

# A Syndemic Approach to Public Health and Updates from NCHHSTP

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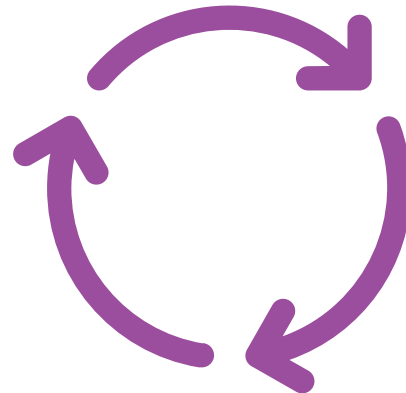


**NASTAD Annual Meeting**  
May 24, 2022

# The Syndemic Approach

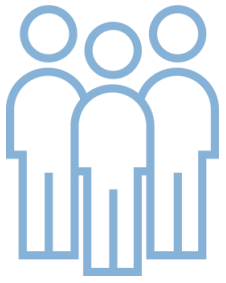
## Population-level clustering of social and health problems

- (1) two or more diseases or health conditions cluster within a population
- (2) contextual and social factors create the conditions for clustering
- (3) results in adverse disease interaction, either biological, social or behavioral, increasing the health burden of the affected population



# Potential Benefits of a Syndemic Approach

- Holistic service delivery
- Increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness
- Reduced stigma
- Supports a focus on policy and SDOH drivers
- Increased flexibility by enabling partners to adapt, implement, and modify integrated services to increase responsiveness to evolving epidemics or changing contexts
- Provides implementing partners with increased control and ability to provide comprehensive services



# People Matter

**Differential incidence and morbidity among groups is frequent and frustrating**

**Inequities will naturally form in an unjust society, but they are not inevitable**

**Embrace holistic approaches and multi-faceted outcomes**

**Good Partnerships lead to success**

# Populations

- **Men who have sex with men**
  - 70% of HIV diagnoses, 42% of P&S syphilis cases, 42% of gonorrhea cases, 17% of chlamydia cases
- **Persons who inject drugs**
  - Most acute HCV and a large proportion of HBV infections, 11% of HIV diagnoses, large proportion of overdose deaths
- **Some racial and ethnic groups disproportionately affected**
  - African Americans 8 times, and Hispanic/Latinos 3 times more likely to get new HIV infections than whites
  - More than a third of TB and HBV among Asian Americans
- **Justice-involved populations higher incidence of all infections**



# Place Matters

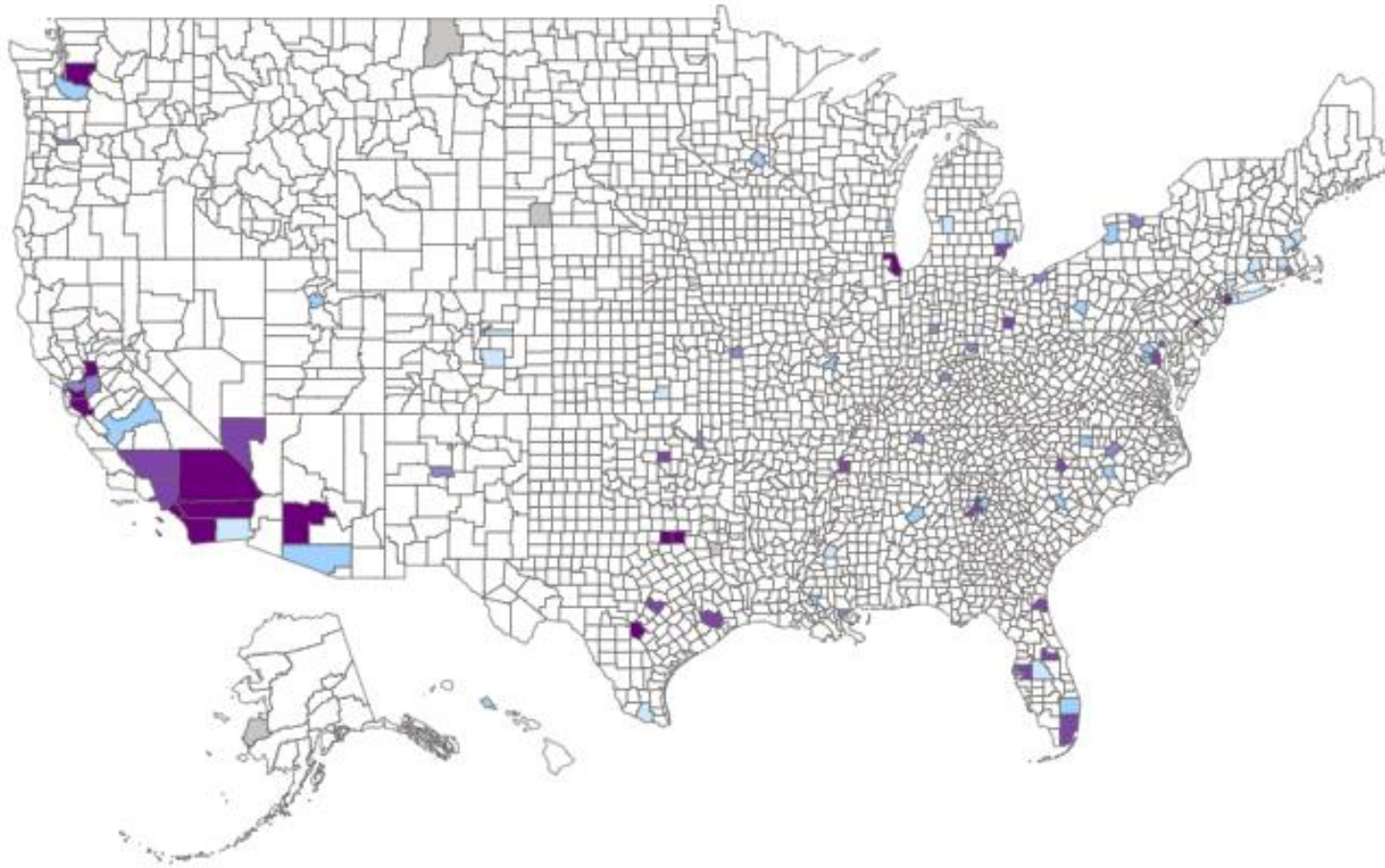
**Extreme  
disparities in  
geographic  
distribution  
exist**

