

HCS Newsletter

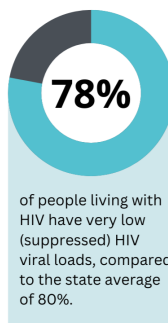
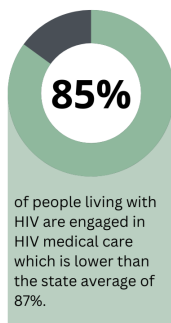
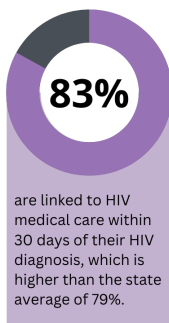
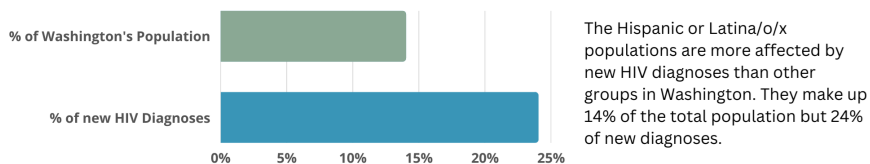
A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP

This second edition of our HIV Community Service Newsletter arrives in your inboxes a week before National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day. October 15 is a day to help stop [HIV stigma](#), promote [HIV testing](#), [prevention](#), and [treatment](#). It's a day to address the [disproportionate impact](#) of HIV on Hispanic or Latina/o/x communities. Hashtags: #NLAAD #StopHIVTogether.

Not all Hispanic or Latina/o/x living with HIV are receiving the medical attention they need. Compared to all people with HIV, this population has lower viral suppression rates. In Washington, this community is more affected by new HIV diagnoses compared to others. There is a lot of work to be done, but together we can make a difference. Thank you for the vital role you play in your community.

Sincerely,
 Lydia Guy Ortiz
 Health Equity & HIV Community Services Manager

HIV Care Continuum in Hispanic or Latina/o/x Populations in Washington



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POINTS OF INTEREST

- Betti Ridge at Kitsap Public health is retiring!
- The HIV STI Prevention Program at Spokane Regional Health District shares its growing success
- Resources to advance your equity knowledge
- Meet our new HIV Community Engagement Coordinator
- Article on mindfulness & Coping in the moment



Picture of Betti Ridge smiling

AGENCY STAFF HIGHLIGHT

KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

CHEERS TO BETTI RIDGE FOR 22+ YEARS OF SERVICE!

Contributor: Jerry H., HIV Case Management Program Client

This article is about the power of a person to make a difference in another's life, no matter who they are, or how they came to need her.

When my illness became so bad, I was forced to retire early, I had no relatives or personal friends to turn to for help. I did not think myself capable of being of any more service to anyone, much less someone who might need help.

A friend visited me about 6 months after my forced retirement and was appalled at the way I was living. She insisted on calling Holly at the health department. That is the beginning, in 1995. By about 1998, I had come to trust the members of the health department but was very certain I could handle things. Holly left and I was assigned a new case manager. That person, Betti Ridge, would earn my trust and confidence for 24 years. She stood with me through my superior self-reliant façade, my personal struggle with self-image, fear, faith, value, and health without a single word of judgement or pity, but always with empathy, caring, and dedication to removing barriers in my new realization of life. She helped give me a sense of purpose and value that I believed my illness had taken from me. Betti gently encouraged me to get involved in the work of helping the state keep their focus on the services the clients need. To help be a part of caring about others again, she told me there is no excuse for not getting involved. Every time I opened my mouth, something else popped out that became a volunteer opportunity. Even after serving on the state HIV counsel, the Bridge consortium, Ryan white II counsel and the Kitsap Foundation, little did I realize at the time (all 28 years it took me to learn this) she artfully distracted me from my self-defeatism to help me realize I am still valuable as a member of my community. Thanks to the work of Betti and the rest of my heroes, I have survived, and I am succeeding and continuing my life.

I can only say to Betti, I will not miss you, not for a moment. You are in my community. I look forward to your retirement, so we can enjoy a friendship built on the trust you have built over the years, and the fact that we both have community business, and we will see each other. Knowing you are in my life has made me the person I thought I could never be. The one who is more about how to make it better instead of just how to make it. Thank you Betti and the rest of the team for years of love and support. Betti, you will always be remembered as the person that gave me strength when my will faltered, and courage when fear overcame me. Thank you for your spirit.



AGENCY HIGHLIGHT

HIV STI PREVENTION AT SPOKANE REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT



“It’s really fun and rewarding when we are all working together to benefit our mutual clients. Everyone wins!”

