

A Syndemic Approach to HIV, COVID-19, and Monkeypox Prevention

Michelle Van Handel, MPH
Associate Director
Program and Performance
Improvement Office
NCHHSTP/CDC

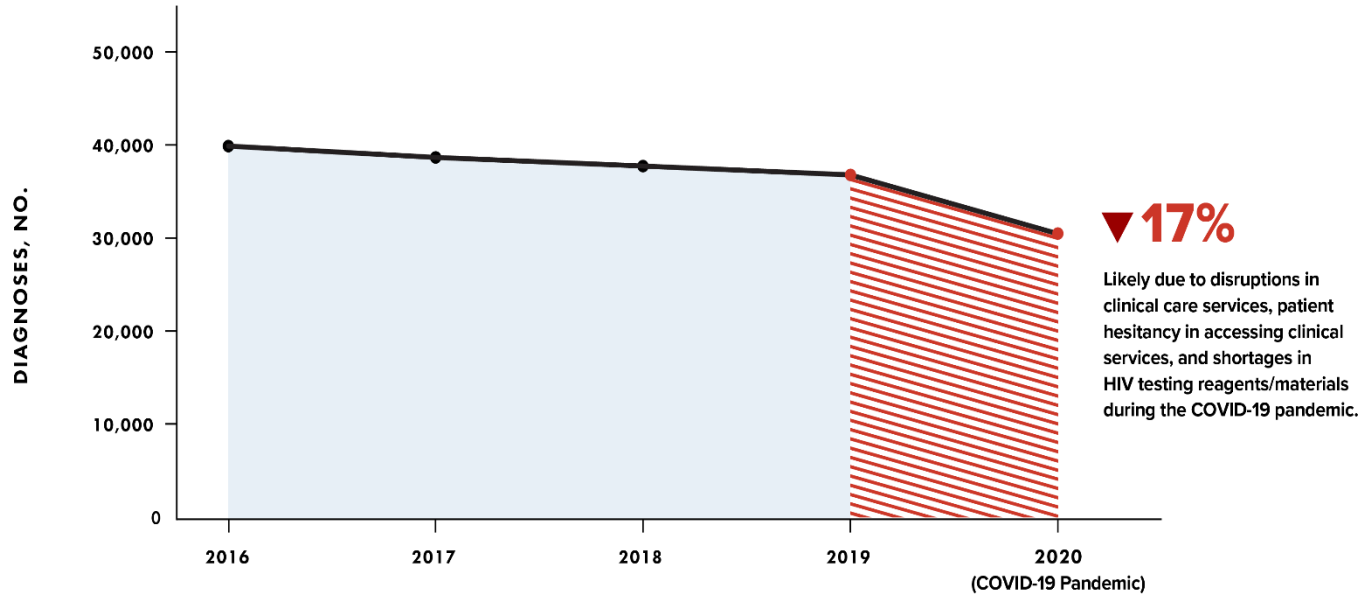
2022 NASTAD National HIV and Hepatitis TA Meeting
October 13, 2022

Federal Partners Roundtable



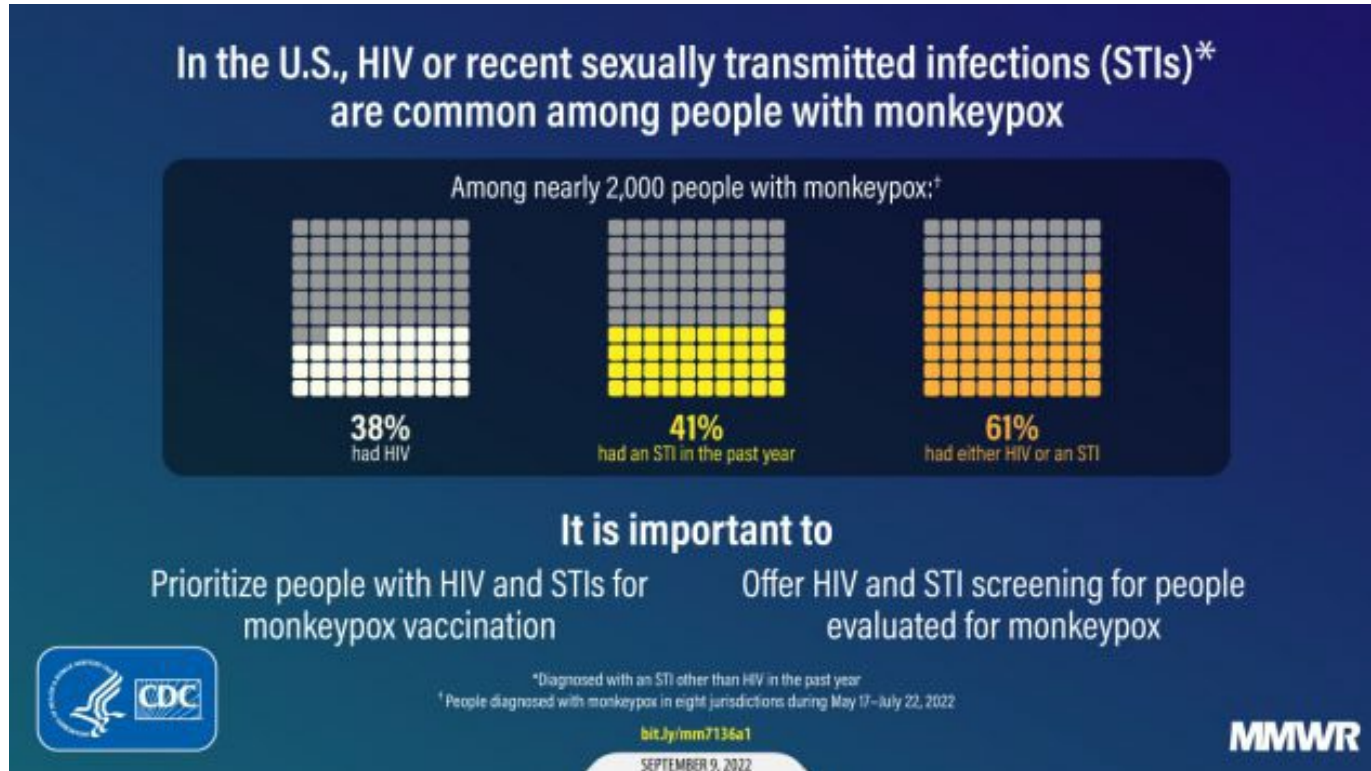
Current state of HIV:

