HIV Program Response to Boston HIV Cluster: Data Trends 2019-2023

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Context

• Beginning in Fall 2018 Boston experienced a sustained uptick in HIV amongst unsheltered people who use drugs (PWID) many of whom also have major mental illness and very limited healthcare engagement

• As of March 2022, there were at least 171 new cases, 117 of those were linked to care at BHCHP
BHCHP Program Response

• Massive expansion of outreach-based harm reduction and HIV prevention and treatment work in Mass/Cass Area including:
  • Rapid starts of HIV medications, often starting the same day as HIV diagnosis
  • Rapid starts of HIV prevention medications including pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis
  • Street-based directly observed therapy (DOT) for both HIV treatment and prevention medications (ranging from 40 up to 90 patients per day)
  • Distribution of safer drug use and safer sex supplies
  • Expansion of outreach based, low threshold sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment
  • Addressing basic survival needs through case management (food, clothes, housing advocacy, etc.) which are CRITICAL social determinants of both HIV transmission and HIV outcomes
  • Overdose response and support was crucial in saving lives (we can’t treat HIV if the person dies from an OD), and was vital to relationship and trust-building with the community
Outcomes
Number of New HIV Diagnoses Linked to Care at BHCHP Since 2019

![Graph showing the number of new HIV diagnoses linked to care at BHCHP since 2019, with a peak in 2021.](image-url)
BHCHP’s Growing Medication Adherence Support Program for People with HIV

Total # of BHCHP Patients on Directly Observed Therapy for HIV

- The chart shows the total number of BHCHP patients on Directly Observed Therapy (DOT) for HIV from January 2020 to November 2023.
- The number of patients has been increasing over time, with a slight dip in June 2021.
- By November 2023, the number of patients on DOT has significantly increased compared to January 2020.
HIV Viral Load Suppression Rates for Patients Receiving Outreach-Based Treatment Adherence Support

90% viral suppression

N=5 patients
N=5
N=16
N=28
N=22
N=28
N=29

### Key BHCHP HIV Outcomes for Unsheltered People who Inject Drugs

**HIV Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viral suppression newly diagnosed cohort (n=117 patients)</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall viral suppression with outreach-based medication adherence support (n=29 patients)</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV Viral Suppression Entire BHCHP Cohort (n=346 patients)</td>
<td>88%</td>
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BHCHP is closing critical equity gaps for our most vulnerable patients, many who were diagnosed with HIV during the Boston outbreak.
Summary

BHCHP’s outreach programming to prevent, diagnose and treat HIV among unsheltered people who inject drugs has had a dramatic positive impact on the Boston HIV Outbreak

• New HIV diagnoses peaked in 2021 and have been declining precipitously since this time

• As of August 1st, 2023 the viral suppression rate for people with HIV receiving outreach-based adherence support was 90 percent!

• Rates of HIV viral suppression in key vulnerable sub-populations including people who use drugs and people experiencing homelessness have improved in the past year
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Thank you!