



HIV in the Houston Area

2023 Epidemiologic Supplement for HIV Prevention and Care Services Planning

CONTENTS

Notes..... 2

Executive Summary..... 3

Comparison of HIV Rates in Houston, Texas, and the U.S., 2020..... 4

Houston/Harris County..... 5

 New HIV Diagnoses, 2020..... 5

 People Living with HIV Disease, 2020..... 6

Houston Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) 7

 New HIV Diagnoses, 2020..... 7

 People Living with HIV Disease, 2020..... 8

 Comparison of the Houston EMA Population to the Population Living with HIV, 2020..... 9

 Houston HIV Care Continuum, 2020..... 11

Addendum

 Houston/Harris County New HIV Diagnoses, 2021..... 13

 Houston/Harris County People Living with HIV Disease, 2021 14

Produced Through a Partnership between:



**Houston Area Ryan
White Planning
Council**



**Houston Health
Department**

Disclaimer:

This document is a supplement to and should be used in conjunction with the *2019 Houston Area Integrated Epidemiologic Profile for HIV Prevention and Care Services Planning*. (December 2019). This document contains data on selected epidemiological measures of HIV disease for the jurisdictions of Houston/Harris County and the Houston Eligible Metropolitan Area (**EMA**) for the reporting period of January 1 to December 31, 2021 (unless otherwise noted). It is intended for use in HIV prevention and care services planning conducted in years 2023-24. The separation of jurisdictions in the data presentation is intended to enhance the utility of this document as a tool for planning both HIV prevention and HIV care services. Data for the third geographic service jurisdiction in the Houston Area, the Houston Health Services Delivery Area (**HSDA**), are not presented here due to the overlap of data and data sources with the EMA, which makes the data virtually identical. The 2019 Epidemiologic Profile should be referenced for a comprehensive discussion of data pertaining to the epidemiological questions outlined in joint guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration. More recent data may have become available since the time of publication.

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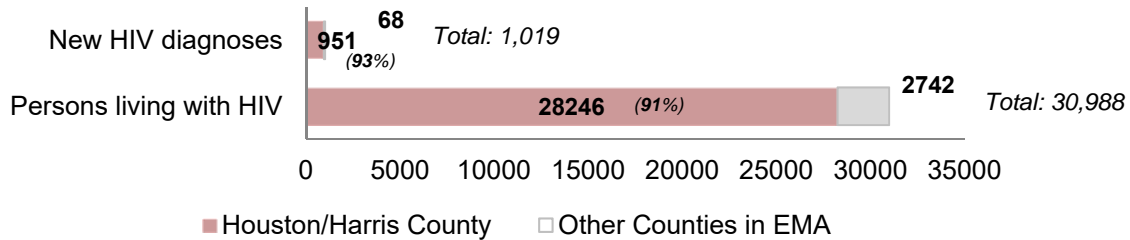
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local communities use data on patterns of HIV, or HIV epidemiology, to better understand who is diagnosed and living with HIV. This helps local communities make informed decisions about HIV services, funding, and quality.

This document is a supplement to the Houston Area’s current epidemiological profile of HIV (published in December 2019) and provides updated data on core HIV indicators used in local planning, including new HIV diagnoses and cumulative people living with HIV (HIV prevalence), for the two local jurisdictions of Houston/Harris County and the Houston Eligible Metropolitan Area (**EMA**), a six-county area that includes Houston/Harris County.¹ Data for the year 2020 should be interpreted with caution due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to HIV testing, care-related services, and surveillance activities in state/local jurisdictions. A summary of key data is below:

- At the end of calendar year 2020, there were 30,988 diagnosed people living with HIV (**PLWH**) in the Houston EMA, a 2.6% increase from 2019 (2019 total = 30,198). In 2020, 91% of PLWH resided in Houston/Harris County.
- Also, in 2020, 1,019 new diagnoses of HIV were reported in the Houston EMA, a 22% decrease from 2019 (2019 total = 1,313). At the time of diagnosis, 93% resided in Houston/Harris County.

Number of New HIV Diagnoses and People Living with HIV in the Houston EMA, by County, 2020



Sources: Texas eHARS, as of 12/31/2022
Definitions: New HIV diagnoses = People diagnosed with HIV between 1/1/2020 and 12/31/2020, with residence at diagnosis in Houston EMA. People living with HIV = People living with HIV at the end of calendar year 2020.

