

End the Epidemics: Californians Mobilizing to End HIV, HCV, and STDs

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Pacific Coast Division

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San Diego

Heidi Aiem
County of San Diego Health and
Human Services Agency

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**Moderator: Scott Suckow, Executive Director
American Liver Foundation, Pacific Coast
Division**

The American Liver Foundation's mission is to facilitate and promote education, support and research for the treatment and cure of liver disease.



For more information, contact the American Liver Foundation
(800) GO-LIVER | (800) 465-4837 | www.liverfoundation.org

Panelists

[Ryan Clary](#)

Consultant, End the Epidemics: Californians Mobilizing to End HIV, HCV, and STDs

[Heidi Aiem](#)

Public Health Services – HIV, STD & Hepatitis Branch
County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

[Christian Ramers, MD, MPH](#)

Assistant Medical Director - Research & Special Populations, Family Health Centers of San Diego



- Pull out your cell phones
- Text to: 22333
- Message: PHSAS



What is your basic understanding of hepatitis C?

I have no
knoweldge **A**

I have some
knoweldge **B**

I have a strong
understanding **C**

I am an expert **D**



Ryan Clary

Consultant, End the Epidemics: Californians Mobilizing to End HIV, HCV, and STDs





End the Epidemics: Californians Mobilizing to End HIV, HCV, and STDs

Ryan Clary
Project Consultant
April 25, 2019



California – A Leader in Health Care

- Aggressively implemented Affordable Care Act
- Expanded Medi-Cal before ACA passage
- Established strong state-based marketplace
- Cut uninsured rate by over 50% from 2013 to 2017
- California's health care system is set up to improve access to testing, care, and treatment for people with HIV, HCV, and STDs

Falling Behind in Addressing HIV, HCV, STDs

- Highest number of annual new HIV infections per year (5,000)
- Close to half of people with HIV don't have consistent care or treatment access
- 400,000 people living with chronic HCV
- Opioid crisis has led to dramatic increases in new HCV infections
- 45% increase in STDs since 2013
- California leads the country in cases of congenital syphilis
- Ranks first in the country for total cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis

Community Response

- April 2018 meeting with 50 advocates
- Discussed need for statewide HIV and HCV strategy
- Immediately recognized STDs must be included
- Agreed California has stalled in fighting all 3 epidemics
- Recognized state is behind others in developing end the epidemic strategies
- Decided to take advantage of gubernatorial election
- Agreed most effective strategy is to address as a syndemic

What is a Syndemic?

- Two or more concurring epidemics in a population
- Increases prevalence and burden of disease
- Syndemic approach is different from biomedical
 - Treats diseases concurrently
 - Addresses health disparities/social determinants of health

Why Treat as Syndemic?

- Gay and bisexual men at increased risk for HIV and STDs
- People of color disproportionately affected by HIV, HCV, and STDs
- Young people have experienced increased rates of HIV, HCV, and STDs
- People who use drugs at increased risk for HIV and HCV
- Women at increased risk for HCV and STDs
- Having STD increases risk of acquiring HIV
- People with HIV and HCV have greater risk of liver disease

Community Process

- Established a statewide working group of HIV, HCV, STD advocates
- Chose name: End the Epidemics: Californians Mobilizing to End HIV, HCV, and STDs
- Formed HIV, HCV, STD work groups
- Put out call for “game changer” recommendations
- Developed community consensus statement

Consensus Statement

- Calls for Governor Newsom to convene high-level task force of stakeholders to develop end the epidemics strategy
- Highlights the syndemic and urgency
- Describes the tools that are available
- Presents 6 goals to address the syndemic
- Signed by over 140 organizations
- Formally launched on March 6th
 - Endorsed by San Diego Union Tribune
 - Op-ed by Assemblymember Todd Gloria and State Senator Scott Wiener

Goals in Consensus Statement

- Increase the number of people living with HIV, HCV, and STDs who are aware of their status;
- Increase access to comprehensive HIV, HCV, and STD prevention services;
- Ensure linkage to and retention in culturally competent, quality health care for everyone living with and vulnerable to HIV, HCV, and STDs;

Goals in Consensus Statement

- Increase training and capacity building to strengthen and integrate the HIV, HCV and STD provider workforce;
- Address social determinants of health that impact people living with at increased risk for HIV, HCV, and STDs;
- Develop and track metrics to assess progress toward ending the HIV, HCV, and STD epidemics.

