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HIV/AIDS Rates by Race/Ethnicity in the 25 Highest HIV Prevalence Counties
in Michigan: Focus on Hispanics
HIV/STD/VH/TM Epidemiology Section
Michigan Department of Community Health

As of July 1, 2009, there are 14,149 people who were reported and living in the state of Michigan at the time of their HIV diagnosis (PLWHA) (0.14% of the general population). However, among some racial/ethnic minorities, the rate at which people are acquiring HIV is disproportionate. For example, blacks comprise 14% of the state's population and 59% of the state's HIV/AIDS cases with a rate of 587 persons living with HIV per 100,000 persons – over nine times the rate among whites. By comparison, whites comprise 78% of the state's population and 35% of the state's persons living with HIV with a rate of 63 persons living with HIV per 100,000 persons. The percentage of population vs. percentage of PLWHA in the other racial/ethnic groups is more comparable. For example, Hispanics comprise 4% of the general population and 4% of persons living with HIV and have a rate of 142 persons living with HIV per 100,000 persons. However, although proportionate, their rate is still over twice as high as the rate among whites. Table 1 below shows this information for the 25 counties with the highest total number of persons living with HIV in the un-incarcerated population, based on residence at diagnosis.

Hispanics could be under represented in the HIV/AIDS surveillance system due to the potential of ethnic misclassification. Differences in the assessment and collection of race and ethnicity by health care providers may contribute to ethnic misclassification. Therefore, when assessing the extent of the epidemic among Hispanics in Michigan, several questions arise:

- 1) How completely and accurately are Hispanics included in the census?
- 2) Are migrant workers included in the census?
- 3) How much of the migrant population is Hispanic?
- 4) How much HIV infection occurs in the migrant population?
- 5) Do Hispanics in the general population and migrant workers get tested for HIV more or less frequently than blacks or whites?
- 6) To what extent is the Hispanic migrant population integrated with the general Hispanic population in the counties in Michigan with the highest Hispanic rates?
- 7) How completely and accurately is Hispanic ethnicity being recorded on the HIV/AIDS case report?

Of the 25 counties in Michigan with the highest HIV prevalence rates, 10 counties had enough Hispanic cases to calculate a reliable rate (i.e., 10 or more cases). All 10 of these counties had rates of Hispanics living with HIV that were higher than the county rate for whites living with HIV. Also, seven of these had rates of Hispanics living with HIV that are close to or greater than the overall statewide rate of any person living with HIV, 140.5 per 100,000 persons. These seven counties are: Berrien (179.4 Hispanics living with HIV per 100,000 persons), Genesee (161.7), Ingham (183.3), Kent (177.6), Oakland (155.6), Washtenaw (178.4), and Wayne (198.6). (Table 1 and graph)

In Michigan, a more thorough evaluation of HIV/AIDS in the Hispanic community is necessary to better characterize the epidemic affecting this population. While racial and ethnic disparities in health and healthcare continue to persist in the United States, a better understanding of the factors that contribute to these disparities will aid in closing the gap. Continued support of activities that further characterize HIV disease in specific populations will be the key to understanding these disparities and making future recommendations to eliminate them.

Table 1-Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in the 25 Counties of Highest HIV Prevalence in Michigan*, as of July 1, 2009

County	HIV Rate for All Races	Number HIV + Hispanic	Percent HIV + Hispanic	Hispanic rate per 100,000	2007 Census Hispanic Pop	Number HIV + Black	Percent HIV + Black	Black rate per 100,000	2007 Census Black Pop	Number HIV + White	Percent HIV + White	White rate per 100,000	2007 Census White Pop	Number of PLWHA
Allegan	67.4	<5	**	**	7,326	10	13%	664.0	1,506	61	80%	60.1	101,562	76
Bay	56.7	<5	**	**	4,392	8	13%	**	1,477	47	77%	47.4	99,125	61
Berrien	144.1	11	5%	179.4	6,130	155	67%	666.1	23,270	62	27%	49.6	124,883	230
Calhoun	82.0	<5	**	**	5,166	49	44%	352.0	13,920	61	54%	54.5	111,855	112
Clinton	44.4	<5	**	**	1,997	5	16%	**	1,203	24	77%	36.9	64,999	31
Eaton	44.7	<5	**	**	4,044	11	23%	163.1	6,744	32	67%	34.4	92,918	48
Genesee	115.5	17	3%	161.7	10,514	248	49%	294.3	84,273	230	46%	70.6	325,637	502
Grand Traverse	62.0	<5	**	**	1,606	<5	**	**	821	44	83%	54.4	80,892	53
Ingham	146.4	30	7%	183.3	16,366	147	36%	503.2	29,213	220	54%	103.4	212,867	409
Jackson	75.5	<5	**	**	4,328	23	19%	178.5	12,885	96	78%	68.1	141,032	123
Kalamazoo	112.9	6	2%	**	8,055	107	39%	455.7	23,481	162	58%	80.3	201,861	277
Kent	123.6	99	13%	177.6	55,749	253	34%	475.7	53,187	378	51%	80.4	470,044	747
Lenawee	43.5	<5	**	**	7,465	<5	**	**	2,192	36	82%	40.1	89,670	44
Livingston	26.7	<5	**	**	3,132	<5	**	**	1,391	45	92%	25.8	174,599	49
Macomb	70.8	14	2%	82.0	17,076	158	27%	281.0	56,233	398	68%	55.3	719,081	588
Monroe	37.8	<5	**	**	4,008	5	9%	**	3,538	49	84%	34.3	142,849	58
Muskegon	65.9	6	5%	**	7,456	49	43%	209.7	23,371	54	47%	39.1	138,204	115
Oakland	128.0	57	4%	155.6	36,624	593	38%	404.6	146,551	851	55%	90.6	939,649	1,544
Ottawa	39.4	14	14%	67.3	20,804	13	13%	387.9	3,351	72	71%	31.9	225,706	102
Saginaw	86.0	10	6%	68.9	14,505	99	57%	269.7	36,706	63	36%	43.3	145,450	174
St. Clair	50.0	<5	**	**	4,360	16	19%	403.2	3,968	65	76%	41.1	158,200	85
St. Joseph	51.2	6	19%	**	4,017	5	16%	**	1,540	21	66%	37.8	55,512	32
Van Buren	52.6	9	22%	**	7,107	5	12%	**	3,479	27	66%	41.5	65,131	41
Washtenaw	128.6	21	5%	178.4	11,770	186	41%	438.8	42,391	235	52%	91.0	258,335	450
Wayne	347.7	193	3%	198.6	97,170	5516	80%	678.0	813,575	1082	16%	108.8	994,487	6,902
Rest of MI	71.6	55	4%	132.1	41,630	686	53%	2147.8	31,939	526	41%	31.3	1,678,258	1,296
Statewide	140.5	573	4%	142.3	402,797	8,353	59%	587.3	1,422,205	4,941	35%	63.2	7,812,806	14,149

*Counties of highest prevalence were determined by selecting the 25 counties with the highest number of living cases by residence at HIV/AIDS diagnosis (excludes prison cases).

** Rates are only calculated for categories greater than or equal to 10 because small numbers create unstable rates.

Together Blacks, Hispanics and Whites comprise 98% of all PLWHA in the state of Michigan (with Blacks comprising 59%, Hispanics comprising 4% and Whites comprising 35%).

HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rates by Race/Ethnicity in the 25 Counties of Highest HIV Prevalence in Michigan, July 1, 2009