- In both Houston/Harris County and the Houston EMA, the rates of new HIV diagnoses and prevalence continue to exceed rates both for Texas and the U.S. The rate of new HIV diagnoses in Houston/Harris County is more than twice the rate for the U.S.
- Compared to the general population in the Houston EMA, PLWH are disproportionately male, Black/African Americans, and ages 45 to 54. There is a larger proportion of people ages 25 to 34 among new HIV diagnoses.
- Among 30,988 HIV-diagnosed individuals in the Houston EMA in 2020, 73% had receipt of care (at least one CD4/VL test in year); 56% were retained in HIV care (at least two CD4/VL tests in year, at least three months apart); and 60% maintained or reached viral load suppression (≤ 200 copies/mL).

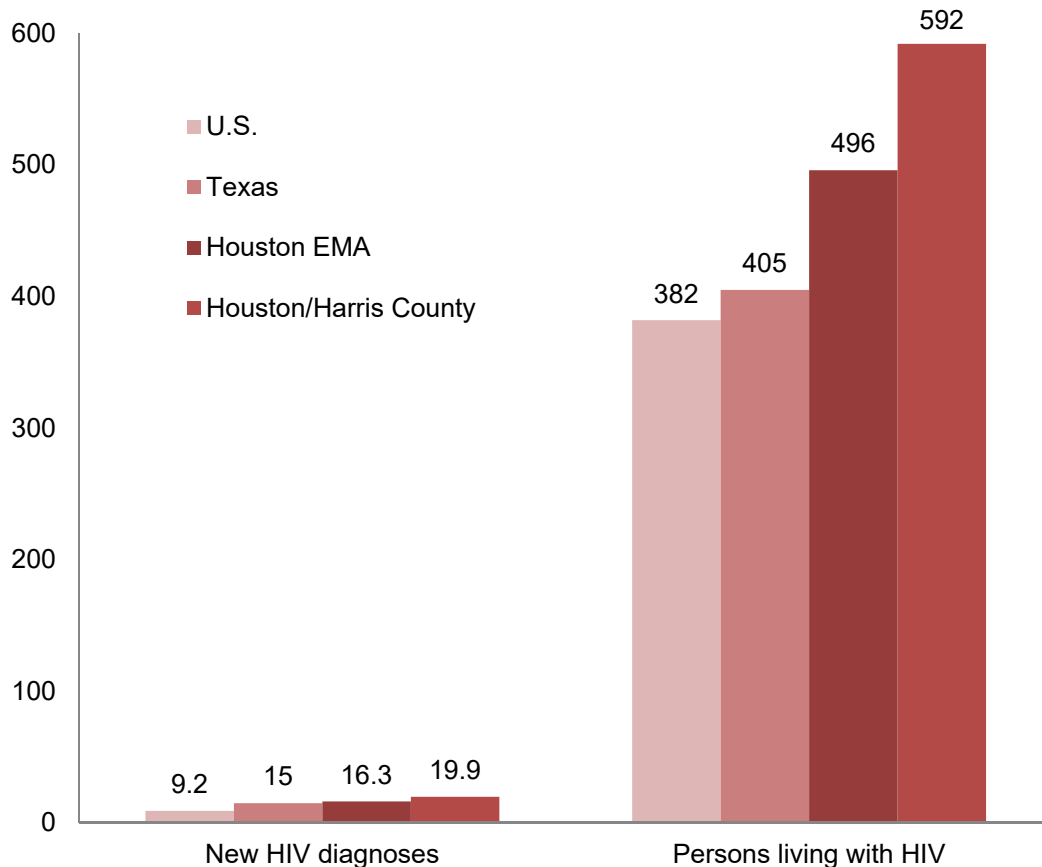
¹Pages marked “EMA” in the top left corner use 2020 Houston EMA HIV prevalence data, and pages marked “H/HC” in the top left corner use 2020 Houston/Harris County HIV prevalence data, unless otherwise noted.

COMPARISON OF HIV RATES IN HOUSTON, TEXAS, AND THE U.S.

A comparison of core HIV epidemiological indicators between the two Houston area jurisdictions (Houston/Harris County and the Houston EMA), the State of Texas, and the U.S. provides context for the local HIV burden data described in this document.

Overall, both Houston/Harris County and the Houston EMA have higher rates of new HIV diagnoses and HIV prevalence (or PLWH per 100,000 population) than both Texas and the U.S. This indicates that the HIV burden in the Houston area is greater than the state and the nation, even when adjusted for population size. In 2020, the Houston EMA had the highest new HIV diagnoses of any EMA/Transitional Grant Areas in Texas, according to epidemiological data provided by the Texas Department of State Health Services (**TDSHS**).

Rate of New HIV Diagnoses and of People Living with HIV for the U.S., Texas, and Houston Area Jurisdictions



*Rate is per 100,000 population in the respective jurisdiction.

