



2022  
NATIONAL

HIV & HEPATITIS  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MEETING



# **Syndemic Infectious Disease – Chicago's Approach to Programs and Planning**

# Syndemic Infectious Disease – Chicago's Approach to Programs and Planning

**Ashley M. Becht, MPH, CPH** – Director of Disease Investigations,  
Chicago Department of Public Health Syndemic ID Bureau

**Sylvia Dziemian**, Program Director – Tuberculosis Program,  
Chicago Department of Public Health Syndemic ID Bureau



# Syndemic ID – Definition and Rationale

- **Syndemic:** Synergistically interacting epidemics
- **Syndemic ID:** HIV, STI, HBV, HCV, and TB
- **Rationale:**
  - Similar behaviors/conditions lead to risk for these diseases.
  - Diseases have reciprocal and interdependent factors:
    - HIV, STI, HBV, and HCV share common risks/modes of transmission.
    - STI increase HIV infectiousness/susceptibility.
    - HIV is a risk factor to TB progression.
    - TB is an HIV opportunistic infection.
    - TB accelerates HIV disease progression.
    - HBV/HCV co-infection makes HIV management more challenging.
  - Common risks suggest common solutions.
  - Disease conditions are often managed by the same institutions.



# Syndemic ID & Healthy Chicago 2025

**Healthy Chicago 2025 Vision:** A city where all people and all communities have power, are free from oppression and are strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being.

## Themes:

- Transform policies and processes to foster anti-racist, multicultural systems
- Strengthen community capacity and youth leadership
- Improve systems of care for populations most affected by inequities
- Further the health and vibrancy of neighborhoods

## HEALTHY CHICAGO 2025

is a plan for the local public health system – including community groups, government agencies, businesses, faith-based organizations, researchers, community development professionals, health and social service providers, and others – to **eliminate the racial life expectancy gap and help all Chicagoans enjoy longer, safer, healthier lives.**



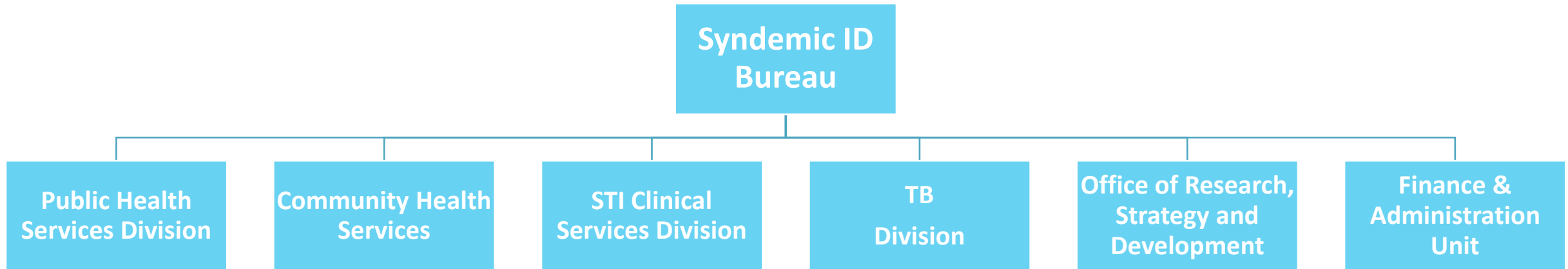
# Syndemic ID – Chicago Background

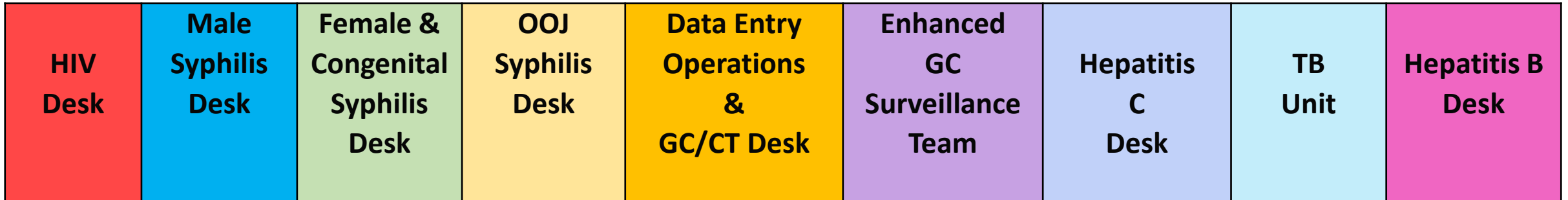
In 2021, the HIV/STI Bureau at CDPH, with the additional of viral hepatitis and tuberculosis disease surveillance and programming, became the Syndemic Infectious Disease Bureau to better address Chicago residents' needs.