**Resources  
are not  
distributed  
equally**

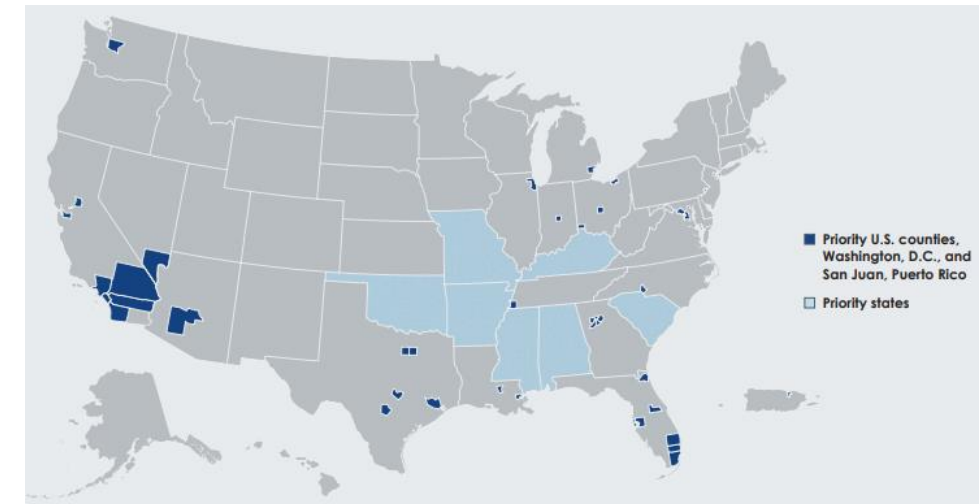
**Social and  
economic  
determinants  
lead to most  
major  
disparities**

**Focus  
resources in  
disparately  
affected  
geographic  
areas and  
venues**

# Counties with a High Burden of HIV, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, & TB\*



## EHE Priority Areas



\*High burden defined as counties with the highest number of diagnoses accounting for 50% of diagnoses for each infection in 2019

# Place Provides Opportunity

- HIV, STD, and Student Health Clinics
- Community Health Centers
- Syringe Service Programs
- Substance Use Disorder Treatment Centers
- Correctional Facilities
- Homeless Shelters
- Emergency Departments
- Hospitals
- Schools
- Virtual Spaces: dating sites, digital interest groups, influencers