Sources:

U.S.: U.S.: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Diagnoses of HIV Infection in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2020*. HIV Surveillance Report, 2020 (Preliminary); vol. 33. Published August 2022.

AIDSVu: Rates of Persons Living with HIV, 2020

Houston EMA: Texas eHARS. All data, 2020;

Houston/Harris County: Houston/Harris County eHARS. Diagnoses, 2020; Prevalence, 2020.

NEW HIV DIAGNOSES IN HOUSTON/HARRIS COUNTY (H/HC)

In 2020, 951 new diagnoses of HIV disease (including stage 3 HIV/formerly AIDS) were reported in Houston/Harris County, a 23% decrease from 2019 (2019 total = 1,233). Data for the year 2020 should be interpreted with caution due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to HIV testing, care-related services, and surveillance activities in state/local jurisdictions. The rate of new HIV and stage 3 HIV diagnoses in Houston/Harris County decreased from 25.9 to 19.9, while the rate of stage 3 HIV was approximately 5 new diagnoses for every 100,000 residents. When compared to 2019, decreases in new HIV rates occurred among all groups.

Proportionally, Black/African Americans made up the majority of new HIV diagnoses in 2020 at 47%, followed by Hispanic/Latinx at 38%. Male-to-male sexual contact or MSM accounted for the most transmission risk at 74%, followed by Sex with male/Sex with female (formerly heterosexual) at 19%.

New Diagnoses of HIV and Stage 3 HIV in Houston/Harris County by Sex assigned at Birth, Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Transmission Risk, 2020 ^a						
	New HIV ^b			New stage 3 HIV		
	Cases	%	Rate ^c	Cases	%	Rate ^c
Total	951	100.0	19.93	229	100.0	4.80
Sex assigned at Birth						
Male	799	84.02	34.10	187	81.66	7.98
Female	152	15.98	6.39	42	18.34	1.77
Race/Ethnicity						
White	107	11.25	8.15	21	9.17	1.60
Black/African American	445	46.79	49.00	95	41.48	10.46
Hispanic/Latinx	365	38.38	17.83	102	44.54	4.98
Other/Multiracial	34	3.58	6.76	11	4.80	2.19
Age at Diagnosis						
0 - 24 ^d	245	25.76	14.41	36	15.72	2.12
25 - 34	358	37.64	47.14	71	31.00	9.35
35 - 44	165	17.35	24.47	48	20.96	7.12
45 - 54	99	10.41	16.88	38	16.59	6.48
55 - 64	69	7.26	13.65	29	12.66	5.74
65+	15	1.58	3.03	7	3.06	1.42
Transmission Risk^e						
Male-to-male sexual contact (MSM)	707	74.34	*	151.7	66.24	*
Person who injects drugs (PWID)	42.4	4.46	*	14.5	6.33	*
MSM/PWID	20.6	2.17	*	5.5	2.40	*
Sex with male/Sex with female	176	18.51	*	56.3	24.59	*
Perinatal transmission	**	**	*	**	**	*

^aSource: Texas eHARS, analyzed by the Houston Health Department

^bHIV = People diagnosed with HIV, regardless of stage 3 HIV status, with residence at diagnosis in Houston/Harris County

^cRate per 100,000 population. Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5- year Estimates (for Harris County)

^dAge group 0-12 years was combined with 13-24 years because 0-12 years category had less than 5 cases and could not be reported.

^ePeople with no risk reported were recategorized into standard categories using the multiple imputation program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

**Cases less than 5 are suppressed.

*Population data are not available for risk groups; therefore, it is not possible to calculate rate by risk.

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN HOUSTON/HARRIS COUNTY (H/HC)

Data on the total number of people living with HIV (PLWH) in Houston/Harris County are available as of the end of calendar year 2020. At that time, there were 28,246 PLWH (regardless of progression) in Houston/Harris County. This is a prevalence rate of 592 PLWH for every 100,000 people in the jurisdiction.

Of those living with HIV in Houston/Harris County, 76% are male, 48% are Black/African Americans, 76% are people ages 35 and older, and 60% report MSM as their primary transmission risk.

