

Transcript: HIV Epidemiology in Maryland Among Transgender People

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### **Title Slide 1**

Hello. My name is Colin Flynn. My pronouns are he and him. I'm with the Maryland Department of Health, where I am the Chief of the Center for HIV Surveillance, Epidemiology and Evaluation.

The title of this presentation is HIV Epidemiology in Maryland Among Transgender People.

### **Slide 2 – Mission and Vision**

In the Maryland Department of Health, HIV surveillance is part of the Prevention and Health Promotion Administration. Our mission and vision statement is presented to you here.

A key point to this mission is that we seek to provide public health leadership through community based public health efforts in partnership with many organizations and community groups.

### **Slide 3 – Where do the Data Come From?**

The first question is, where do the data come from?

Maryland law requires health care providers to report people with diagnoses of HIV or AIDS. It requires laboratories to report HIV-related test results, and for providers to cooperate with the health department investigations.

The state and local health department attempt to interview and provide Partner Services to all people with a new diagnosis of HIV.

And the HIV surveillance program investigates all people reported to be living in or receiving care in Maryland with HIV to ensure that we have complete and accurate, unduplicated information.

### **Slide 4 – HIV Diagnosis Trends**

This slide presents the HIV diagnoses trends over the last ten years.

The purple line indicates the number of new HIV diagnoses in each year from 2010 to 2019.

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As you can see, there's been a steady decline in the number of new diagnoses from just under 1,800 in 2010 to under 1,000 in 2019. This is a 47-percent decrease over this 10-year period for an estimated annual percentage change of minus 5.9-percent.

### **Slide 5 – People Living with Diagnosed HIV on 12/31/2019 by Gender**

This slide shows people living with diagnosed HIV on December 31, 2019 by Gender.

There were 33,976 people living with diagnosed HIV in the state of Maryland. Of those, 22,000 or 65-percent were cis-male, and 11,500 were cis-female, or 34-percent.

Trans female at 309, are about 1-percent; and trans male, are 21, less than 1%.

### **Slide 6 – How do We Know Someone's Gender?**

So, how do we know someone's gender?

Providers unfortunately often only collect and report sex at birth. The Partner Services interviews, which I mentioned earlier, do collect gender information. And when we investigate, gender status is often documented in the record.

In addition, name and gender changes are recorded in official documents, such as driver license records.

We routinely review all incoming surveillance reports to identify people who have records with different names, sex at birth, and/or gender, that might indicate a person is transgender, and then investigate to confirm their status.

What we typically see is that people are getting care at multiple locations, and that these reports have a mixture of names and aliases, and reported sex or reported gender. So when this occurs, we then follow up and investigate and contact the provider, or contact the patient, and try to determine what the actual status of this person is and what the correct pronouns are.

### **Slide 7 – HIV Diagnosis Trends – Transgender People**

In this slide, we show the HIV Diagnosis Trends over the ten-year period for transgender people.

As we saw earlier, there are more trans female persons than trans male. We have been experiencing two or fewer trans male diagnoses per year, with no discernible trend in the number.

For trans female, the numbers have decreased over this time period, as we saw statewide, from 30 diagnoses in 2010 to 14 diagnoses in each of the last three years.

### **Slide 8 – Transgender People Living with Diagnosed HIV on 12/31/2019, Residence on 12/31/2019**

This slide is a representation of where you might find transgender persons living with diagnosed HIV across the state.

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The largest proportion, just over half, are residents of Baltimore City. The next-largest groupings are Prince George's County, with 17-percent; Baltimore County with almost 9-percent; Anne Arundel County, with about 7-percent; and Montgomery County with 5-percent.

These are somewhat similar to what we see for HIV diagnoses in general, but with a larger portion within Baltimore City than we might otherwise see.

### **Slide 9 – Transgender People Living with Diagnosed HIV on 12/31/2019 by Age on 12/31/2019**

In this slide you see the Current Age for Transgender persons living with diagnosed HIV.

There are 330 (transgender people); we are combining the trans male and trans female numbers in this chart.

The largest group by far are folks in their 30's -- 30 to 39 years of age, just under 140 people living with HIV in that group. Followed by folks in their 20's, with just under 80; and then smaller numbers in older ages from 40-to-49, 50 to 59, and 60 plus. Very small numbers in the 13 to 19 age group, and none under the age of 13.

### **Slide 10 – Transgender People Living with Diagnosed HIV on 12/31/2019 by Race/Ethnicity**

In this slide we see transgender people living with diagnosed HIV by race and ethnicity.