# Policy Matters

**Policy can  
maximize  
reach and  
effectiveness  
of  
interventions**

**Policies  
leverage  
existing  
systems**

**Policy and  
law provide  
long-term  
solutions**

**Policies can  
lead to  
behavior  
change and  
improve  
public health**



# Science Matters

New multi-  
pathogen  
testing  
technology

PrEP  
guidelines  
decrease HIV  
and STI  
incidence

SSPs prevent  
HIV, HCV, and  
overdose  
deaths

# High Impact Strategies

- Multi-pathogen test-and-link
- Policy change
- Routine and outbreak response interventions
- Venue- and program-based multi-disease prevention
- Data sharing and analyses
- Digital communication campaigns and interventions

# Supportive Structures & Processes

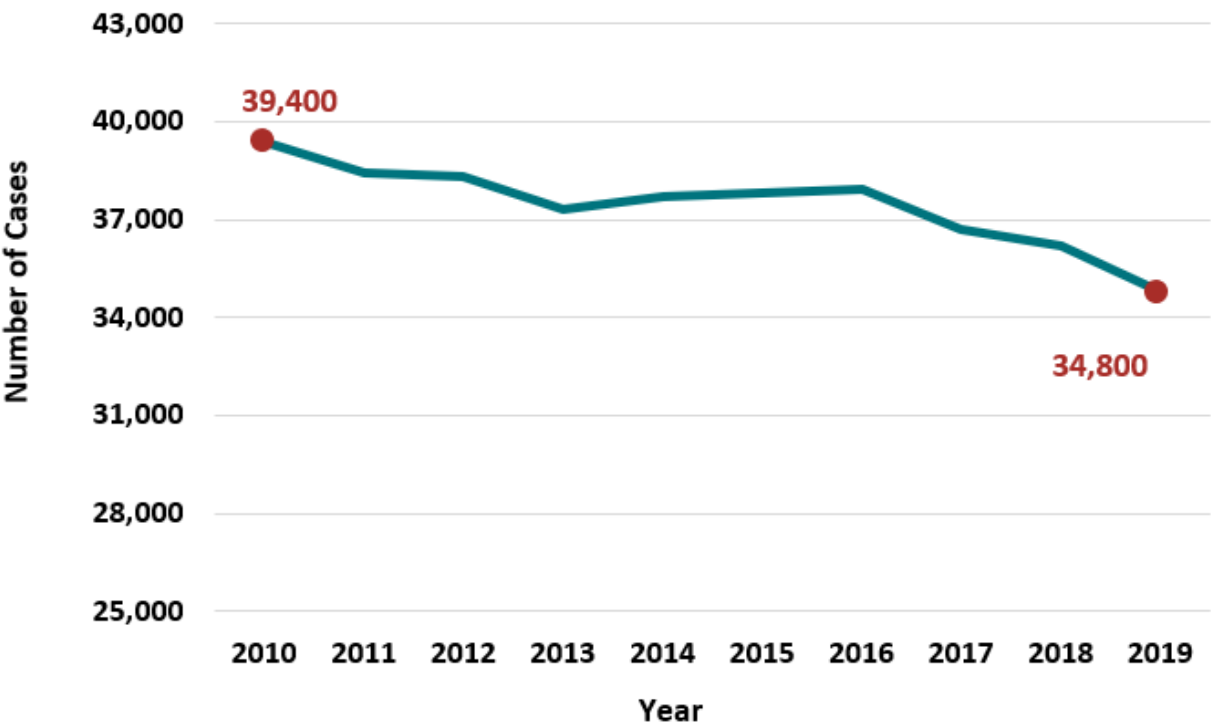
- Administrative, financial, and managerial processes that enable a syndemic approach to prevention
- Evaluations of the impact, costs, and benefits of a syndemic strategy
- Strategic communications to gain and maintain support for syndemic approaches



