



END HIV MN 2020

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

December 1, 2020

END HIV MN

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Minnesota Department of Human Services – HIV Supports Section

Minnesota Department of Health – STD/HIV/TB Section

COVID-19 Response

Despite all the challenges of 2020, including the reassignment of many staff from the END HIV MN team to coronavirus response efforts, it has been a big year for END HIV MN.

The pandemic has required the HIV Supports Section at the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and the STD/HIV/TB Section Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to make many changes to business as usual, including:

- Making critical changes to the Program HH/AIDS Drug Assistance Program to ensure that eligible clients continued to receive needed HIV medications.
- Providing funding so that clients could receive additional food vouchers and personal protective equipment for themselves and their family members.
- Providing guidance and flexibility to partner organizations to adapt service delivery.
- Working with the AIDSLine to maintain an [HIV/AIDS Community Services Directory during COVID-19](#) for a centralized place to find up to date information.



Shout Out: Thank you to all staff at partner organizations who have creatively adapted to continue to provide services and meet client needs during this time, especially front-line providers. We can't do this work without you! A special thank you to the AIDSLine for maintaining the service directory and to Gelli at NorthPoint for coordinating a [Syringe Service Program Calendar during COVID-19](#).

VIRTUAL HIV & COVID-19 COMMUNITY MEETING



DHS, MDH, the Hennepin County Public Health Ryan White Program and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center – MN/IA branch collaborated to host the April 2020 Virtual HIV & COVID-19 Community Meeting.

Attended and viewed by over 200 people, the webinar covered information for people living with HIV and service providers.

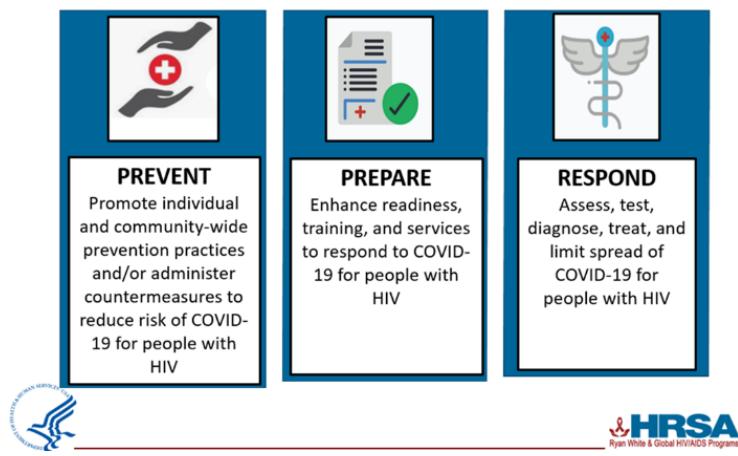
View the archived webinar on YouTube at [HIV & COVID-19 Community Meeting](#).

Topics covered included:

- How to stay healthy and avoid getting sick
- What to do if you get sick
- How to access HIV prevention services
- How to access HIV core medical & support services

Shout Out: Thank you to the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center – MN/IA branch (MATEC) team for ensuring the virtual meeting was a success and thank you to MATEC Clinical Advisor Brian Goodroad, DNP, ARPN, CNP, FAANP, for being the expert clinical speaker for this event.

COVID Cares Act Client Survey



DHS and the Hennepin County Public Health Ryan White Program received over \$575,000 in COVID CARES Act Ryan White funding to help Minnesota prepare, prevent, and respond to COVID-19 among people living with HIV.

By partnering with Medical Case Managers, DHS and Hennepin County were able to get 645 people living with HIV to make their voices heard and influence how the money was spent in Minnesota.

Shout Out: Bravo to Medical Case Managers for doing the survey with clients, getting an incredible 654 responses in less than two weeks! We also thank all the people living with HIV who took the survey.

END HIV MN Rollout Report

In fall and winter of 2019, the END HIV MN team traveled across the state to Bemidji, Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Mankato to introduce END HIV MN and show how previous community input from earlier engagement was reflected in the plan.