People Living with HIV in Houston/Harris County by Sex assigned at Birth, Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Transmission Risk, 2020^a			
	Cases ^b	%	Rate ^c
Total	28246	100.0	592.00
Sex assigned at Birth			
Male	21527	76.21	918.80
Female	6719	23.79	282.57
Race/Ethnicity			
White	4409	15.61	335.69
Black/African American	13526	47.89	1489.32
Hispanic/Latino	8844	31.31	432.07
Other/Multiracial	1467	5.19	291.77
Current Age (as of 12/31/2020)			
0 - 24	1116	3.95	65.63
25 - 34	5776	20.45	760.49
35 - 44	6608	23.39	979.83
45 - 54	6660	23.58	1135.23
55 - 64	5792	20.51	1146.00
65+	2294	8.12	464.08
Transmission Risk^d			
Male-to-male sexual contact (MSM)	16871	59.73	*
Person who injects drugs (PWID)	2184	7.73	*
MSM/PWID	1187	4.20	*
Sex with male/Sex with female	7686	27.21	*
Perinatal transmission ^e	247	0.87	*
Other adult risk	13	0.05	*

^aSource: Texas eHARS analyzed by the Houston Health Department

^bPLWH at end of 2020 = People living with HIV, regardless of stage 3 HIV status

^cRate per 100,000 population. Source: American Community Survey, 2020- 5-year Estimates (for Harris County)

^dPatients with no risk reported were recategorized into standard categories using the multiple imputation or risk program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

^ePerinatal transmission doesn't include perinatal exposure w/HIV age 13+ years.

*Population data are not available for risk groups; therefore, it is not possible to calculate rate by risk.

NEW HIV DIAGNOSES IN THE HOUSTON EMA

In 2020, 1,019 new HIV diagnoses were reported in the Houston EMA, 22% decrease from 2019. The rate of new HIV diagnoses for every 100,000 people in the Houston EMA decreased by 22% from 20.8 in 2019 to 16.3 in 2020.

Noticeable decreases in rates compared to 2019 occurred among all groups.

Black/African Americans comprised the highest proportion of new HIV diagnoses in 2020 at 47%, followed by Hispanic/Latinx at 38%. MSM accounted for the majority of transmission risk at 74%, followed by Sex with male/Sex with female at 19%.

New Diagnoses of HIV in the Houston EMA by Sex assigned at Birth, Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Transmission Risk, 2020^a				
		Cases	%	Rate^c
Total		1,019	100.0	16.32
Sex assigned at Birth				
	Male	847	83.12	27.37
	Female	172	16.88	5.46
Race/Ethnicity				
	White	128	12.56	6.10
	Black/African American	474	46.52	44.04
	Hispanic/Latinx	384	37.68	15.97
	Other/Multiracial	33	3.24	4.97
Age				
	0 – 24 ^d	255	25.02	11.38
	25 - 34	378	37.10	39.85
	35 - 44	188	18.45	21.03
	45 - 54	108	10.60	13.60
	55 - 64	75	7.36	10.92
	65+	15	1.47	2.21
Transmission Risk^b				
	Male-male sexual contact (MSM)	755	74.09	*
	Person who injects drugs (PWID)	47	4.61	*
	MSM/PWID	17	1.67	*
	Sex with male/Sex with female	198	19.43	*
	Perinatal transmission	**	**	*

^a Source: Texas eHARS, new HIV diagnoses in the Houston EMA between 1/1/2020 and 12/31/2020.

^b Cases with unknown transmission risk have been redistributed based on historical patterns of risk ascertainment and reclassification

^d Age group 0-12 years was combined with 13-24 years because 0-12 years category had less than 5 cases and could not be reported.

**Data has been suppressed to meet cell size limit of 5.

*Population data are not available for risk groups; therefore, it is not possible to calculate rate by risk.

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN THE HOUSTON EMA

At the end of calendar year 2020, there were 30,988 people living with HIV in the Houston EMA, a 3% increase from 2019 (30,198 cases). The rate of HIV prevalence also increased in 2020 to 496 PLWH for every 100,000 people in the Houston EMA, up from 478 in 2019.

Noticeable increases in prevalence rates in 2020 compared to 2019 occurred among all groups, except for Other/Multiracial and people ages 45 to 54.

Black/African Americans comprised the highest proportion of PLWH in 2020 at 48%, followed by Hispanic/Latinx at 30%. MSM accounted for the majority of transmission risk at 59%, followed by Sex with male/Sex with female at 28%.

People Living with HIV in the Houston EMA by Sex assigned at Birth, Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Transmission Risk, 2020^a				
		Diagnosed PLWH		
		Cases	%	Rate^c
Total		30,988	100.0%	496.28
Sex assigned at Birth				
	Male	23,440	75.64	757.34
	Female	7,548	24.36	239.69
Race/Ethnicity				
	White	5,163	16.66	246.01
	Black/African American	14,765	47.65	1371.76
	Hispanic/Latinx	9,448	30.49	392.82
	Other/Multiracial	1,612	5.20	242.83
Age				
	0 - 24	1,198	3.87	53.46
	25 - 34	6,251	20.17	659.08
	35 - 44	7,174	23.15	802.56
	45 - 54	7,427	23.97	935.12
	55 - 64	6,409	20.68	932.75
	65+	2,529	8.16	372.32
Transmission Risk^b				
	Male-male sexual contact (MSM)	18,395	59.36	*
	Person who injects drugs (PWID)	2,411	7.78	*
	MSM/PWID	1,270	4.10	*
	Sex with male/Sex with female	8,579	27.68	*

^a Source: Texas eHARS, diagnosed PLWH in the Houston EMA between 1/1/2020 and 12/31/2020.