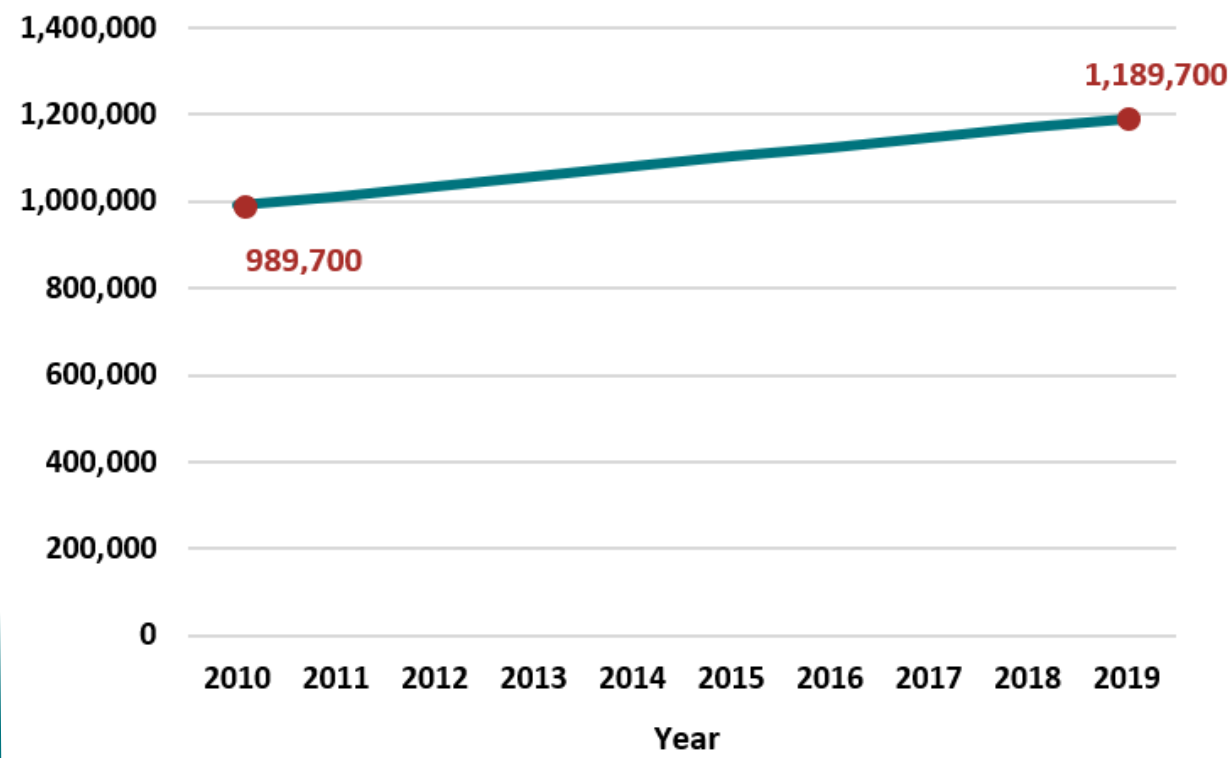
# NCHHSTP Updates

# HIV Incidence Declined Slightly While Prevalence Increased

Estimated HIV Incidence 2010-2019



Estimated HIV Prevalence 2010-2019\*



\*Includes both diagnosed and undiagnosed cases

# Innovation for HIV Prevention and Advancing Health Equity

Self-Testing



Syndemic Approaches



CBO Capacity



PrEP Uptake



Status Neutral Models of Care



Diagnose

Treat

Prevent

Respond

Diagnose

Treat

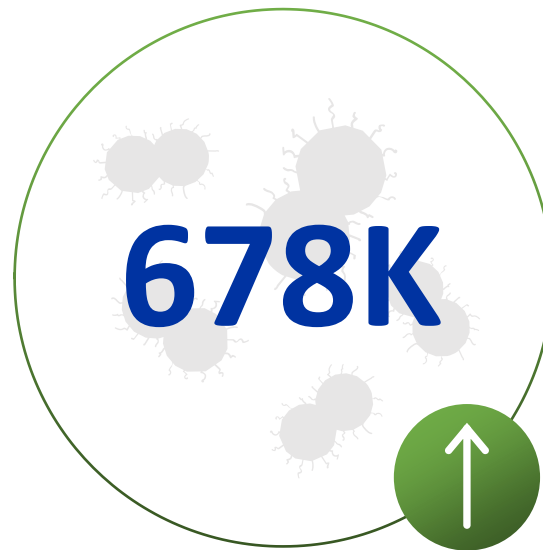
# STD Incidence is Far Too High in the U.S.