Syndemic ID	Surveillance Year	# of Cases	% co-I with HIV	#co-I with HIV
Chlamydia	2020	25,219	4.97%	1,254
Gonorrhea	2020	13,322	11.26%	1,500
P & S Syphilis	2020	919	33.08%	304
HCV	2017	25,363	9%	2,282
TB	2020	83	2.41%	2

*\*HIV/HBV co-infection data are not available. Research suggests 5-10% of PLWH are co-infected with HBV.  
(<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20158604>)*

# CDPH Syndemic ID Bureau – Current State

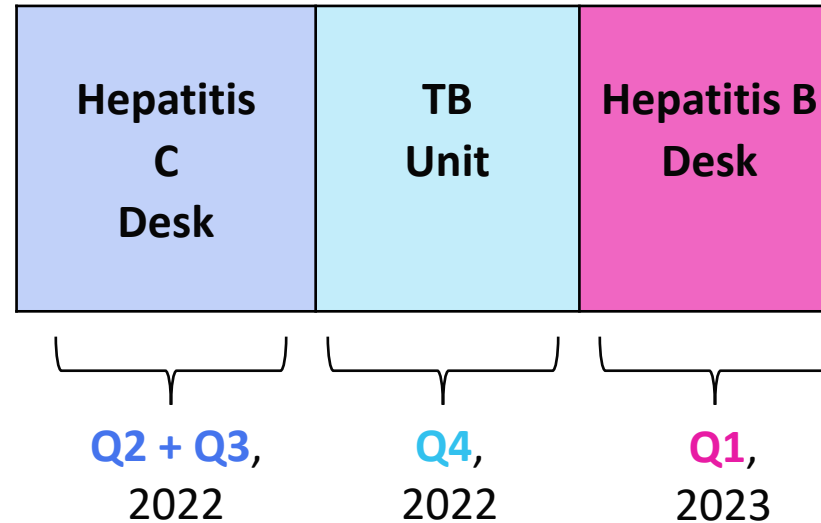




- Our team staffs each desk with Disease Intervention Specialists and all desks are supported by our Data Entry staff as well as Supervisors and Team Leads.
- Our team works together to address co-infection in a syndemic way, making the experience a holistic one for the provider and client, if possible.
- This approach allows for a more focused and accessible model of care and allows our team to be more efficient in disease investigation and mitigation.
- Often, the same Chicago community areas and regions have high rates of one or more syndemic ID diagnoses, and Chicago residents are not all equally affected by various conditions of public health concern.
- Not all Chicago residents can access care and services equitably.