The [END HIV MN Rollout: Community Engagement \(PDF\)](#) report was finished in February and can be viewed at [END HIV MN Reports](#).

Shout Out: Thank you to everyone who took the time to attend the END HIV MN Rollout events to learn more about END HIV MN and to share your knowledge, wisdom, and expertise.



END HIV MN Rollout:
Community Engagement



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February 2020

Photo Shoot

A cross-sector partnership dedicated to ending HIV stigma in Minnesota met over the course of a year to plan an HIV awareness project. In February 2020, this planning resulted in a photo shoot where 19 models who are living with HIV or taking PrEP for HIV prevention took pictures to be used in future awareness campaigns and educational materials. The models were compensated for their time and stories and received professional make-up and headshots during the shoot.

Partners included people from Greater Minnesota and the Metro area representing the following:

- City, County, and State government
- Tribal Health and Indian Health Services
- HIV researchers and clinicians
- Higher education institutions
- Community based organizations
- HIV care and prevention
- Adolescent health and youth services
- Harm reduction advocates
- Communities most impacted by HIV
- People living with HIV



Pictured: Joe, Moncies, Alex, Daphne, Mariah.

Shout Out: The photo shoot was made possible by the Community Collaborative Campaign members, which included working group members and an advisory body of people living with HIV and people from communities most impacted by HIV. Thank you to JustUs Health for hosting the photo shoot. Finally, none of this would be possible without the models who agreed to use their stories to help end HIV stigma and raise awareness statewide. Thank you models: Alejandro, Alex, Aaron, Austin, Cree, Dylan, Daphne, Gregory, J, Johan, Joli, Joe, Kevin, Ka'Milla, Mariah, Moncies, Michael, Ricky, and Tesha.

Statewide Inventory of Efforts

Goal 5 of END HIV MN calls for achieving a more coordinated statewide response to HIV. To reach that goal, MDH and DHS have compiled a statewide inventory of all ongoing efforts being made to address HIV in Minnesota. Finished in fall 2020, the inventory will help MDH and DHS:

- Identify gaps in services.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and new partnerships.

Shout Out: We were incredibly impressed to learn more about the work being done by over 100 organizations statewide that are included in the inventory. We look forward to strengthening existing partnerships and forging new ones as we work together to end HIV in Minnesota.

Partner Engagement Survey

Ending HIV in Minnesota is bigger than any one individual or organization. Success will depend on all of us to get involved, coordinate, and collaborate. DHS, MDH, and the Hennepin County Public Health Ryan White Program worked together to create a Partner Engagement Survey. The survey asked staff at partner organizations how we can more effectively engage them, more effectively engage community members, and how to improve partnerships.

The survey was open in June and July of 2020 and the [Partner Engagement Survey Summary \(PDF\)](#) was published online at [END HIV MN Reports](#) in September of 2020. We are incredibly grateful for the advice and suggestions on how to improve from those who took the survey.

MDH and DHS staff are working on the following projects using the results from the engagement survey and other community input:

- Creating a statewide HIV community engagement plan.
- Assessing and improving communications to make sure people are receiving the right information at the right time.
- Improving our partnerships between the organizations MDH and DHS collaborate with and fund.

The cover page of the Partner Engagement Survey report features the logos for Minnesota and Hennepin County, Minnesota. The title "Partner Engagement Survey" is prominently displayed, along with the date "September 2020". A small "END HIV MN" logo is also present. The page includes a detailed overview of the survey's purpose and findings, as well as sections on respondent demographics and survey methodology.

Shout Out: Thank you to all of our partners who took the time to complete the survey and help us improve. Your honest feedback, expertise, and innovative ideas are exactly what we need to see an end to HIV in Minnesota.