Governor's Response

- Spokesman Jesse Melgar said the governor “recognizes the importance of fighting to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the HIV, hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infection epidemics” and “looks forward to working on these issues.” (California Health Report, March 12, 2019)
- A spokesman for Newsom told the B.A.R. that the governor welcomes seeing a formal proposal from the coalition of health groups or legislation submitted by the lawmakers. (Bay Area Reporter, March 13, 2019)

Current Actions

- \$2 million budget proposal for the task force
- Budget hearings on April 25th and May 6th
- End the Epidemics Day of Action on April 30th
- Town Hall meetings
- San Francisco AIDS Foundation petition
- Over 100 Statewide Working Group members
 - Strategize via email and monthly calls
 - Outreach with community consensus statement
 - Continue to recruit new members

Successes and Opportunities

- Addressing epidemics as a syndemic makes us unique.
- Community agreement that the syndemic approach is the most effective and innovative way to address these three epidemics in California.
- We have also received very positive feedback from key staff in state agencies and the Legislature.

Successes and Opportunities

- Governor Newsom supported the concept during his campaign and has continued to indicate support for moving forward.
- Community and public health leaders have embraced the idea of a new statewide coalition to work on the strategic plan and its implementation.
- There is a concurrent effort at the Department of Public Health to integrate HIV, HCV and STD into one department, which we support and believe will be helpful to our public health program efficacy.

Next Steps

- Continued advocacy with Governor's staff
- Advocate for \$2 million request for task force
- Budget hearings
- End the Epidemics "Day of Action"
- Town Hall meetings
- Continue to collect sign ons
- Refine/finalize game changer recommendations
- Outreach to recruit more coalition members

Get Involved

- Sign the consensus statement/circulate widely
- Join the End the Epidemics Statewide Working Group (email: clarystrategies@gmail.com)
- Sign the San Francisco AIDS Foundation petition



For More Information

Contact:

Ryan Clary

End the Epidemics Consultant

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GETTING TO ZERO

Heidi Aiem

County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency





HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR GETTING TO ZERO

1981

1985

1991

1996

2012

2015

2016



NEW HIV DIAGNOSES, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, 1981-1990

Year	# of New Diagnoses
1981	1
1982	1
1983	4
1984	11
1985	761
1986	824
1987	921
1988	1067
1989	1290
1990	1314



HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR GETTING TO ZERO

1981

1985

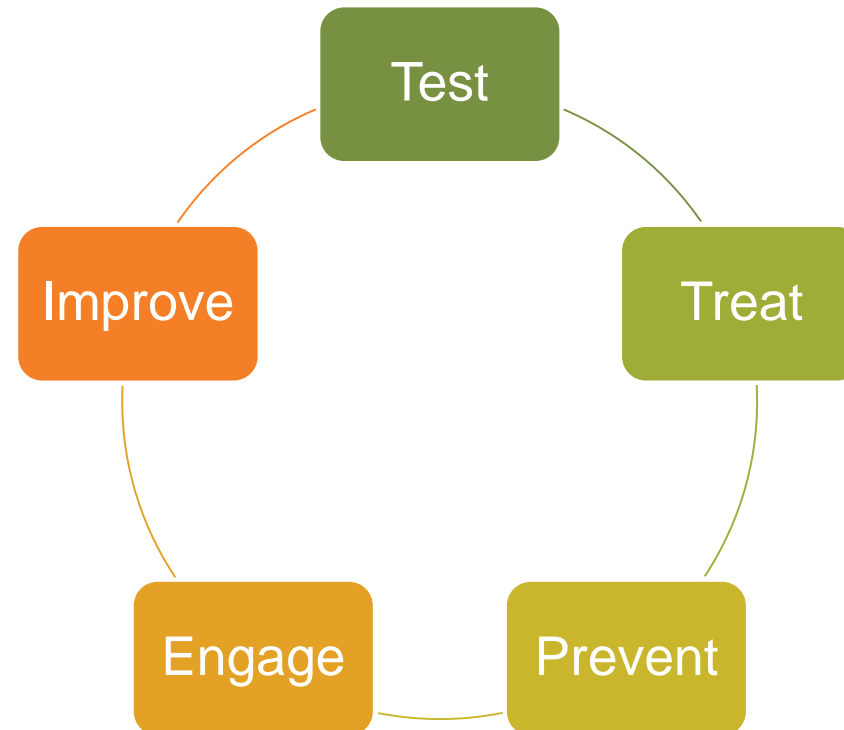
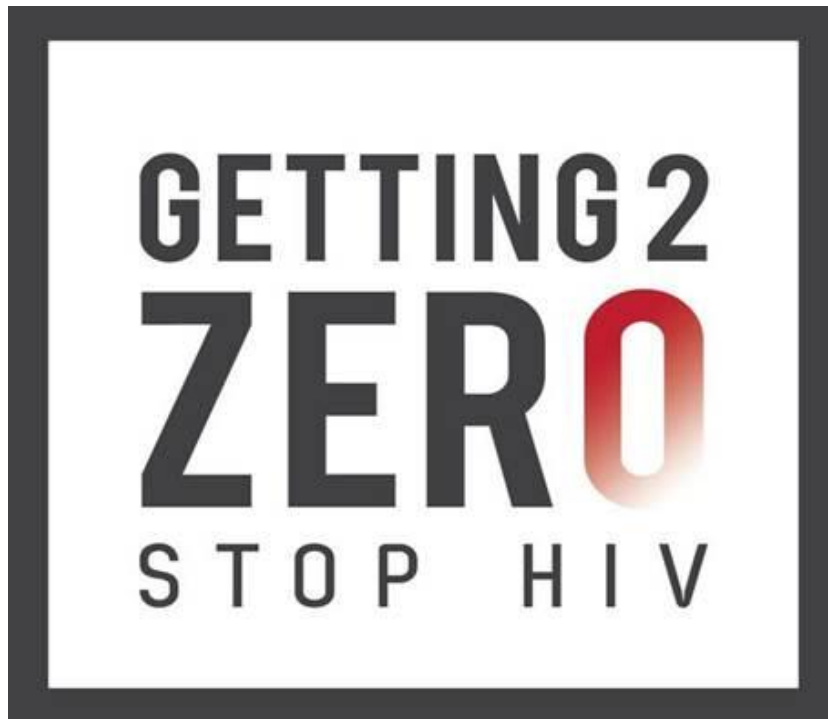
1991

