Committee
4:00 to 5:30 pm

Wednesday 5/20/26

Quality Improvement Committee
2:30 to 3:30 pm

Membership, Retention &
Marketing Committee
4:00 to 5:00 pm

Full Planning Council
5:30 to 7:00pm

JUNE – PSRA

Wednesday 6/3/26

Community Liaison Committee
noon to 1:30 pm

Strategy & Finance Committee
2:00 to 3:30 pm

Prevention Committee
4:00 to 5:30 pm

Date TBD

Executive Committee
TBD

Wednesday 6/10/25

IN PERSON
PSRA Learning Lab
6:00 to 8:00 pm
Registration Required

Wednesday 6/17/26

PSRA
noon to 4 pm



The Planning Council and its subcommittees make critical decisions about HIV funding in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina Counties. Meetings are open to the public and all are welcome.

It is especially important that we have the participation of people living with HIV. Scan the QR code to watch a short video and learn more.



PLANNING COUNCIL CORNER



WITH GRATITUDE

At the end of October, longtime Planning Council members **Leshia Yarbrough Franklin** and **Clinton Droster** reached the end of their term limits. Members are allowed to serve two consecutive terms, after which time they are invited to stay involved as committee members. After one year, former members are welcome to reapply for full membership.

Leshia Yarbrough Franklin served on the Planning Council since 2011. As an employee of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, & Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County, Leshia filled a critical role on the Planning Council.

First as a member of the Quality Improvement Committee and then the Strategy & Finance Committee, Leshia provided critical insight about the needs of people impacted by mental health and substance use challenges, as well as the ways that mental health and substance use services could be leveraged for the wellbeing of people living with HIV. We are grateful for Leshia's service and hope she will remain involved.

Clinton Droster joined the Planning Council in 2008. As longtime co-chair of the Strategy & Finance committee, Clinton brought an acumen for numbers and an eye for efficiency to the Planning Council's most critical work. Although he was uncertain about joining the Planning Council at first, Clinton came to have an impressive understanding of the intricacies involved in allocating and stewarding millions of dollars in Ryan White funds each year. Clinton was a great example of the way that people living with HIV can have a positive impact through service on the Planning Council.

In November 2025, we were deeply saddened by Clinton's passing. His presence, leadership, and commitment will be missed by all who served with him.

PLANNING COUNCIL CORNER

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: ***BILLY GAYHEART, JR.***



PLANNING COUNCIL MEMBER SINCE 2020
CHAIR FOR MEMBERSHIP, RETENTION, & MARKETING COMMITTEE

Q: Why did you join the Planning Council?

A: When I first heard about the Planning Council (PC), I was at a support group in Lorain County. I heard two members speak about the work of the PC. As someone who had been HIV-positive for many years, I had no clue what was going on behind the scenes. I had received Ryan White services, but I did not know they were part of the Ryan White Program. It was interesting to see the nuts and bolts of everything going on; not just in PC, but everything that integrates. I was struck to see that people were making decisions that would impact my healthcare. Being part of PC was my chance to shape things that can make a huge impact on people living with HIV (PLWH).

Q: How has the experience on Planning Council impacted you?

A: The PC introduced me to the whole world of policy, services, and things like that. I realized this is where I need to be. I wouldn't trade it for the world. It's been such an amazing journey for me that I can meet such wonderful people, both PLWH that are receiving services and people who provide the services. I am also proud of the learning. I've learned how to be an advocate; what it means to make policy; and how to really dig deep and dive into certain topics.

Q: What have been some of the highlights of you as you've served?

A: My biggest joy has been the recent launch of the NxtGen Collective. For many years, we have been trying to recruit more people who are younger and living with HIV. I am proud to have started a work group on the topic. The work group has evolved into the NxtGen Collective, a young adult-led organization dedicated to empowering individuals under 35 to advance HIV advocacy and improve health justice on matters impacting young community members.

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

A: I want them to know that their voice matters first and foremost. Especially as we are moving into uncharted waters, it is extremely important that we have PLWH participate in the PC. The important decisions that the PC makes can help a person succeed or they could break them, but when you get people with lived experience and people who actually care to participate, we can make a big difference. Without the PC, there would be no Ryan White Part A in our region. We can't have a Planning Council if we don't have enough PLWH at the table.

PLANNING COUNCIL CORNER



SEEKING NEW MEMBERS

The Cuyahoga Regional HIV Prevention and Care Planning Council (PC) makes key decisions about Ryan White Part A funds in our region. Over 40% of the people on this Planning Council are people living with HIV (PLWH).

The PC is looking for new members, especially PLWH 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.

[Click here for the Recruitment Video](#)

[Click here to access Meeting Schedules & Connections](#)

[Click here to subscribe](#) and receive information about the Planning Council.

For more information or for an application, contact:

Lisa-Jean Sylvia Reyes

Planning Council Facilitator

Call or text: (216) 264-9858

lisajeau@upwardspiralconsulting.com

Brittanie Evans

Planning Council Support

bevans@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!

First Wednesday of the month (*virtual*)

12:00 - 1:30 PM

Because this meeting is open only to people living with HIV, you must contact the Planning Council Facilitator to receive connection info.

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 2025 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.who.int/campaigns/world-aids-day/2025>

<https://www.poz.com/article/world-aids-day-2025>

<https://www.unaids.org/en/2025-world-aids-day>

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