^b Cases with unknown transmission risk have been redistributed based on historical patterns of risk ascertainment and reclassification; information for perinatal transmission risk and other adult risk is not available.

^c Rate per 100,000 population. Source: American Community Survey, 2020 5-year estimates Houston EMA Population Denominators.

*Population data are not available for risk groups; therefore, it is not possible to calculate rate by risk.

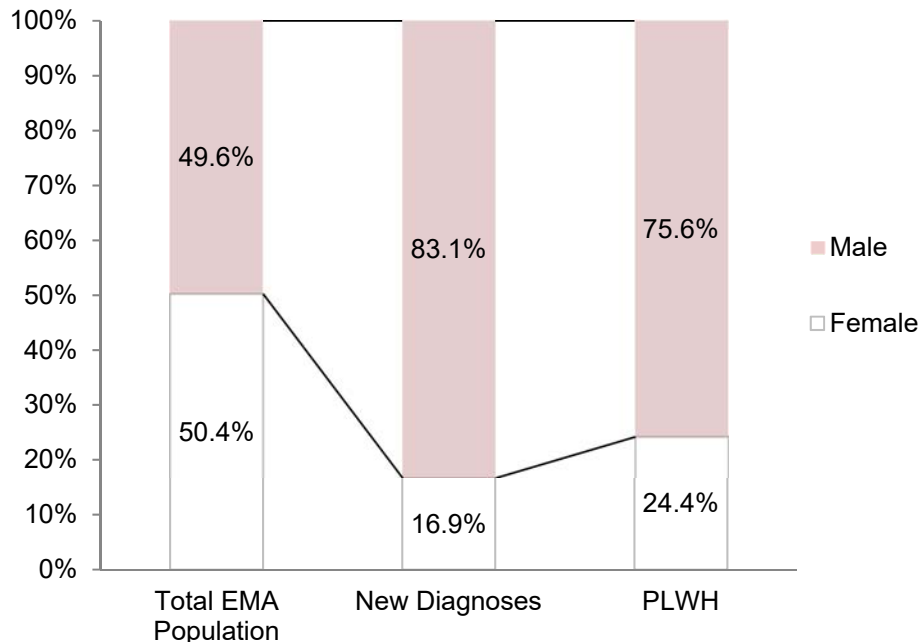
COMPARISON OF THE HOUSTON EMA POPULATION TO THE POPULATION LIVING WITH HIV

By Sex Assigned at Birth: In 2020, the Houston EMA population was divided almost equally between males and females. However, more males than females were both newly diagnosed with HIV (83% vs. 17%) and living with HIV (76% vs. 24%) at the end of 2020.

By Race/Ethnicity: Black/African Americans, Hispanic/Latinx, and people of other or multiple races account for 66% of the total Houston EMA population, while these groups comprised 87% of all new HIV diagnoses in 2020 and 83% of all PLWH at the end of 2020. Black/African Americans account for 17% of the total Houston EMA population but comprised 47% of new HIV diagnoses in 2020 and close to half of all PLWH (48%) in the region at the end of 2020.

By Age: People ages 25 to 34 accounted for a much larger proportion of new HIV diagnoses (37%) than their share of the Houston EMA population (15%) in 2020. Similarly, people ages 45 to 54 accounted for a much larger proportion of those living with HIV (24%) at the end of 2020 than their share of the population (13%).

Comparison of Total Population^a in the Houston EMA to People Living with HIV^b by Sex assigned at Birth,^c 2020