1996

2012

2015

2016

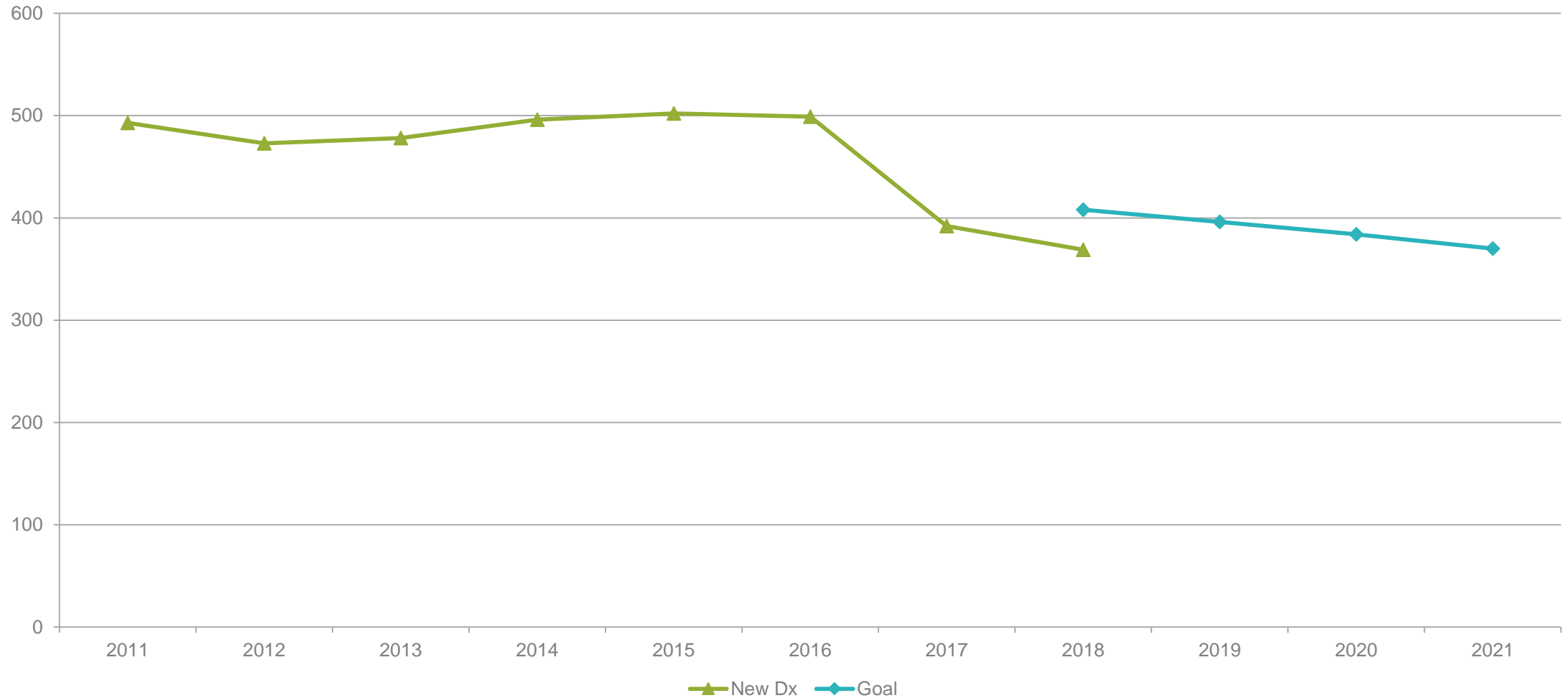


GETTING TO ZERO



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

Goal: Reduce new HIV infections in San Diego County

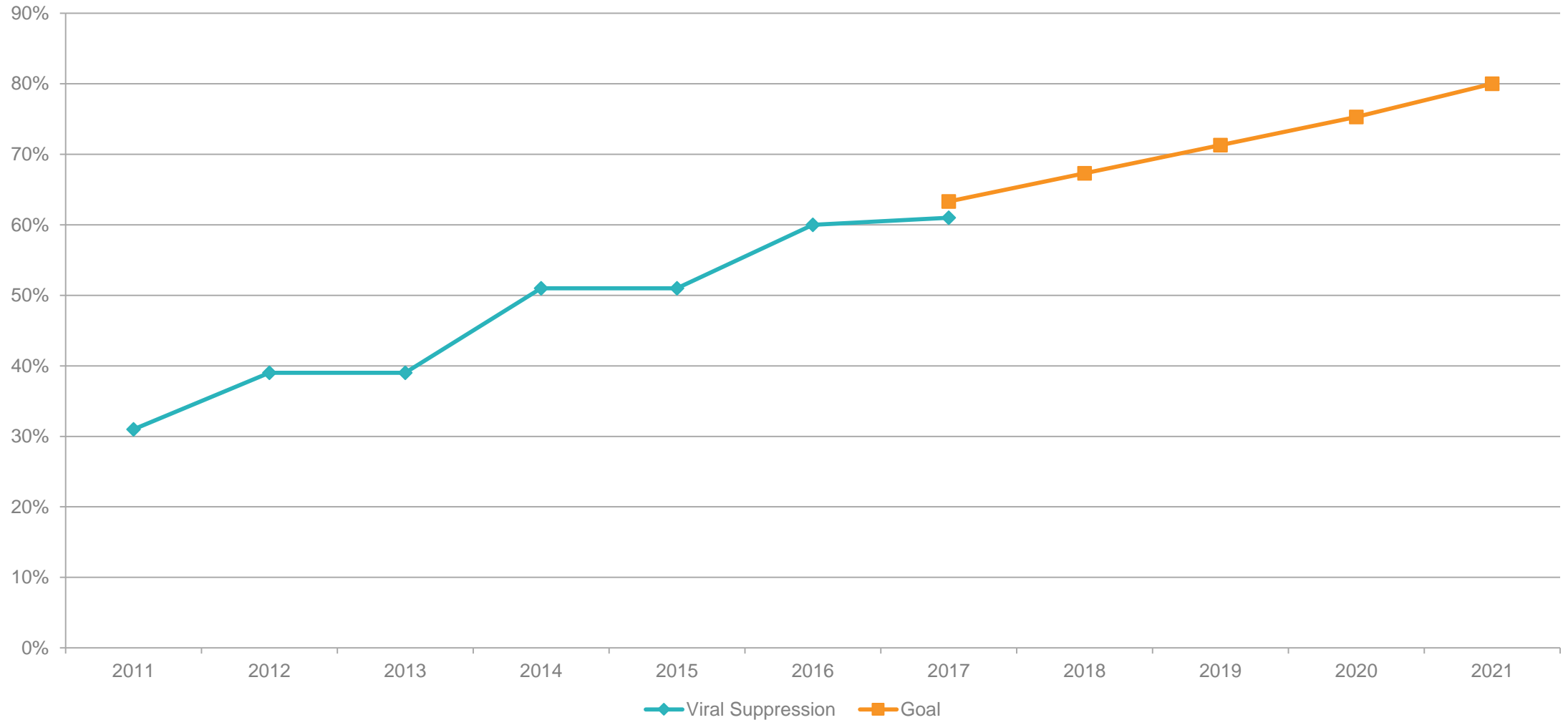


GETTING TO ZERO



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

Goal: Improve viral suppression among persons living with diagnosed HIV

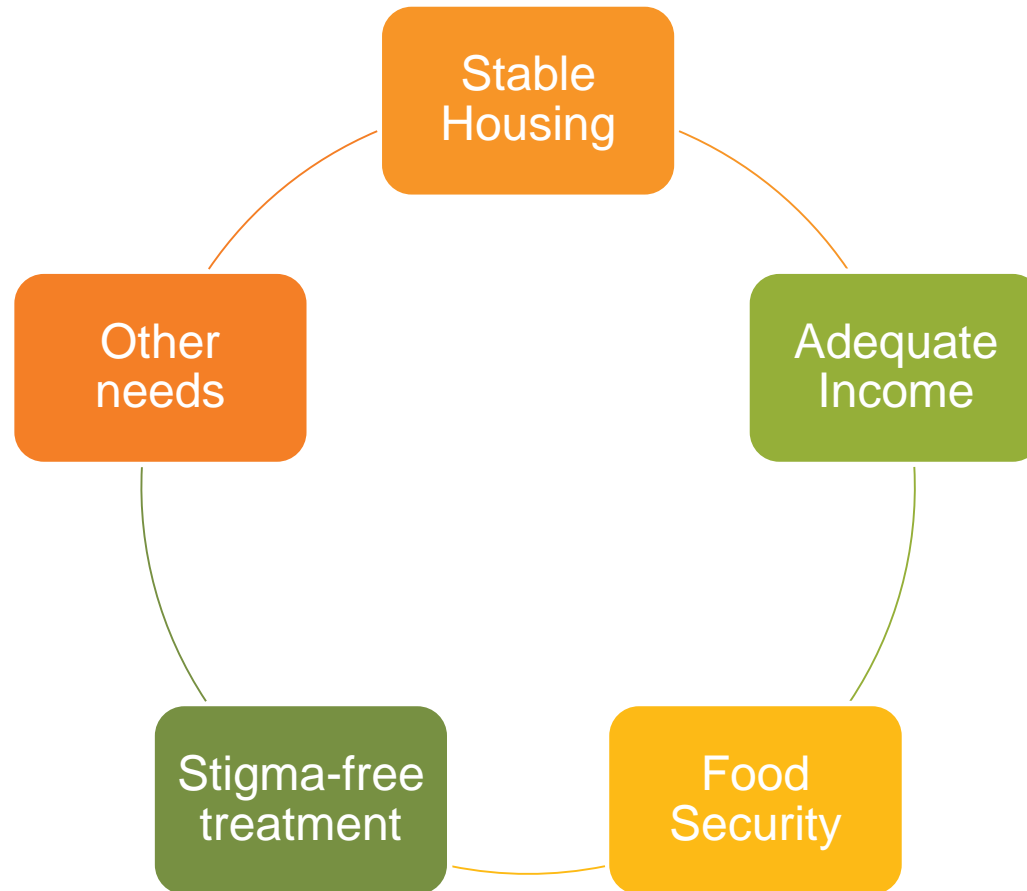




“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not lead single-issue lives.”

—Audre Lorde

GETTING TO ZERO





QUESTIONS



ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C INITIATIVE



Christian B. Ramers, MD, MPH, AAHIVS
*Infectious Disease specialist and Assistant Medical Director at
Family Health Centers of San Diego*

Community Information Exchange Summit
April 25, 2019



WHAT IS VIRAL HEPATITIS?