## 2020 STD Surveillance Report

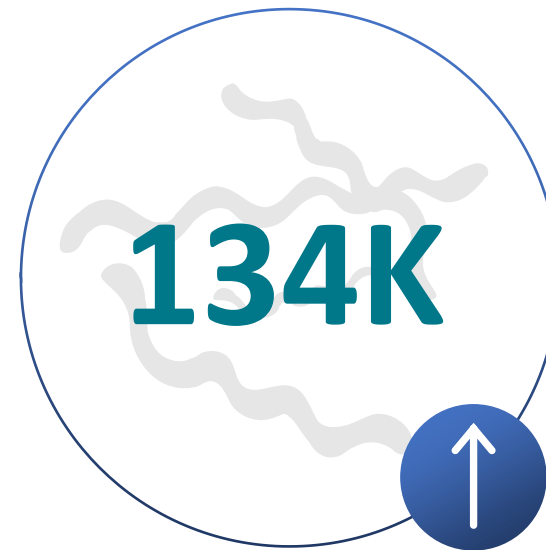
Chlamydia



Gonorrhea



Syphilis

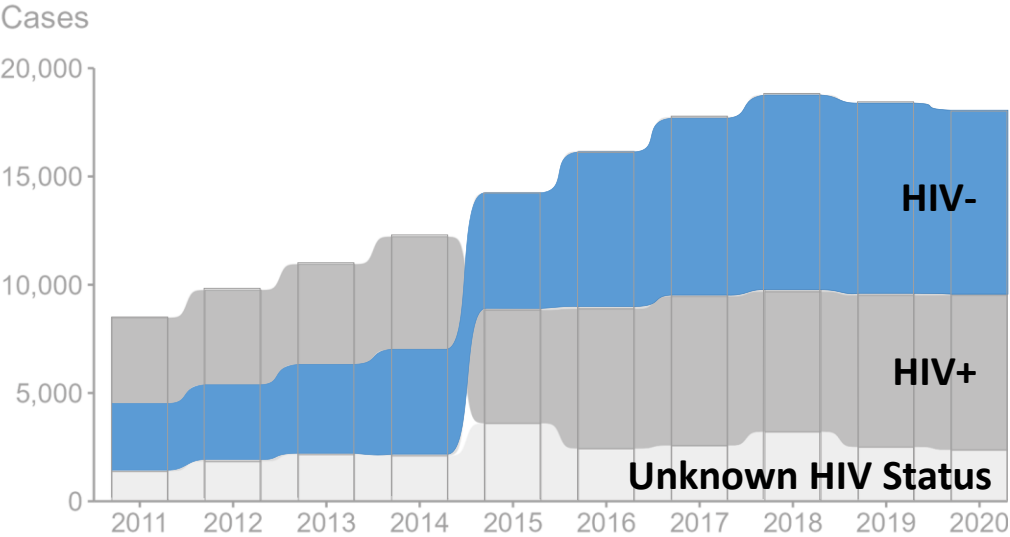


Congenital Syphilis

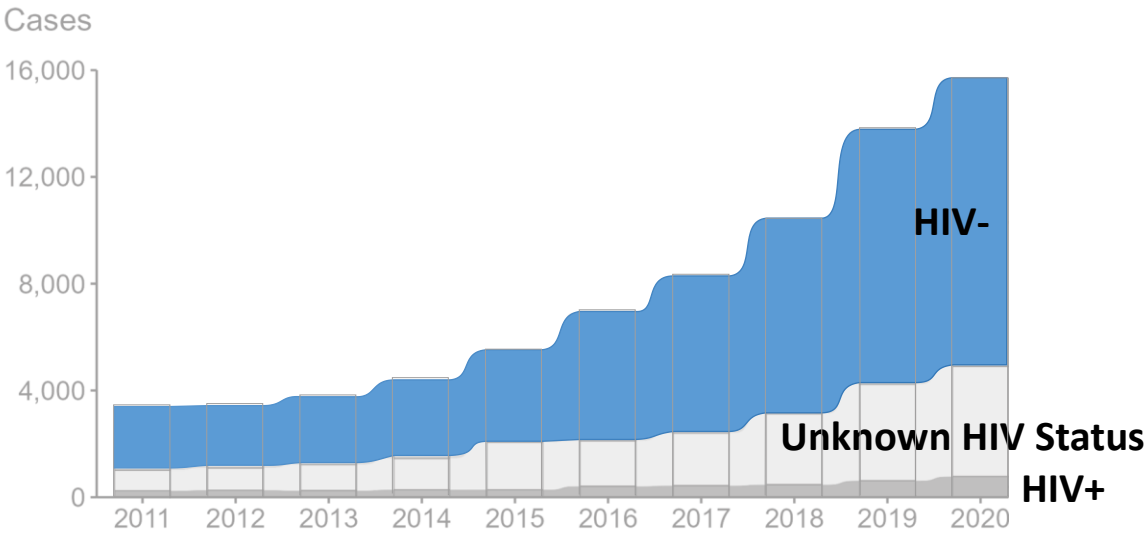




# Syphilis Diagnoses Provide HIV Prevention Opportunities



*Primary and Secondary Syphilis — Reported Cases Among Men Who Have Sex with Men by HIV Status, United States, 2011–2020*



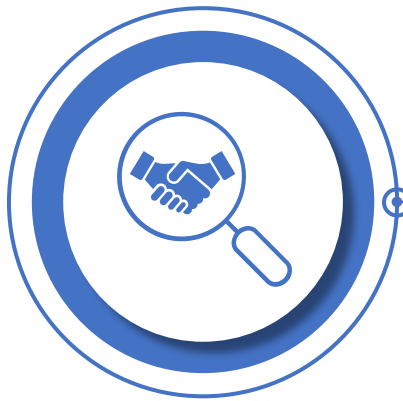
*Primary and Secondary Syphilis — Reported Cases Among Women and Men Who Have Sex with Women Only and by HIV Status, United States, 2011–2020*

NOTE: During 2011 to 2020, the proportion of primary and secondary syphilis cases among men reported without data on sex of sex partners ranged from 17% to 23%.