So, again, for the 330 folks, three-quarters of them are non-Hispanic Black, 13-percent are Hispanic, 6-percent are non-Hispanic White, and 6-percent are non-Hispanic multiracial. And multiracial typically are folks who are reporting being Black and White. We have no transgender persons with HIV in the other race/ethnicity categories.

### **Slide 11 – Transgender People Living with Diagnosed HIV on 12/31/2019 by Gender and HIV Exposure**

In this slide, we look at the HIV exposure categories for persons living with diagnosed HIV who are transgender.

These are somewhat different than the typical transmission categories used for HIV statistics, in that the labelings of sexual partners are not necessarily appropriate.

In addition, we are presenting it here so that there can be overlaps between sexual transmission and injection drug use transmission.

From the top line there, for injection drug use, 11-percent of the trans females are reporting injection drug use. A higher proportion, 28.6 percent of trans males, are reporting injection drug use.

66-percent of the trans females reported having sex with males only, while 52-percent of the trans males reported having sex with males only.

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Just under 3-percent of trans females reported having sex with females only, and none of the trans males reported having sex with females only.

26-percent of trans females reported having sex with both males and females, and 38-percent of trans males reported having sex with both males and females.

There were small numbers of transgender individuals who acquired HIV through perinatal transmission, and about 4-percent -- 4 to 5 percent -- of transgender individuals who have no reported HIV risk factor.

### **Slide 12 – HIV Care Markers**

In this slide we present the HIV Care Markers for transgender people in the middle columns, and then, for comparison purposes, the Maryland totals in the far right column.

So in the top rows for new HIV diagnoses in 2019, as mentioned earlier there were 14 among transgender individuals and just under 1,000 in Maryland as a total. These 14 transgender HIV diagnoses represented 1.5-percent of all the new Maryland HIV diagnoses in 2019.

12 of the 14 were linked to HIV care within one month, for an 85.7-percent Linkage to Care rate, which is just slightly lower than the Maryland total of 87.4-percent.

1 transgender new diagnosis was a late diagnosis, which means that within the 12 months after the HIV diagnosis they were also diagnosed with AIDS. That's a rate of 7.1-percent, which is substantially lower than the 24.7-percent for Maryland as a whole. But, it's a very small number of individuals, so this percent estimate is probably unstable.

The bottom rows are for persons living with diagnosed HIV at the end of 2019.

So again, the 330 number, which we saw earlier, and as mentioned earlier, that represents 1-percent of all of the people living with diagnosed HIV in the state of Maryland.

279 of the 330 are reported to be in care, which means that they had CD-4 and viral load testing done in the last 12 months, for 79-percent, a little bit lower than the Maryland total of 84.5-percent.

16 had their most recent CD-4 test results at under 200 cells per microliter, which would be an indication of their immune suppression and an AIDS diagnosis. That's a rate of 4.8-percent, which is somewhat lower than the state total of 8.1-percent.

And 236 reported at their last viral load test during 2019-2020 period, was virally suppressed, for a viral-suppression rate of 71.5-percent, just slightly higher than the state average of 69.8-percent.

So, all in all, the Care Markers for transgender individuals are consistent with what we see for the HIV population as a whole in Maryland, although for the new diagnoses the numbers

are somewhat small and so one must be cautious of over generalizing from these numbers.

**Slide 13 – Data Limitations**

So, those are the HIV surveillance data that we have for transgender people, diagnosed and living with HIV, but there are some limitations to these data.

Over the last 10 years, there have been substantial improvements in our data systems, in general and in particular as regards to identifying and reporting transgender individuals. During this time period we have done substantial cleaning of the data, improved our processes, improved our data system, and the number of identified transgender persons in the HIV data has more than doubled.

There are, however, still some data limitations.

Transgender status is likely unreported for some people. Some people, despite our efforts to de-duplicate, may be double-counted under different names and genders.

The gender categories that we have do not accurately represent nonbinary people.

And, we are unable to describe when someone transitions or where they are in their process, so we are able to indicate that someone at some point is or was transgender, but we are unable to put dates on when that occurred or what their current status is.

So, given those caveats, we are pleased that we do have some data and that it is fairly robust, and that we tend to have enough numbers to make some inferences from these numbers.

Thank you for your attention at this time.

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To learn more about HIV Surveillance and HIV Statistics in Maryland, please visit:

<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/CHSE/pages/Home.aspx>

Download the Maryland Annual HIV Epidemiological Profile: Gender Expansive People Supplement. Data reported through June 30, 2019, at

<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/CHSE/SiteAssets/Pages/statistics/Gender-Expansive-People-HIV-Supplemental-Profile.pdf>

To learn more about Partner Services, please visit:

<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDPCS/CSTIP/Pages/Partner-Services.aspx>