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

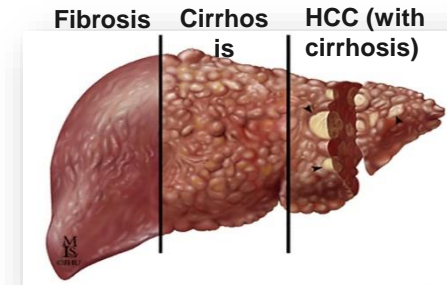
- Hepatitis is inflammation in the liver
- Viral hepatitis is inflammation of the liver caused by a virus
- Hepatitis A, B & C are the most common types in the U.S.



Who do you think should be tested to see if they have hepatitis C?

WELL
DIEGO

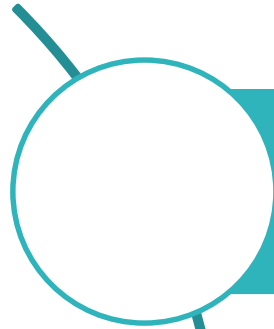
- Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV)
- HCV is transmitted blood to blood
- Can cause liver cirrhosis (scarring), liver cancer, liver failure and death
- Of every 100 people infected with HCV:
 - 75-85 will develop chronic infection
 - 10-20 will develop cirrhosis (scarring)
- Most have no symptoms initially and have the disease for many years before it is diagnosed
- An estimated 3.5 million people in the United States have chronic hepatitis C
- An estimated 41,200 acute hepatitis C cases occurred in 2016



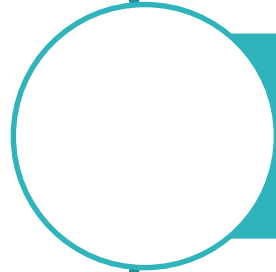
HEPATITIS C



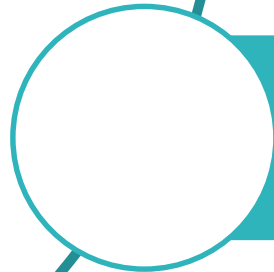
EPIDEMIOLOGY



More than **2,500** cases of chronic HCV is reported every year in San Diego



2011-2016 approximately **70-100** San Diego County residents died per year, with chronic HCV listed as an underlying cause of death



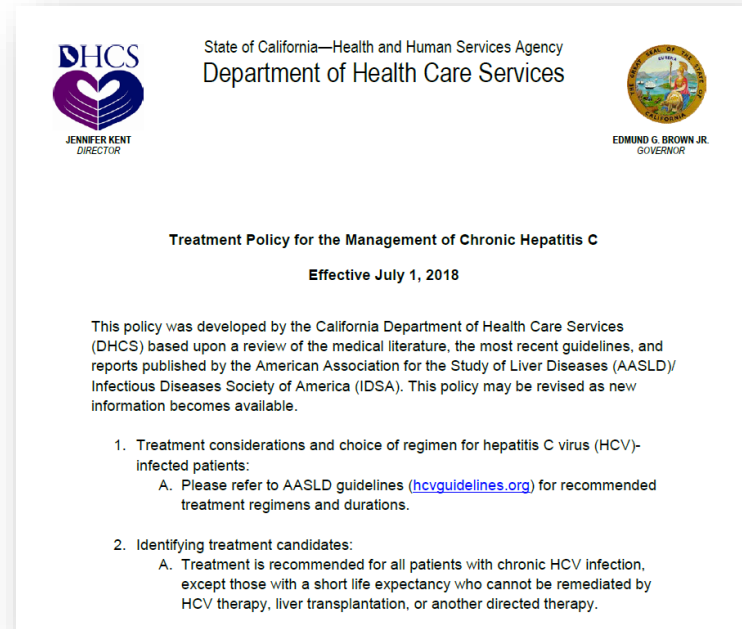
Both men and women affected, **63%** of reported cases occur in ages 45+

ACCESS AND TREATMENT



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

- **July 1, 2018** – Policy issued by California Department of Health Care Services recommends treatment for all individuals with chronic HCV infection (except those with short life expectancy)
 - More individuals diagnosed with HCV can receive treatment immediately
- **Current Medication** – Provides a highly effective cure, in the form of an oral pill, with few side effects
 - **Older interferon-based treatments** were less effective, lengthier, injections-based, and had more side effects
- **Treatment is Prevention**