Summary of Interviews with Grantees and Potential Grantees

September 2020

Key Informant Interviews

END HIV MN calls for DHS and MDH to increase the organizational capacity of small, new, or yet-to-be-formalized culturally specific, community-based organizations to successfully secure and implement state and federal HIV funding.

To work towards that goal, DHS and MDH partnered to do Key Informant Interviews with sub-recipient (or grantee) partner agencies that receive, have received, or could receive HIV related funding from MDH and/or DHS to provide HIV prevention or core medical and support services.

A total of 23 organizations participated in 16 individual and group interviews during the summer of 2020. Their feedback was

compiled and in September of 2020 the [Summary of Interviews with Grantees and Potential Grantees \(PDF\)](#) was posted online at [END HIV MN Reports](#).

MDH and DHS are currently assessing the feedback to determine what can be implemented without policy change and what suggestions require agency, state, or federal policy change. We look forward to implementing these suggestions as we are able to the next time we issue an HIV-related Request for Proposals (RFP).

Shout Out: We appreciate our partners – old and new—who took the time to give us honest and transformative feedback on how we can improve the grantmaking process. Your insight and expertise are incredibly valuable. We welcome both your partnership and accountability as we reimagine our grantmaking to be more equitable.

Collaborations

In 2020, the END HIV MN team was also busy supporting other work to end HIV in Minnesota, such as:

Provider Town Halls Series

MDH, DHS, and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center partnered to create a Virtual HIV Town Hall Series for health care providers. The first Town Hall focused on the story of the background of encampments from those on the front lines and details about the current HIV outbreak in this context.

END HIV MN calls for increased provider education and training that focuses on evidence-based strategies to prevent and treat HIV, as well as more training to help health care providers increase their cultural responsiveness.

Shout Out: Thank you to our expert speakers from Native American Community Clinic and Southside Harm Reduction Services for sharing your time and expertise during the first Town Hall.

HIV Outbreak Response

Minnesota is currently experiencing an HIV outbreak among people who inject drugs, many of whom are unhoused. END HIV MN staff have supporting outbreak response work by providing planning assistance for and participating on multiple work groups. This work has included collaborative efforts with state, county, and community partners. For example, a working group has been meeting to identify barriers in accessing shelter and housing options and identify creative solutions to overcome those barriers.

Shout Out: Thank you to the HIV Outbreak Public Engagement Group (HOPE) and to all of the organizations partnering to respond to the HIV outbreak, including: Hennepin County Public Health Ryan White Program, Hennepin County Healthcare for the Homeless, Hennepin County Public Health – Red Door Clinic, the City of Minneapolis, Native American Community Clinic, Hennepin Healthcare – Positive Care Center, Southside Harm Reduction Services, the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center – MN/IA branch, JustUs Health, Minnesota AIDSLine, Ramsey County Public Health – Clinic 555, the Aliveness Project, Indigenous Peoples Task Force, and many others.

2020 Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Done every 5 years, the Comprehensive Needs Assessment is a partnership between DHS, the Hennepin County Public Health Ryan White Program, and the Minnesota Council for HIV/AIDS Care and Prevention. The Needs Assessment team did a great job of pivoting to a new virtual environment, while collecting over 800 surveys from people living with HIV who represent all of the different communities that are impacted by HIV across Minnesota.

END HIV MN calls for increasing the meaningful inclusion of voices from the communities most affected by HIV in decision making about HIV programs and funding. One of the critical ways that people living with HIV shape HIV service delivery is through the Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Shout Out: Kudos to the Needs Assessment Team for adapting to virtual survey delivery and still getting a record-breaking number of surveys completed. We also thank every person living with HIV who took the time to complete the Needs Assessment and make their voices heard.

For More Information

Want more information? Excited to get involved? Have ideas for how to end HIV in Minnesota? Want a virtual END HIV MN presentation for your organization?

The END HIV MN team would love to hear from you! Email us at endhivmn@state.mn.us, subscribe to [END HIV MN email updates](#), and check out the [END HIV MN website](#).