Health Equity and HIV in North Carolina: Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men

Newly diagnosed HIV rates by sexual preference, age, and race/ethnicity identify health disparities.

Rates of HIV among gay, bisexual, and other men who report sex with men (MSM) are based on an estimated population in North Carolina.^

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay and Bisexual Men and Other Men who have Sex with Men^</td>
<td>868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 years old</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30 years old</td>
<td>1,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American*</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other**</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

North Carolina 2015 HIV Rate: 13 per 100,000

*Non-Hispanic/Latino.
**Other includes American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Multiple Race.

Successful treatment leads to viral suppression in people living with HIV. The National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) aims to increase viral suppression among people with HIV to at least 80%. Due to strong public health partnerships, North Carolina is on track to meet and exceed these NHAS goals.

Viral Suppression in North Carolina and among Gay, Bisexual, and Other MSM by Race/Ethnicity in 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Suppression Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina:</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino:</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian:</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other* Race/Ethnicity:</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other includes American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Multiple Race.
What is North Carolina doing about health disparities?

In 2012, North Carolina was awarded one of only eight Care and Prevention in the United States (CAPUS) projects in 2012. The purpose of this project was to reduce disparities in HIV infection and health outcomes. CAPUS set out to accomplish this by increasing statewide HIV testing capacity and optimizing linkage, retention, and re-engagement into care and prevention services for people of color and sexual minorities who are living with HIV.

Three programs developed by the North Carolina CAPUS team specifically address health disparities and promote health equity in North Carolina.

1. Culturally Competent Care (C3) training: developed and provided training for HIV providers to help combat the discrimination and stigma HIV-positive individuals of color may face in healthcare and social service settings.

2. Safe Spaces: curriculum-based support groups designed for HIV-positive men and women of color as a safe, judgement free place to learn more about HIV care and prevention, build social support systems, achieve viral suppression and how to advocate for their own health. Safe Space sites are located across the state.

3. Minority Men’s Clinics: designed for men of color to receive well check-ups, HIV/STD testing, and access to comprehensive HIV care for all HIV-positive individuals. Clinics are located in Raleigh and Durham.

While the grant ended in the summer of 2016, North Carolina created a new program called North Carolina CAPUS (Community, Awareness, Purpose, Unity, and Service) Health Equity. It will carry on the original 3 CAPUS interventions, focusing on:

- Engaging the community by hosting support groups to better understand the needs and wants of those living with HIV;
- Raise awareness and provide education among providers and the public about HIV;
- Ensure the design and implementation of programs and interventions are purposeful and meet the needs of the community;
- Unify internal and external partnerships by integrating Health Equity into HIV care and prevention programs; and
- Provide services to and with community members.