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HIV/AIDS Rates by Race/Ethnicity in the 22 Highest HIV Prevalence Counties
in Michigan: Focus on Hispanics

HIV/STD & Blood borne Infections Surveillance Section
Michigan Department of Community Health

As of April 1, 2006, there are 11,432 people who were living in the state of Michigan at the time of their HIV diagnosis (PLWHA) (0.12% of the 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 461 HIV/AIDS cases per 100,000 persons. By comparison, whites comprise 79% of the state's population and 37% of the state's HIV/AIDS cases with a rate of 55 HIV/AIDS cases 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 3% of the general population and 4% of PLWHA and have a rate of 129 HIV/AIDS cases per 100,000 persons. Table 1 below shows this information for the 22 counties with 15 or more total living HIV/AIDS cases and 5 or more white and black cases (each) 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 in the HIV/AIDS case report?

Of the 22 counties in Michigan with the highest HIV prevalence rates, only 6 counties had enough Hispanic cases to calculate a reliable rate (i.e., 10 or more cases). Five of these had HIV/AIDS rates for Hispanics that are close to or greater than the overall statewide rate of 109 per 100,000 persons, these are: Ingham (148.2), Kent (184.2), Oakland (148.3), Washtenaw (158.4), and Wayne (196.9). All 6 of these had HIV/AIDS Hispanic rates higher than the county rate for whites living with HIV/AIDS (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 22 Counties of Highest HIV Prevalence in Michigan*, as of April 1, 2006