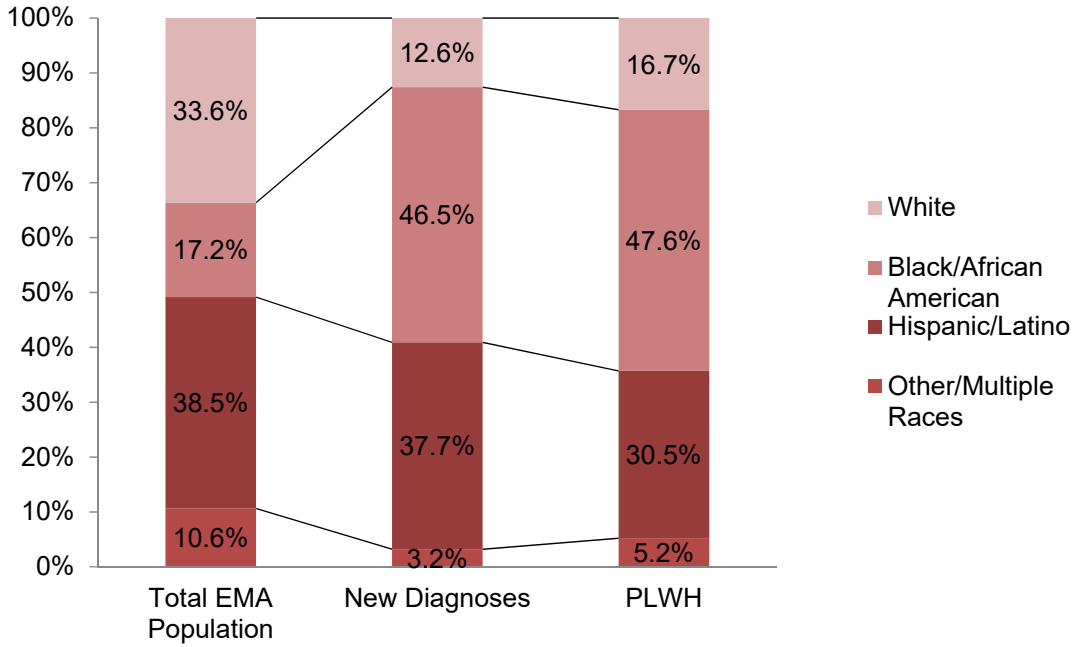


^aSource: American Community Survey, 2020 5-year estimates

^bTexas eHARS, Diagnosed PLWH in the Houston EMA as of 12/31/2020; new HIV diagnoses in the Houston EMA between 1/1/2020 and 12/31/2020.

^cTransgender people are reflected in data by sex assigned at birth due to underreporting.

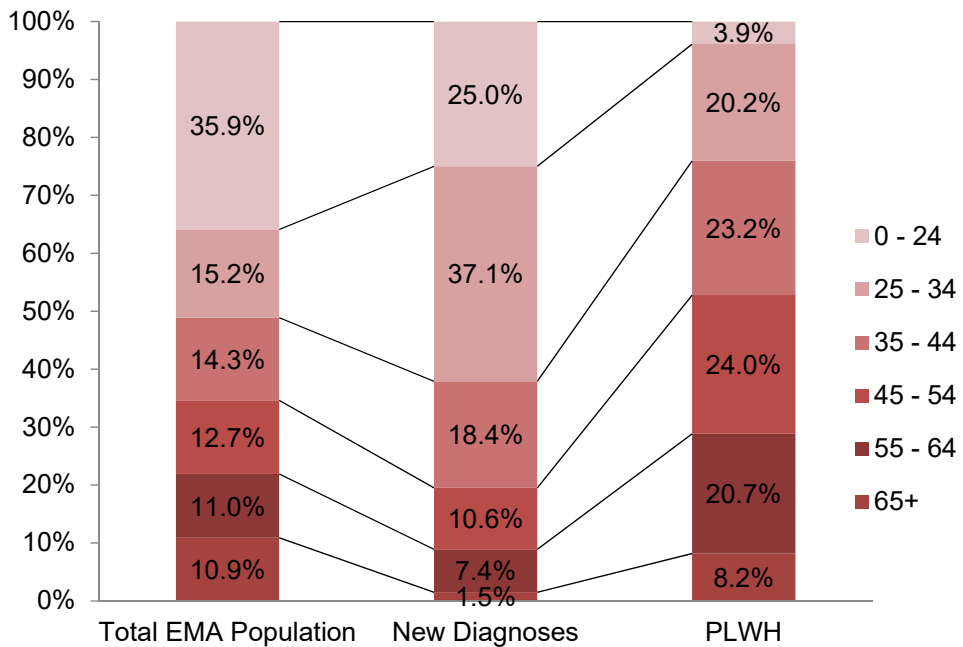
Comparison of Total Population^a in the Houston EMA to People Living with HIV^b by Race/Ethnicity, 2020



^aSource: American Community Survey, 2020 5-year estimates

^bTexas eHARS, Diagnosed PLWH in the Houston EMA as of 12/31/2020; new HIV diagnoses in the Houston EMA between 1/1/2020 and 12/31/2020.

Comparison of Total Population^a in the Houston EMA to People Living with HIV^b by Age, 2020



^aSource: American Community Survey, 2020 5-year estimates

^bTexas eHARS, Diagnosed PLWH in the Houston EMA as of 12/31/2020; new HIV diagnoses in the Houston EMA between 1/1/2020 and 12/31/2020.