# STI Prevention and Control in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## Integrating Services to Address Syndemics

### Addressing Disparities & Inequities Through



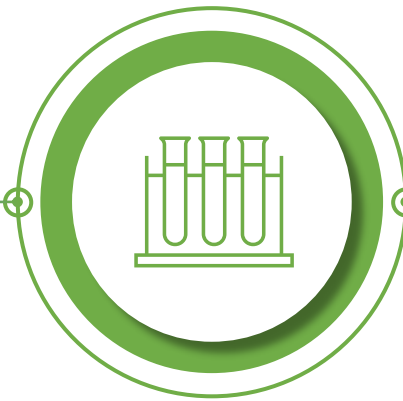
**Identifying  
Collaboration  
Opportunities**



**Increasing  
Access to  
Healthcare**



**Expanding Partner  
Services & DIS**



**Improving STI  
Diagnostics &  
Therapeutics**



**Enhancing  
Surveillance  
Systems**

# STD Division Programs and Grants



## State & Local

- ✓ Strengthening STD Prevention & Control for Health Depts.
- ✓ Community Approaches to Reducing STD
- ✓ Integrated HIV Programs for Health Departments to Support EHE



## Supplemental Surveillance

- ✓ Enhanced Gonococcal Isolate Surveillance Project
- ✓ STD Surveillance Network
- ✓ Strengthening the US Response to Resistant Gonorrhea



## Training

- ✓ Disease Intervention Training Centers
- ✓ National Network of STD Clinical Prevention Training Centers



**Programs and grants account for approximately 85% of STD Division funds**

# CDC's Strategic Plan to Reduce Infectious Diseases Among People Who Use Drugs

**Vision:** Eliminate injection drug use-associated infections

**Mission:** Decrease morbidity, mortality, and incidence of infectious diseases associated with injection drug use, as well as stigma experienced by people who use drugs

## Strategic Priorities:

1. **Strengthen** the syringe services program (SSP) infrastructure nationwide and further integrate SSPs into the U.S. public health system
2. **Establish** coordinated surveillance, monitoring, and program implementation



# Innovative Harm Reduction Approaches for Prevention

## National Harm Reduction Technical Assistance Center



Provides technical assistance and consultation services to support **implementation of effective, evidence-based harm reduction programs, practices, and policies** in diverse community settings



[harmreductionhelp.cdc.gov](https://harmreductionhelp.cdc.gov)

## Strengthening Syringe Services Programs (CDC-RFA-PS22-2208) announced March 2022

### Aims



increase access to harm reduction services for PWID

&



reduce incidence of infectious diseases and other complications of injection drug use



### Component 1

Support a national network of SSPs and oversee implementation and use of an annual national survey of SSPs