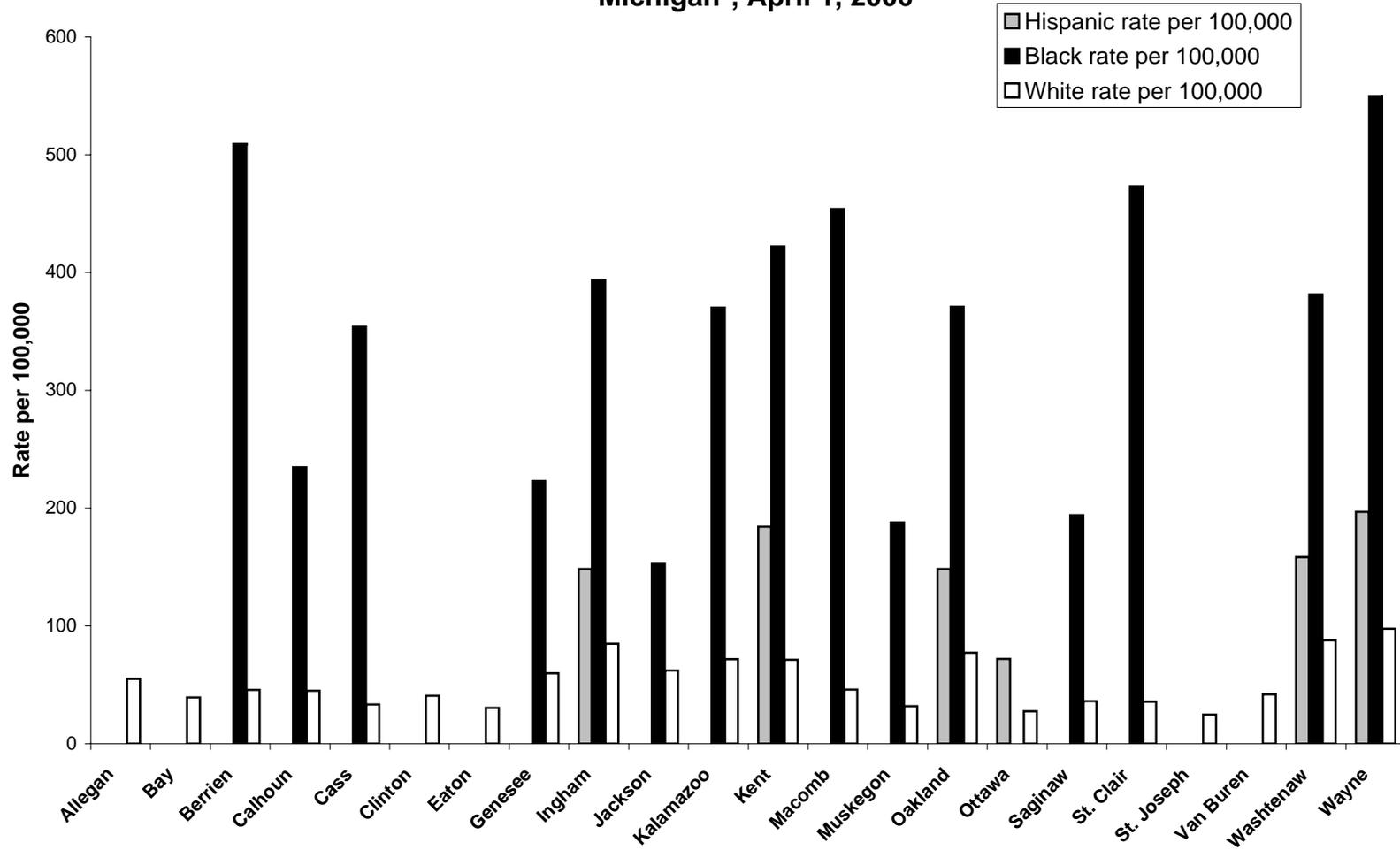
County	HIV Rate for All Races	Number HIV + Hispanic	Percent HIV + Hispanic	**Hispanic rate per 100,000	2000 Census Hispanic Pop	Number HIV + Black	Percent HIV + Black	Black rate per 100,000	2000 Census Black Pop	Number HIV + White	Percent HIV + White	White rate per 100,000	2000 Census White Pop	Number of PLWHA
Allegan	63.4	5	7%	**	6,040	7	10%	**	1,315	53	79%	55.1	96,167	67
Bay	46.3	<5	**	**	4,308	6	12%	**	1,343	40	78%	39.2	102,119	51
Berrien	123.1	9	5%	**	4,888	131	66%	509.2	25,729	58	29%	45.7	126,798	200
Calhoun	63.8	0	**	**	4,351	35	40%	234.7	14,912	51	58%	44.8	113,723	88
Cass	52.8	<5	**	**	1,233	11	41%	354.0	3,107	15	56%	33.3	45,069	27
Clinton	52.5	0	**	**	1,688	9	26%	**	401	25	74%	40.7	61,416	34
Eaton	38.6	<5	**	**	3,323	5	13%	**	5,397	28	70%	30.5	91,895	40
Genesee	96.1	7	2%	**	10,152	197	47%	223.0	88,356	193	46%	59.7	323,136	419
Ingham	123.2	24	7%	148.2	16,190	117	34%	393.8	29,712	182	53%	84.8	214,685	344
Jackson	68.8	<5	**	**	3,493	19	17%	153.3	12,396	86	79%	62.1	138,528	109
Kalamazoo	100.6	7	3%	**	6,311	85	35%	370.1	22,968	143	60%	71.8	199,180	240
Kent	109.0	74	12%	184.2	40,183	211	34%	422.1	49,994	329	53%	71.3	461,162	626
Macomb	56.8	9	2%	**	12,435	96	21%	453.9	21,151	331	74%	45.9	721,882	448
Muskegon	56.4	5	5%	**	6,001	45	47%	187.7	23,971	43	45%	31.8	135,379	96
Oakland	106.9	43	3%	148.3	28,999	444	35%	370.9	119,708	751	59%	77.3	971,752	1,276
Ottawa	34.4	12	15%	71.9	16,692	7	9%	**	2,380	58	71%	27.5	211,058	82
Saginaw	66.7	6	4%	**	14,075	75	54%	193.9	38,675	55	39%	36.2	151,977	140
St. Clair	45.1	0	**	**	3,593	16	22%	473.2	3,381	55	74%	35.7	153,893	74
St. Joseph	40.0	6	24%	**	2,488	5	20%	**	1,561	14	56%	24.6	56,994	25
Van Buren	59.0	9	20%	**	5,634	8	18%	**	3,939	27	60%	41.9	64,466	45
Washtenaw	119.9	14	4%	158.4	8,839	150	39%	381.4	39,326	215	56%	87.7	245,033	387
Wayne	292.5	152	3%	196.9	77,207	4,753	79%	549.7	864,627	1,005	17%	97.7	1,028,984	6,028
Rest of MI	26.3	28	5%	61.2	45,754	38	6%	137.2	27,698	507	87%	24.2	2,091,395	586
Statewide	115	417	4%	129	323,877	6,470	57%	461	1,402,047	4,264	37%	55	7,806,691	11,432

**Counties of highest prevalence were determined by selecting counties with 15 or more total living cases and 5 or more Black and White living cases (each) 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 57%, Hispanics comprising 4% and Whites comprising 37%).

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