Diagnoses of HIV infection have declined due to impact from COVID-19 pandemic



Note. Diagnoses of HIV infection reported to CDC through December 2021. The annual number of HIV diagnoses in 2020 was 17% lower than 2019. The decline in 2020 was larger than the average yearly decline (2-3%) observed during 2016–2019.

Need to leverage systems for MPX, HIV, and STI treatment and prevention



Syndemic

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**

**Strong
workforce &
good
partnerships
lead to
success**



Populations

- **Men who have sex with men**
 - 42% of P&S syphilis cases, 42% of gonorrhea cases, 70% of HIV diagnoses
- **Persons who inject drugs**
 - High incidence of STIs, most acute HCV, large proportion of acute HBV infections, 11% of HIV diagnoses, large proportion of overdose deaths
- **Some racial and ethnic groups disproportionately affected**
 - African Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, AI/ANs, higher incidence of STIs and HIV; more than 1/3 of TB and HBV among Asian Americans
- **Justice-involved populations have higher incidence of all infections**
- **Young people**
 - Highest rates of STIs; 21% of new HIV diagnoses



Place Matters

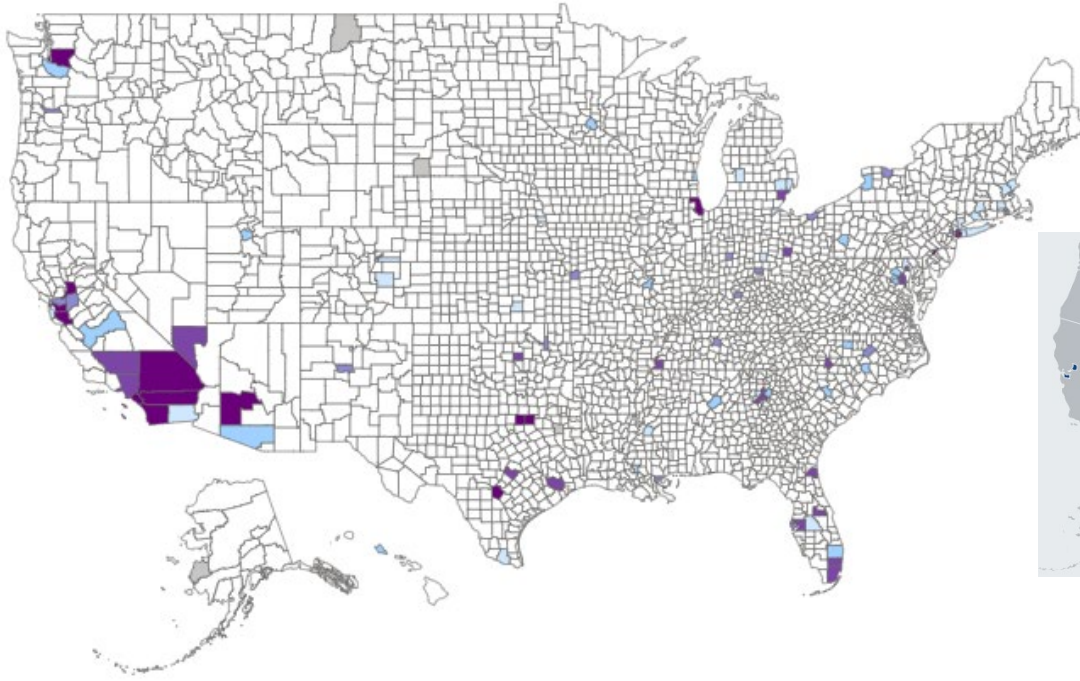
**Extreme
disparities in
geographic
distribution
and
resources
exist**

