

Opioid Task Force Bulletin: Emerging Patterns of HIV in SE Michigan and New Overdose Alert

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is sharing updates on two separate public health issues:

- The emergence of a growing network of individuals diagnosed with or living with HIV in Southeast Michigan predominately.
- The detection of medetomidine in overdose cases, including a recent case in Wayne County.

We are providing key findings, actionable recommendations and resources to help providers and community organizations address these pressing health concerns. We encourage you to review these updates carefully and incorporate the recommendations into your work to help mitigate risks and promote better health outcomes.

Additionally, we've included a newly created naloxone resources flyer. This flyer can be shared with your networks and posted in locations where it may reach individuals who can most benefit. You can download a [digital flyer](#) or [printable flyer](#), and for other naloxone resources visit the MDHHS [Naloxone page](#).

Thank you for your continued efforts to improve the health and well-being of Michigan's residents.

HIV in SE Michigan: Updates and Recommendations for Providers

In December 2024, the Shared HIV Networks monitoring program at MDHHS identified a rapidly growing network of individuals diagnosed with or living with HIV in Wayne, Washtenaw, Oakland and Jackson counties. This network also includes individuals diagnosed or residing in Ohio.

MDHHS is actively gathering information and reaching out to providers who have interacted with people in this network to ensure they have access to necessary resources and services. This effort aims to identify gaps and barriers that may have contributed to HIV transmission.

Key Findings:

- **Location:** The network is primarily based along the I-94 corridor in Jackson, Washtenaw and Wayne counties, with one individual residing in Oakland County and two diagnosed in Ohio (one currently living in Wayne County).
- **Demographics:** The network includes six individuals: five white males (83%) and one Hispanic male.

- **Risk factors:**
 - 83% are men who have sex with men.
 - 33% are persons who inject drugs.
 - 66% have a history of methamphetamine use, often connected to sexual activity.
- **Care and suppression:** 83% are virally suppressed (viral load <200 copies/ml) and all six are documented as receiving HIV medical care.
- **Other findings:** Half of the individuals acquired HIV very recently.

While it is encouraging that all individuals are connected to care, further outreach and testing are needed to identify additional cases and address potential barriers to prevention and treatment.

Recommendations:

Health care providers, please encourage HIV, sexually transmitted infection (STI) and hepatitis testing for individuals living in Wayne, Washtenaw, Oakland and Jackson counties, or those with ties to Ohio, who have any of the following risk factors:

- Men who have sex with men.
- History of injection drug use.
- Methamphetamine use.

Individuals who test negative for HIV should be referred to [Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis](#) to help them remain HIV-negative.

Providers can also direct individuals to local health departments and community-based agencies for free and confidential HIV, STI and hepatitis testing. Find HIV & STI [services in your area](#).

MDHHS also offers [brochures and educational materials](#) for patients and providers.

For questions, contact Katie Macomber at MDHHS: Macomberk@michigan.gov.

New Alert: Medetomidine-Related Overdose Case in Wayne County

In January 2025, MDHHS received a toxicology report confirming that an individual who died in Wayne County had medetomidine in their system. Medetomidine is a veterinary tranquilizer in the same drug class as xylazine but more potent.

This is the ninth case of medetomidine detected through the Swift Toxicology of Overdose-Related Mortalities (STORM) program since March 2024. Cases have also been reported in Ingham, Berrien and Muskegon counties.

Key Findings:

- **Location:** Of the nine cases identified between March 2024 and January 2025, this is the first in 2025. Previous cases spanned multiple counties, including Wayne.
- **Substance profile:** All cases involved medetomidine and fentanyl. Four cases also included xylazine.
- **Current case:** The individual passed in early January 2025. This case mirrors previous findings, with medetomidine, fentanyl and xylazine detected in toxicology reports.

Actions Underway:

- MDHHS continues to collaborate with partners to monitor and gather data on medetomidine-related cases.
- Surveillance of STORM data and mortality records will continue to track medetomidine involvement.

Recommendations:

- Be aware of the presence of medetomidine in overdose cases, particularly in conjunction with fentanyl and xylazine.
- Educate patients, clients, and community about the risks of polysubstance use, including the dangers of knowingly or unknowingly using multiple substances at the same time, as well as the potential for drugs to be contaminated with medetomidine, fentanyl, xylazine, or other harmful substances.
- Promote harm reduction strategies, including naloxone distribution, and connect individuals to local resources for treatment and support.