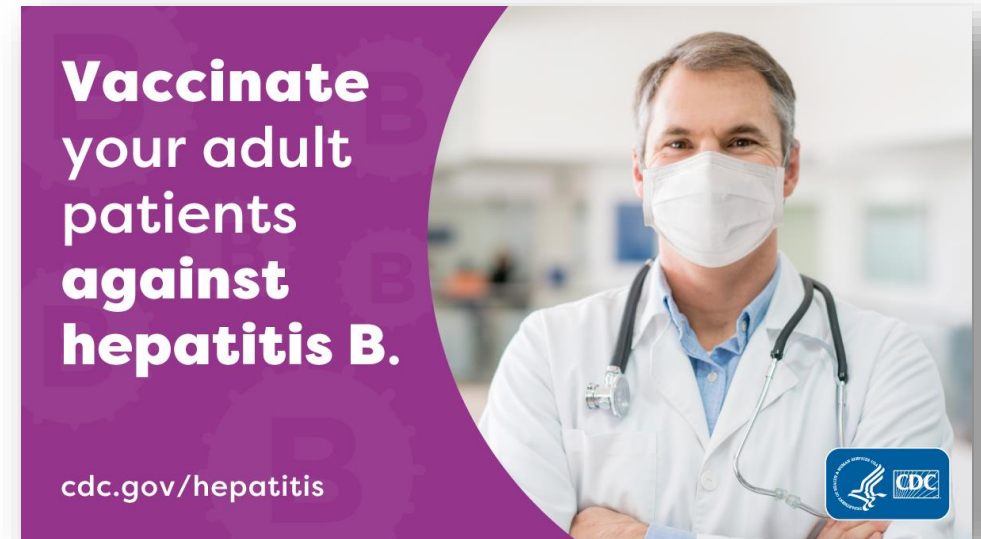
### Component 2

Strengthen implementation of SSPs in the United States, territories and affiliated states, and tribal nations

# Advances in Adult Hepatitis B Vaccine Recommendations

## Updated hepatitis B vaccination recommendations published in April 2022: A move away from risk-based approaches

- All adults **19-59 years** and **adults  $\geq 60$  with risk factors** should receive hepatitis B vaccines
- **Adults  $\geq 60$  without known risk factors** may receive hepatitis B vaccines



# Advances in Adult Hepatitis B Screening and Testing Recommendations

## Screening and testing guidelines posted in the Federal Register for public comment

- Proposed recommendation: **At least once in a lifetime for adults** aged  $\geq 18$  years
- Comment closes June 3, 2022



<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-07050>

# New CDC Data Reveal the Magnitude of Challenges Youth are Experiencing

37%



Of students reported **poor mental health during the pandemic**

26%



Of students who identify as LGB **attempted suicide** in prior year

17%



Of students who identify as other or questioning **attempted suicide** in prior year

55%



Of students experienced **emotional abuse in the home**

64%



Of Asian students have experienced **racism in school**

55%

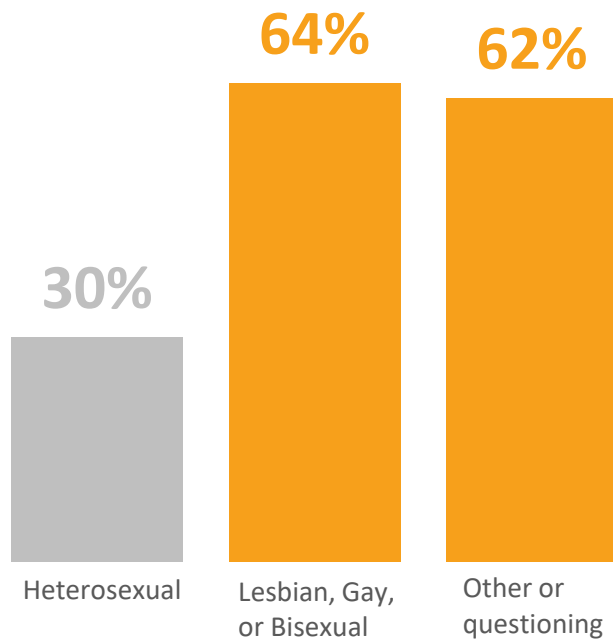


Of both Black and Multiracial students have experienced **racism in school**

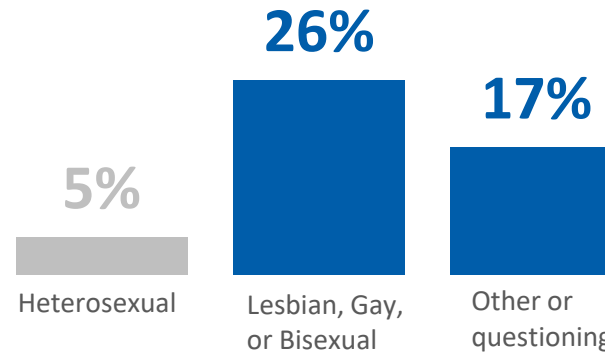
## Schools Need Support to Promote Recovery and Resilience