Contributor: PrEP Coordinator Keith Harris

The HIV STI Prevention program at Spokane Regional Health District has grown from a handful of clients starting on PrEP to a robust program. We offer STI testing and treatment, link to PrEP provider with an option for primary medical care as needed, and support for clients needing other services in the community. Here’re some things that make it work:

- **Building relationships!** Not just with clients but also the medical community, from MAs and admin staff to medical providers, it’s really fun and rewarding when we are all working together to benefit our mutual clients. Everyone wins!
- **Advocating for the clients!** It’s not just about testing and PrEP. Many clients have other immediate concerns such as housing, SUD, food insecurities, mental health, and others. It’s imperative to know your community, where the helpers are, to really support that client in as many ways possible. They will feel better and be more likely to stay engaged with you.
- **Making the PrEP process as easy as possible!** Our program recently added the full PrEP panel to our menu of labs that we can provide—a game changer! This allows clients to get follow up labs at SRHD if they can’t make it to their provider appointment for some reason. This assures that clients can get their refills on time, even when life gets in the way. And now we are building on that, piloting a PrEP on Demand option for some clients. In this scenario, a client who is doing initial PrEP testing/referral with me can have a virtual appointment with their new PrEP provider at the same time, and get a PrEP prescription same day.
- **WelTel!** Implementing this fun engagement tool has been an easy way to reach out and keep track of clients and check in regularly. Clients are liking it.
- **Teamwork!** This is the most important part. I work with a talented and dedicated group of colleagues who share the same client-centered vision and a spirit of helpfulness. Clients feel safe and cared for. I couldn’t do it without them.

RACE TO EQUITY CORNER



Watch TEDx Talk [Fight HIV Stigma through Access, Mobilization and Equity](#) (15:37 min)

In this TEDx Talks Dr. Allison Mathews shares her idea that helps us remember we are all the S.A.M.E.

Watch TEDx Talk [Don't Take the Exit on People: A diversity & Inclusion Approach](#) (17:58 min)

What if our automatic assumptions are causing a more divided society? In this talk, Justin Jones-Fosu shares practical ways to challenge our assumptions and encourage meaningful connections with others.

2022 UPCOMING EVENTS

- October 17th at 2 pm: CQM Training (Open Forum) via Go To Meeting
- October 27th at 1 pm: CQM Committee Meeting (3rd Quarter) via MS Teams
- October 31st: 3rd Quarter CQM Quarterly Dashboard due
- December 1st: World AIDS Day
- December 31st: End of 4th quarter Reporting

DOH EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

VANESSA GRANDBERRY, HIV COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR



Picture of Vanessa smiling

Hello community partners!

For over 20 years, I have dedicated my skills to serving diverse communities of color. A lot of my community efforts have been focused on trans-women and at-risk youth.

My community service began

at People Of Color Against AIDS Network (POCAAN) in 2000. During my time at POCAAN, I created a newsletter called T-TIME. It was so successful it became a bi-monthly magazine. I also volunteered with organizations like Lambert House, Ingersoll and others.

After POCAAN I worked for Seattle King County Public Health, Center for Multicultural Health, and Harborview Mental Health & Addictions Clinic.

I am grateful, and humbled to be given the opportunity to serve as the HIV Community Engagement Coordinator at the Department of Health (DOH).

CLINICAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Quality Management Committee members and consumers from POCAAN, PCAF, Harborview Medical Clinic, and Kitsap Public Health District attended and completed ELEVATE (Engage Leadership through Employment, Validation, and Advancing Transformation and Equity for persons with HIV) Training from May 16-May 20th, 2022. During this in-person training by National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), Ryan White Program Coordinators/Managers met with PLWH whom are active in Case Management services to discuss areas of which services can be improved while reducing stigma and promoting independence. Participants completed and departed the training highly informed and encouraged to explore opportunities to increase consumer involvement through Advisory Board Leadership, employment, or lived experience education. Link provided for additional information: <https://targethiv.org/elevate>.

If you are in need of technical assistance, send us an email at HIV.QualityImprovement@doh.wa.gov or contact Karlos Johnson at Karlos.johnson@doh.wa.gov.



Picture of a person's hand balancing stones vertically

MINDFULNESS AND COPING IN THE MOMENT

Feeling stressed from your day? Did you have a less than favorable client interaction? Being mindful about how you feel and coping in the moment can prevent you from holding in that experience and it manifesting in to a crisis. Here are some ideas for how to cope in the moment of a stressful situation.

- Ground Yourself: Focus on putting your hands/feet flat on a surface
- Breath slowly & deeply through your belly
- Breath out longer than in
- Use calming, positive self talk
- Press your feet and/or hands together
- Do chair push-ups
- Wiggle your toes and/or fingers
- Look at 3 things (identify them in your mind example: cup, calendar, post-it note)
- Notice 3 properties about an object
- Look near and far three times
- Get up and move for at least 3 minutes
- Hug someone for at least 10 seconds
- Hold your breath for 15 seconds and splash cold water on your face (or put an icepack on your face)
- Identify something for every sense in the room you are in (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch)

STRESS IN NUMBERS



Did you know that:

- 77% of people experience stress that affects their physical health
- 73% of people have stress that impacts their mental health
- 48% of people have trouble sleeping because of stress
- 75% of Americans experienced moderate to high stress levels in the past month
- The most common symptom of stress in irritability and anger, which 45% of people experiencing stress report

Source: The American Institute of Stress



Picture of colorful balloons

SHARE YOUR STORIES!

- Is your agency doing something awesome or innovative?
- Did your coworker go the extra mile to help a client?
- Do you have news you want to share?

If so, HCS would like to hear from you!

