



# HIV and Transgender Women

## HIV in San Diego County, 2018

### 169 TRANSGENDER WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV

**Transgender:** people whose gender identity or expression is different from their sex assigned at birth.

**Transgender women:** people who were assigned male sex at birth but identify as women.

**Transgender men:** people who were assigned female sex at birth but identify as men.

**Gender identity:** a person's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither.

**Gender expression:** a person's external presentation of their gender identity, often expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice.



This fact sheet provides the percentage and demographic distribution of transgender women living in San Diego County who were diagnosed with HIV (including AIDS). Gender status relies on complete information from medical records, and historically, current gender status has been difficult to obtain. Limitations for this fact sheet include the lack of a reliable system for collecting and sharing sex and gender identity in health records. Although many systems have begun collecting both sex at birth and gender identity, not all systems do.

**Nationally, 14% of transgender women are living with HIV.<sup>1</sup>**

This means that many clients do not have a way to accurately communicate their gender identity. Clients may also refrain from disclosing their gender identity on client information forms due to experiences of discrimination in healthcare settings. This fact sheet likely underestimates the number of transgender people

diagnosed and living with HIV in San Diego County. More research needs to be done to fully understand the impact of HIV on transgender people.

Transgender people living with HIV through year-end 2018 were primarily transgender women. The number of transgender men was too small to be reported, but this may reflect the challenges in obtaining current gender status. This fact sheet will focus on the 169 transgender women living with HIV in San Diego County.

Transgender women living with HIV in San Diego County were more likely to be Black/African American or Latinx compared to all people living with HIV (PLWH). Transgender women were also were younger in age, were more likely to live in the Central Region of San Diego County, and were more likely to inject drugs, compared to all PLWH.

**Stigma is the primary reason why transgender women avoid medical treatment.<sup>2</sup>**

Nationally, about 14% of all transgender women, 44% of Black/African American transgender women, and 26% of Latinx transgender women are living with HIV.<sup>1</sup> Transgender women, particularly transgender women of color, may be at higher risk for getting or transmitting HIV for many reasons, including stigma, discrimination, social rejection, and exclusion. These same barriers extend into healthcare settings, resulting in a lack of trust with medical professionals and fewer transgender women receiving the preventive and medical care they need.<sup>2</sup>

For information about programs and services that benefit transgender people, please call 619-293-4700 or email [OAC.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:OAC.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov).

<sup>1</sup>Bacsen JS, Denard CL, Mullins MM, Higa DH, Sipe TA. Estimating the Prevalence of HIV and Sexual Behaviors Among the US Transgender Population: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, 2006–2017. *Am J Public Health* 2019; 109:e1-e8.

<sup>2</sup>White HJ, Reisner S, Pachankis J. Transgender Stigma and Health: A Critical Review of Stigma Determinants, Mechanisms, and Interventions. *Soc. Sci Med*: 2015; 147, 222-231.

TRANSGENDER WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV WERE MORE LIKELY TO BE BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN OR LATINX COMPARED TO ALL PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV



TRANSGENDER WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV WERE YOUNGER COMPARED TO ALL PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

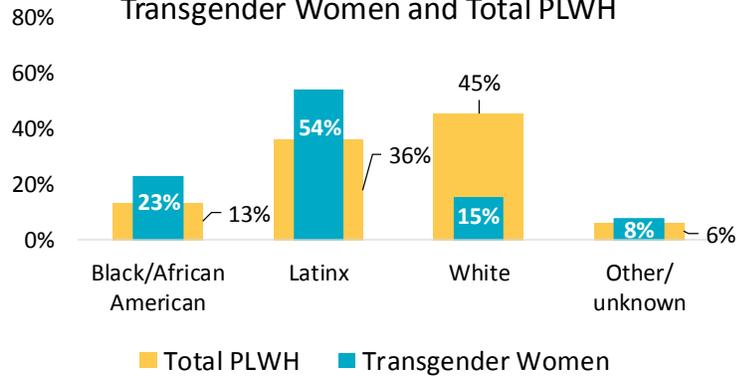


TRANSGENDER WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV WERE MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN THE CENTRAL REGION COMPARED TO ALL PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

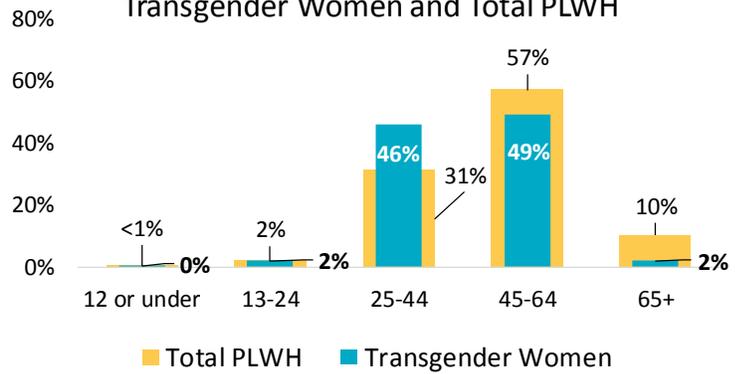


TRANSGENDER WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV WERE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A MALE PARTNER AND INJECT DRUGS COMPARED TO ALL PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

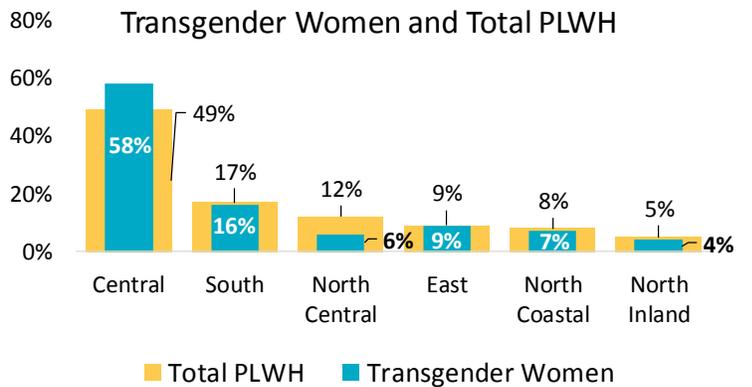
Race/Ethnicity of Transgender Women and Total PLWH



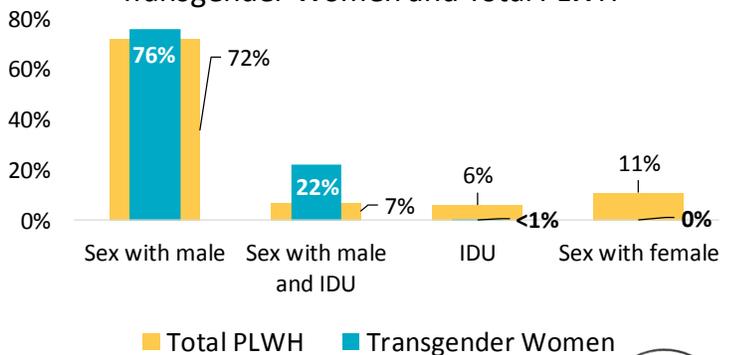
Current Age Group of Transgender Women and Total PLWH



Current HHSA Region of Residence of Transgender Women and Total PLWH



Transmission Risk of Transgender Women and Total PLWH



Data based on people living with HIV in San Diego County through 12/31/2018.