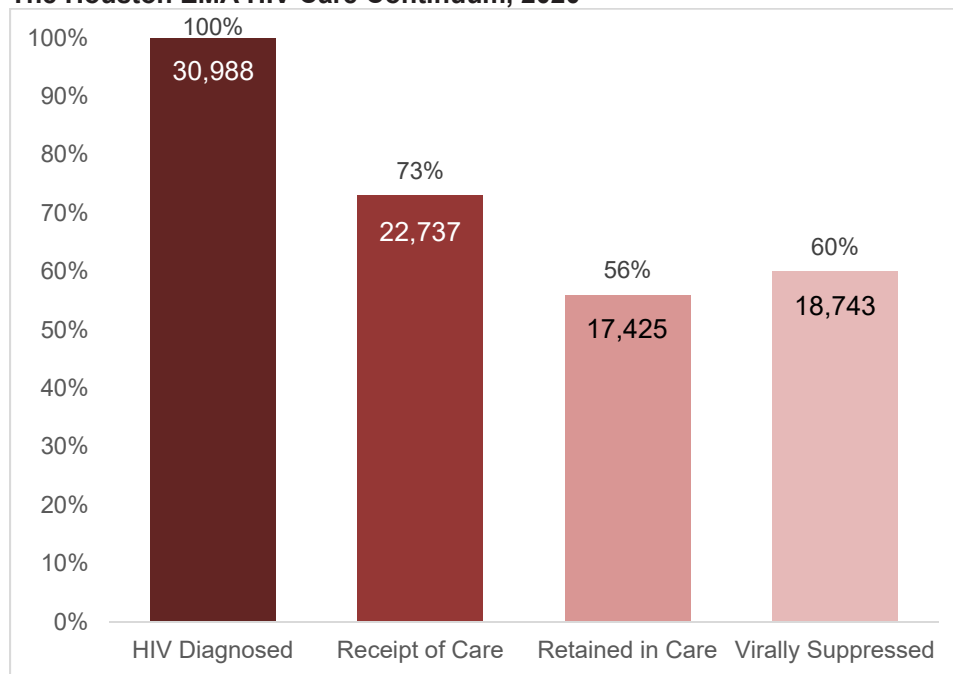
^NData suppressed as case number was fewer than 5.

THE HOUSTON EMA HIV CARE CONTINUUM

The Houston EMA HIV Care Continuum depicts the number and percentage of PLWH in Harris, Fort Bend, Waller, Montgomery, Liberty and Chambers counties at each stage of HIV care, from being diagnosed with HIV to viral suppression then linkage to care. Stakeholders use this analysis to measure the extent to which PLWH have community-wide access to care and identify potential service gaps. The methodology follows the CDC definition for a diagnosis-based HIV care continuum.

Among 30,988 HIV-diagnosed individuals in the Houston EMA in 2020, 73% had receipt of care (at least one CD4/VL test in year); 56% were retained in HIV care (at least two CD4/VL tests in year, at least three months apart); and 60% maintained or reached viral load suppression (≤ 200 copies/mL).

The Houston EMA HIV Care Continuum, 2020



Methodology of CDC diagnosis-based HIV Care Continuum:

HIV Diagnosed: No. of HIV-diagnosed people residing in the Houston EMA, 2020.

Receipt of Care: No. of HIV-diagnosed people who had a care visit as documented by a CD4 or viral load in 2020.

Retained in Care: No. of HIV-diagnosed people who had at least two care visits documented by a CD4 or viral load at least 90 days apart in 2020

Virally Suppressed: No. of HIV-diagnosed people whose last viral load test of the year was ≤ 200 copies/mL.

Source: TDSHS HIV Unmet Need Project (incl. eHARS, ELR, ARIES, ADAP, Medicaid, private payer data)

Linked to care data is not available.

ADDENDUM

To provide up-to-date findings, we include 2021 data of Houston/Harris County as an addendum to our existing report for comparison since 2021 data of EMA is not available.

NEW HIV DIAGNOSES IN HOUSTON/HARRIS COUNTY (H/HC)

In 2021, 1,182 new diagnoses of HIV disease (including stage 3 HIV/formerly AIDS) were reported in Houston/Harris County, an 24% increase from 2020 (2020 total = 951). Data for the year 2020 should be interpreted with caution due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to HIV testing, care-related services, and surveillance activities in state/local jurisdictions. The rate of new HIV and stage 3 HIV diagnoses in Houston/Harris County increased from 19.9 to 24.9, while the rate of stage 3 HIV remained approximately 6 new diagnoses for every 100,000 residents. When compared to 2020, increases in new HIV rates occurred among all groups.