Please submit your kudos, brags, shout-outs, articles, accomplishments, and pictures to an HCS staff member and we will try our very best to include them in our next issue. You can also send your stories directly to: columba.fernandez@doh.wa.gov.

KUDOS, HUMBLE BRAGS, AND SHOUT-OUTS

FROM BETTI RIDGE AT KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH:

I want to take this opportunity to shout from the roof top about the entire HIV Staff at Kitsap Public Health. This is the absolute best group of professionals that you will find anywhere in the nation. They provide the clients in Kitsap, Clallam, Jefferson, Mason Counties with the very best case management and peer support services possible as well as take care of each other while doing it.

I am proud to say that the team worked through COVID and staffing issues and still came through the first new face to face DOH program site visit with no findings. We have set the bar high for the rest of the State agencies. Good luck you all!

Thank you to the BEST TEAM!

Chris Winters, Ashley Duren, Mindy Tonti, Jami Armstrong, George Fine, and Mark Wickhamshire.

Special thank you to our Assistant Director of Health, **Siri Kushner.**

FROM DORIS AND HARBORVIEW:

I want to shout out to the **entire Madison Clinic social work team.** They have continued to come to work in person, at a hospital, every single day since the pandemic began. Even when we are very short-staffed, as we are now, they cover for one another and continue to prioritize providing the most compassionate care to all our patients. I have always been proud to be a part of this team, but now as I leave, I am prouder of them than ever!

ANONYMOUS SUBMISSION:

I would like to give an anonymous shout out to our Program Manager, **Stacie Lehot.** She is an amazing asset for our team and clients, an exceptional mentor and I am forever grateful for unwavering patience and support.

FROM BENTON FRANKLIN HEALTH DISTRICT:

Congratulations to **Adrian Aguilar-Perez** for his promotion to the HIV Program Lead at Benton-Franklin Health District!



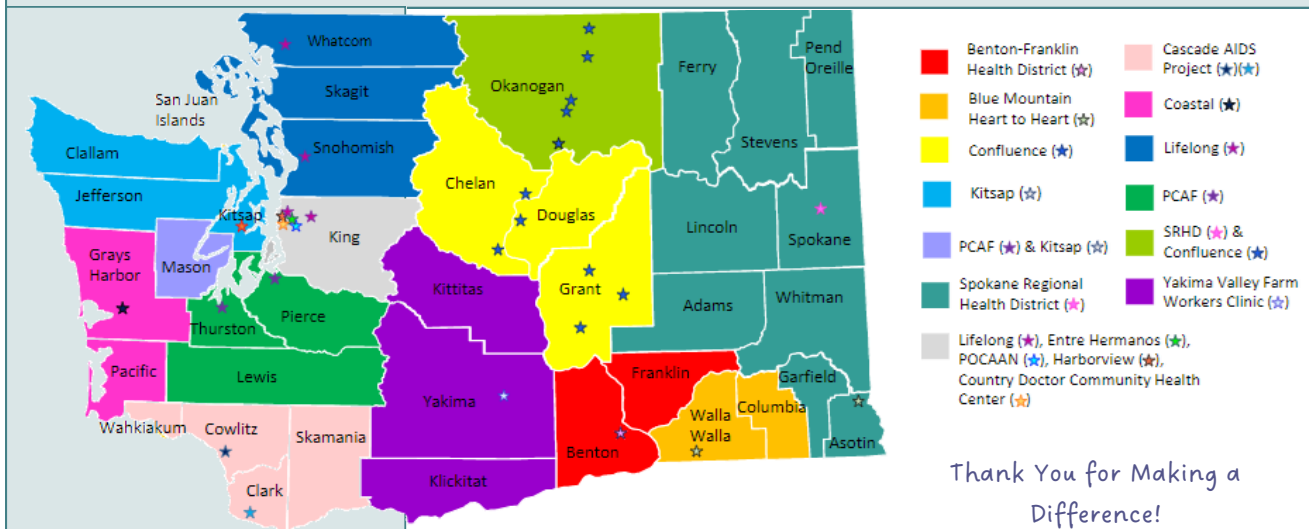
DOH HOPWA PROGRAM UPDATE

Washington State Department of Health (DOH) HOPWA program is currently participating in the HUD/Office of HIV Housing Equity Initiative along with six other areas/states. This initiative is looking for barriers through a race, gender and LGBTQ lens. Our goal in this work is to gain a better understanding of barriers to service/s, how to address them and ultimately improve access and outcomes for the HOPWA program participants.

DOH's [HOPWA Webpage](#) has also been translated into [Spanish](#). Thanks to our CLAS Implementation Consultant, Columba Fernandez.

As we wrap up our monitoring visits, we also want to recognize our project sponsors and say thank you for the amazing work you do to improve the lives of our HOPWA participants.

2022 HIV COMMUNITY SERVICE PARTNERS



Thank You for Making a Difference!

Office of Infectious Disease
 HIV Community Services
 P.O. Box 47841
 Olympia, WA 98504-7841
 Phone: 1-800-272-2437

An updated map of the HIV Community Service Partners providing Peer Navigation Services in Washington State.



To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.