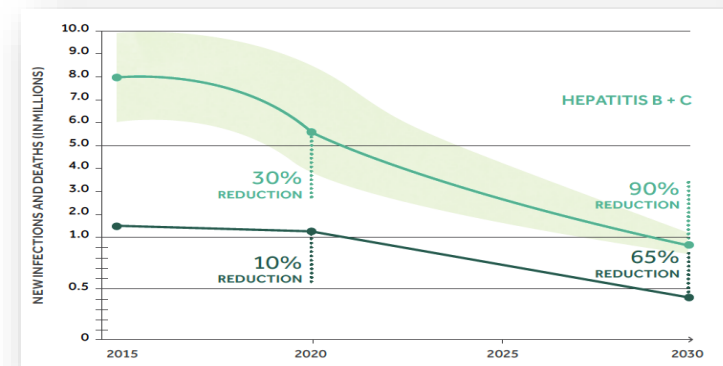


ELIMINATION CAMPAIGNS ACROSS THE COUNTRY



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

- In 2014, the World Health Assembly requested the World Health Organization (WHO) to examine the feasibility of eliminating HCV
- In 2014, New York City launched Hep Free NYC
- In 2015, New York State adopted its state-wide plan
- In 2016, San Francisco adopted End Hep C SF
- In 2017, WHO sets targets for elimination by 2030
- Cities, Counties, and States starting to organize:
 - Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico and Illinois
- In November of 2018 San Diego BOS approved 12-month planning process for an eliminate Hepatitis C initiative



ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C SAN DIEGO COUNTY INITIATIVE

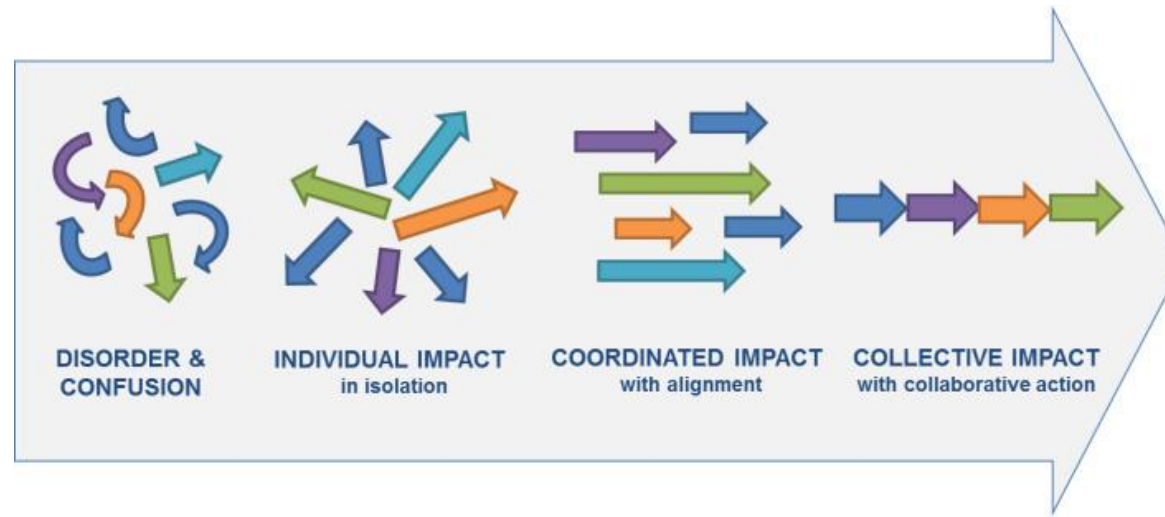


LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

- Public-private partnership utilizing a collective impact approach
- Development a 3-5 year roadmap for eliminating HCV as a public health threat
- Elimination defined as 80% decrease in new cases of chronic HCV by 2030 and 65% reduction of HCV mortality by 2030
- One year planning process coordinating efforts from stakeholders
- Collective impact approach as used by other Live Well SD initiatives



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO



COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO



Advisory



Steering



Facilitating Agency



Access, Testing, Treatment
and Prevention



Research and
Surveillance



Consumer



**For those who use drugs, do you think
having access to clean needles would help
to eliminate hepatitis C?**

Yes

No



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

In order to eliminate hepatitis C in San Diego County, what should be done?



How can we improve screening for hepatitis C in the general population and specific sub-groups?

How can make treatment more accessible?

What should be done to prevent the spread of hepatitis C?



QUESTIONS?