Proportionally, Black/African Americans made up the majority of new HIV diagnoses in 2021 at 46%, followed by Hispanic/Latinx at 40%. Male-to-male sexual contact or MSM accounted for the most transmission risk at 72%, followed by Sex with male/Sex with female (formerly heterosexual) at 20%.

	New HIV ^b			New stage 3 HIV		
	Cases	%	Rate ^c	Cases	%	Rate ^c
Total	1182	100.0	24.90	303	100.0	6.38
Sex assigned at Birth						
Male	961	81.30	40.64	237	78.22	10.02
Female	221	18.70	9.28	66	21.78	2.77
Race/Ethnicity						
White	117	9.90	8.77	25	8.25	1.87
Black/African American	544	46.02	61.10	127	41.91	14.26
Hispanic/Latinx	469	39.68	22.69	140	46.20	6.77
Other/Multiracial	52	4.40	11.42	11	3.63	2.42
Age at Diagnosis						
0 - 24 ^d	277	23.43	16.25	37	12.21	2.17
25 - 34	445	37.65	59.64	104	34.32	13.94
35 - 44	213	18.02	31.07	71	23.43	10.36
45 - 54	131	11.08	22.11	43	14.19	7.26
55 - 64	85	7.19	16.61	34	11.22	6.64
65+	31	2.62	6.12	14	4.62	2.77
Transmission Risk^e						
Male-to-male sexual contact (MSM)	846.8	71.64	*	198.8	65.61	*
Person who injects drugs (PWID)	67	5.67	*	21	6.93	*
MSM/PWID	30.3	2.56	*	7.1	2.34	*
Sex with male/Sex with female	236.9	20.04	*	76.1	25.12	*
Perinatal transmission	**	**	*	0	0	*

^aSource: Texas eHARS, analyzed by the Houston Health Department

^bHIV = People diagnosed with HIV, regardless of stage 3 HIV status, with residence at diagnosis in Houston/Harris County

^cRate per 100,000 population. Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and 2020 U.S. Decennial Census

^dAge group 0-12 years was combined with 13-24 years because 0-12 years category had less than 5 cases and could not be reported.

^ePeople with no risk reported were recategorized into standard categories using the multiple imputation program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

**Cases less than 5 are suppressed.

*Population data are not available for risk groups; therefore, it is not possible to calculate rate by risk.

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN HOUSTON/HARRIS COUNTY (H/HC)

Data on the total number of people living with HIV (**PLWH**) in Houston/Harris County are available as of the end of calendar year 2021. At that time, there were 29,139 PLWH (regardless of progression) in Houston/Harris County. This is a prevalence rate of 614 PLWH for every 100,000 people in the jurisdiction.

Of those living with HIV in Houston/Harris County, 76% are male, 48% are Black/African Americans, 76% are people ages 35 and older, and 61% report MSM as their primary transmission risk.

People Living with HIV in Houston/Harris County by Sex assigned at Birth, Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Transmission Risk, 2021 ^a			
	Cases ^b	%	Rate ^c
Total	29139	100.0	613.83
Sex assigned at Birth			
Male	22282	76.47	942.36
Female	6857	23.53	287.79
Race/Ethnicity			
White	4380	15.03	328.33
Black/African American	14012	48.09	1573.73
Hispanic/Latinx	9196	31.56	444.84
Other/Multiracial	1551	5.32	340.54
Current Age (as of 12/31/2021)			
0 - 24	1145	3.93	67.17
25 - 34	5944	20.40	796.64
35 - 44	6746	23.15	983.90
45 - 54	6680	22.92	1127.19
55 - 64	6050	20.76	1181.97
65+	2574	8.83	508.39
Transmission Risk^d			
Male-to-male sexual contact (MSM)	17654.8	60.59	*
Person who injects drugs (PWID)	2163.1	7.42	*
MSM/PWID	1192.6	4.09	*
Sex with male/Sex with female	7812.5	26.81	*
Perinatal transmission ^e	242	0.83	*
Other adult risk	13	0.04	*

^aSource: Texas eHARS analyzed by the Houston Health Department

^bPLWH at end of 2021 = People living with HIV, regardless of stage 3 HIV status

^cRate per 100,000 population. Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and 2020 U.S. Decennial Census

^dPatients with no risk reported were recategorized into standard categories using the multiple imputation or risk program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

^ePerinatal transmission doesn't include perinatal exposure w/HIV age 13+ years.

*Population data are not available for risk groups; therefore, it is not possible to calculate rate by risk.