# Transitions to Better Address Syndemic Conditions

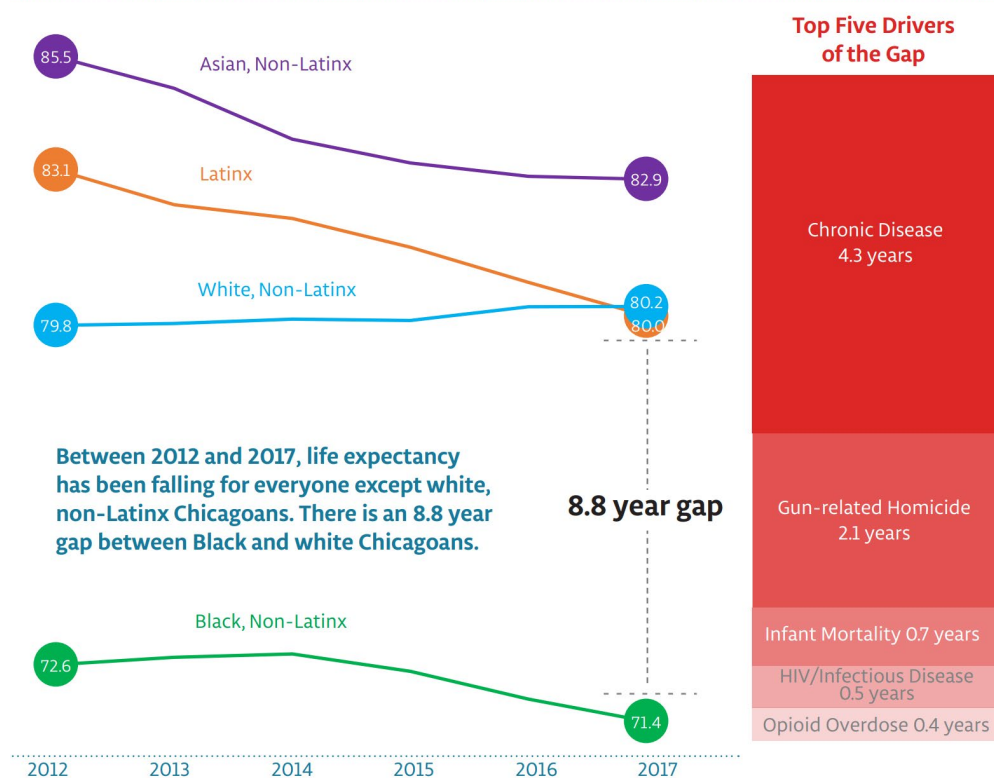









- Our team continues to successfully transition viral hepatitis activities from the Communicable Disease Program in the Health Protection Bureau to the Syndemic Infectious Disease Bureau. The tuberculosis program transitioned from the Bureau of Health Protection to the Syndemic Infectious Disease Bureau in November 2021.
- The integration of all conditions into our Maven surveillance platform, also known as the Chicago Health Information Management System (CHIMS) will allow for our team to better address these conditions for timely public health intervention as outlined in the Healthy Chicago 2025 Plan.
- In Q4 of 2022, the tuberculosis program will be integrated into Maven (CHIMS), and in Q1 of 2023, we anticipate the hepatitis B program will deploy in Maven.
- Current work related to hepatitis and other syndemic conditions includes building coalitions and our upcoming provider conference, creating internal and external reports, and engaging stakeholders to improve reporting.

# Closing the Life Expectancy Gap

Healthy Chicago 2025 addresses priority areas and themes utilizing anti-stigma, anti-racist, and people-centered language and SID approaches to programming and care across all conditions.

CHICAGO'S LIFE EXPECTANCY GAP, 2017



Assessment themes	To close the racial life expectancy gap, we will...								<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Improve systems of care for populations most affected by inequities</li><li>•Further the health and vibrancy of neighborhoods</li><li>•Strengthen community capacity and youth leadership</li><li>•Transform policies and processes to foster anti-racist, multicultural systems</li></ul>
Assessment priority areas	Address inequities in...	 HOUSING	 FOOD ACCESS	 ENVIRONMENT	 PUBLIC SAFETY	 NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	 PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEMS ORGANIZATION	
Populations experiencing inequities	With a focus on...	Black, Latinx and low-income Chicagoans	Black, Latinx and low-income Chicagoans	Communities disproportionately burdened by pollution	Black Communities	Disinvested and gentrifying communities	Black, Latinx and low-income Chicagoans	Black and Latinx Chicagoans	
Ideal states	So within one generation, all Chicagoans...	Have a healthy, affordable home	Have enough nutritious food and local food businesses thrive	Breathe clean air free of harmful pollutants	Are safe across the city and have trusting relationships with law enforcement	Live in vibrant neighborhoods that reflect their identities	Benefit from a full range of health and human services	Have voice and power in the public health system	
Healthy Chicago 2025 vision	In a city where...	All people and all communities have power, are free from oppression and are strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being.							

# CDPH Syndemic ID – Moving to a Future State

- Finalize implementation of Maven (CHIMS) case surveillance system for all conditions that transitioned in the SID Bureau to better enhance internal and external reporting.
- Continue internal and external collaboration among partners, coalitions and providers.
- Integrate funding across fund sources to create comprehensive programs and services.
- Continue to prioritize health equity and current science.
- Challenge ourselves and our partners to move from silos to systems of care.
- Build on existing HIV/STI surveillance, epidemiology, and public health intervention programs to expand disease monitoring, investigation, notification, and intervention for all syndemic ID.

# Contact Information

**Ashley M. Becht, MPH, CPH**

Director of Disease Investigations – Office of Surveillance

Syndemic Infectious Disease Bureau

[ashley.becht@cityofchicago.org](mailto:ashley.becht@cityofchicago.org)

**Sylvia Dziemian**

Program Director - Tuberculosis Program

Syndemic Infectious Disease Bureau

[sylvia.dziemian@cityofchicago.org](mailto:sylvia.dziemian@cityofchicago.org)



# Acknowledgments

**David Kern**

Deputy Commissioner

Syndemic Infectious Disease Bureau

[david.kern@cityofchicago.org](mailto:david.kern@cityofchicago.org)

**Irina Tabidze, MD, MPH**

Director of Program Operations

Syndemic Infectious Disease Bureau

[irina.tabidze@cityofchicago.org](mailto:irina.tabidze@cityofchicago.org)