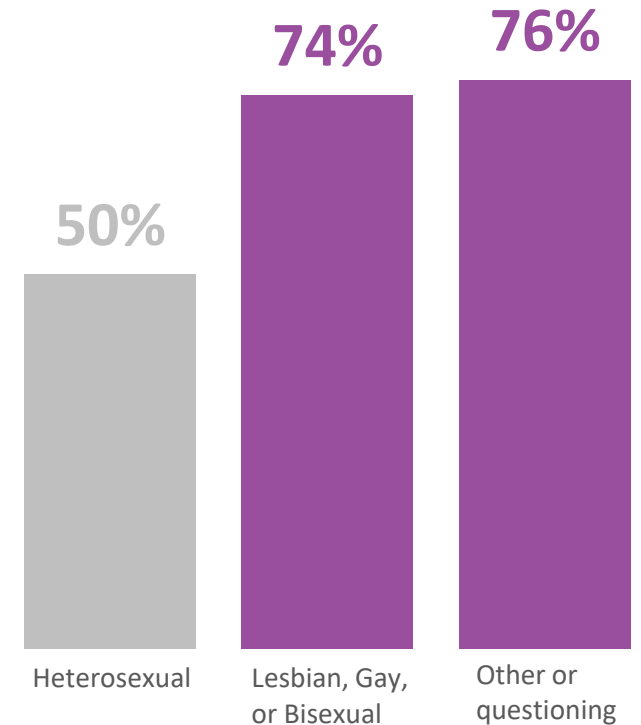
# LGBQ Youth Have Been Disproportionately Impacted by the Pandemic



More than 60% of **LGBQ students** experienced **poor mental health** during the pandemic



**LGBQ students** were more than 3x as likely to have **attempted suicide** in the past year



Three quarters of **LGBQ students** experienced **emotional abuse at home** during the pandemic

# CDC's "What Works in Schools" Approach Improves Adolescent Health and Well-being

In schools implementing this approach within CDC-funded districts, students were **less likely** to:



HAVE EVER  
HAD SEX



HAVE 4+  
SEXUAL  
PARTNERS



BE CURRENTLY  
SEXUALLY  
ACTIVE



MISS SCHOOL  
BECAUSE  
OF SAFETY  
CONCERNS

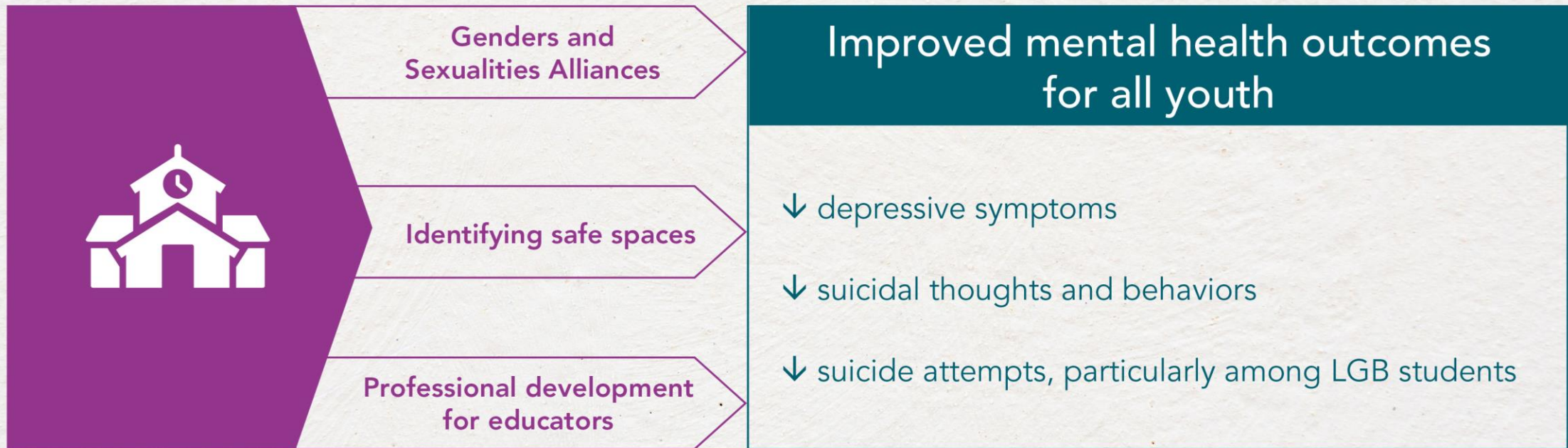


BE FORCED TO  
HAVE SEX



USE  
MARIJUANA

# LGBTQ-Supportive School Policies and Practices Support All Youth



## CALL TO ACTION:

# Key Actions to Address Syndemics



**Put People  
First**



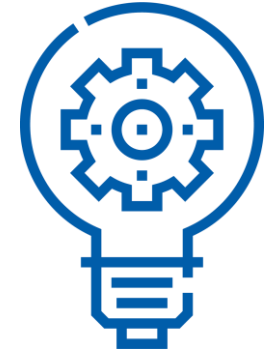
**Focus on  
Equity**



**Put Money  
Where The  
Epidemic Is**



**Leverage  
Policy as a  
Public Health  
Tool**



**Prioritize  
Innovation**