

**Human Immunodeficiency Virus
and Hepatitis C Virus in Texas**

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Presentation Overview

- What is Human Immunodeficiency Virus?
- HIV in Texas
- HIV Risk Factors, Treatment, and Prevention
- What is Chronic Hepatitis C?
- HCV in Texas
- HCV Risk Factors, Treatment, and Prevention
- Group Discussion

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**What is Human
Immunodeficiency Virus?**

- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a chronic infection, meaning it is treatable but not curable.
- Once HIV is in the body, it takes over white blood cells known as CD4 or T-cells. The virus replicates itself over and over again, lowering the healthy T-Cells in the body and increasing risk for other types of infections.
- Early detection and treatment is the best option to keep people healthy.

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HIV in Texas (1 of 2)

- In 2019, 95,196 people were living with HIV and of those, approximately:
 - ▶ 78 percent were male and 22 percent were female;
 - ▶ 44 percent were Hispanic;
 - ▶ 29 percent were Black; and
 - ▶ 20 percent were White.
- The most affected age groups were people ages 18 to 35.

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HIV in Texas (2 of 2)

- In 2019, approximately 4,500 additional people were diagnosed with HIV. Of those, approximately:
 - ▶ 82 percent were male and 18 percent were female;
 - ▶ 49 percent were Hispanic;
 - ▶ 29 percent were Black;
 - ▶ 16 percent were White; and
 - ▶ 37 percent were ages 25-34.

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HIV Risk Factors, Treatment, and Prevention (1 of 5)

Risk Factors

- Unprotected sex
- Having a sexually transmitted infection
- Sharing contaminated needles
- Receiving unsafe injections
- Accidental needle stick injuries

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HIV Risk Factors, Treatment, and Prevention (2 of 5)

Treatment

- Texas funds treatment for state residents who do not have insurance or cannot pay.
- HIV treatment involves taking highly effective medicines called antiretroviral therapy (ART) that work to control the virus.
 - ▶ ART is recommended for everyone living with HIV.
 - ▶ People should start ART as soon as possible after diagnosis, if not the same day.

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HIV Risk Factors, Treatment, and Prevention (3 of 5)

Post-Exposure

- **PEP** (post-exposure prophylaxis) means taking medicine to prevent HIV after a possible exposure.
- If taken within 72 hours after possible exposure, **PEP** is highly effective in preventing HIV.
- **PEP** involves taking three medications for 28 days.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend tenofovir and emtricitabine (combined in one pill called **Truvada®**) and a third drug, either Raltegravir or Dolutegravir.

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HIV Risk Factors, Treatment, and Prevention (4 of 5)

Prevention

- **PrEP** (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is given to people at risk for HIV in order to prevent HIV.
- If taken as prescribed, **PrEP** is highly effective in preventing HIV, even with injection drug use.
- **PrEP** is much less effective when not taken as prescribed.

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HIV Risk Factors, Treatment, and Prevention (5 of 5)

Other strategies to reduce risk for HIV include:

- Practicing abstinence or using methods that reduce the risk of transmitting or acquiring sexually transmitted diseases;
- Using a new syringe every time or cleaning syringes, which is less effective than using a new one; and
- Knowing and trusting your partners, getting tested, etc.

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What is Chronic Hepatitis C?

- Hepatitis C (HCV) is an inflammation of the liver caused by the hepatitis C virus.
- The virus can cause both acute and chronic hepatitis, ranging in severity from a mild illness to a serious, lifelong illness including liver cirrhosis and cancer.

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HCV in Texas

- Approximately 600,000 people in Texas may have HCV.
- One in four people living with HIV in Texas also have HCV.
- More than 25 percent of Texans are at risk.
- Adults born 1945 to 1965 account for 73 percent of all HCV associated mortality.
- Injection drug use is the source of infection for 60 percent of people.

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HCV Risk Factors, Prevention, and Treatment (1 of 3)

Risk Factors

- Sharing drug-injection equipment
- Being born to woman who is HCV positive
- Health care exposures
- Unprotected sex
- Unregulated tattoos or body piercings
- Sharing personal items
- Blood transfusions and organ transplants

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HCV Risk Factors, Treatment, and Prevention (2 of 3)

Treatment

- There is currently no effective vaccine against hepatitis C.
- Approximately 15-25 percent of people with HCV can clear HCV from their system without medical treatment, known as resolved.
- **HCV is curable and treatment is covered by insurance.**
- Additional community resources are available at: <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd/info/hcv/providers.shtm>

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HCV Risk Factors, Prevention, and Treatment (3 of 3)

Strategies to reduce risk for HCV include:

- Using clean equipment each time (sharing drug-injection equipment is the most common way HCV is transmitted);
- Not sharing personal hygiene items; and
- Always cleaning blood spills with gloves and bleach.

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Group Discussion

- What is your comfort level with discussing HIV and HCV?
- How does my agency help to address stigma related to HIV, HCV, and substance use?
- What skills or techniques can we use with clients to better help them address risk and/or enter services?

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References

- Slides 3-4: [Graphs from aidsvu.org](https://aidsvu.org)
- Slide 4: [DHSI HIV Surveillance Report, 2019](#)
- Slides 11: [DSHS HCV in Texas, Brochure, 2018](#)

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Thank You

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