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

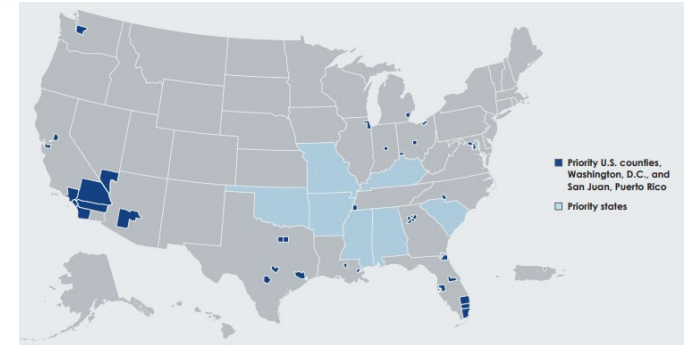
**Focus
resources in
disparately
affected
geographic
areas and
venues**

**Co-locate
services to
provide
holistic care**

Counties with High Burden* for 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

- STI clinics
- HIV clinics
- Schools, school nurses, and student health clinics
- Community health centers
- Syringe Services Programs
- Substance use disorder treatment centers
- Correctional facilities
- Homeless shelters
- Emergency departments
- Hospitals
- Virtual space: dating sites, digital interest groups, influencers



Policy Matters

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

**Policies can act
upstream and
improve SDOH
and health
equity**

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

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



Science Matters

New multi-pathogen testing technology

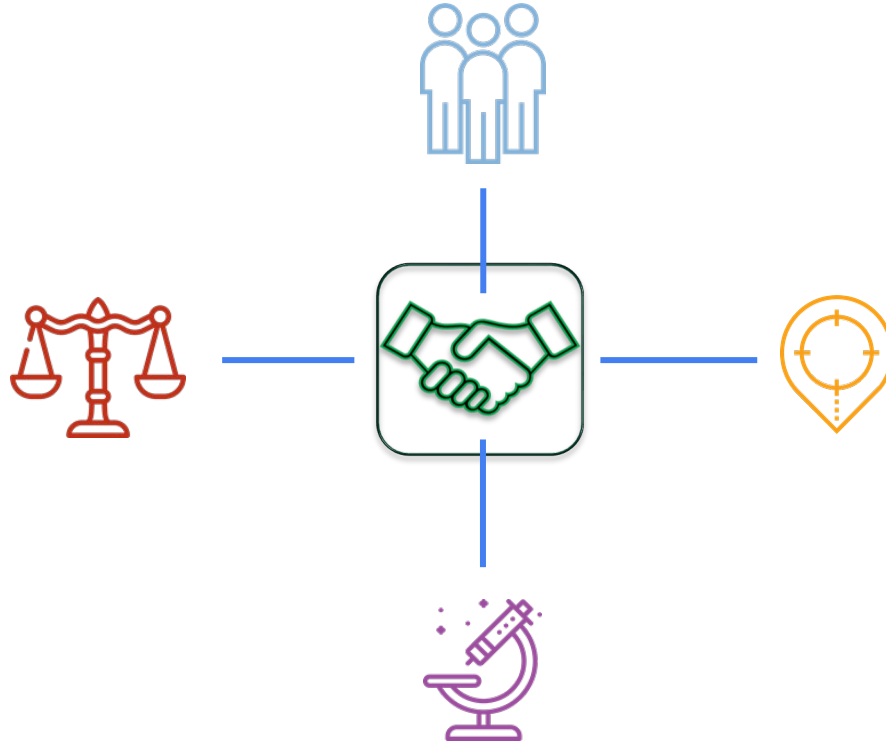
Multi-pathogen vaccines

PrEP guidelines decrease STI and HIV incidence

SSPs prevent HIV, HCV, and overdose deaths



Workforce & Partnerships



High Impact Strategies

- Multi-pathogen testing and vaccines
- Policy change
- *What Works in Schools*
- Prevention interventions and outbreak response
- 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
- Evaluations of the impact, costs, and benefits of a syndemic strategy
- Strategic communications to support syndemic approaches



CALL TO ACTION:

Key actions to Address Syndemics



**Put
people
first**



**Focus
on
equity**



**Put your
money
where
your
epidemic
is**



**Leverage
policy as a
public
health tool**



**Support
Workforce &
Partnerships**

Thank you!

For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

