

## Funded Categories

**Category 1:** PrEP (Preexposure Prophylaxis)

**Category 2** - Data to Care

## Background

Louisiana ranks 3rd in the U.S. in estimated HIV and AIDS case rates. The New Orleans Metropolitan Statistical Area (NOMSA) ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the U.S. for estimated HIV case rates and 5<sup>th</sup> for AIDS case rates, respectively. In 2014, men who have sex with men (MSM) in NOMSA accounted for 82% of HIV and 77% of syphilis diagnoses. Transgender women who have sex with men (TWSM) were also heavily impacted. Among all MSM and TWSM, persons of color accounted for 68% of new HIV cases and 65% of new syphilis cases in metro-New Orleans. MSM and TWSM of color are also disproportionately represented among persons living with HIV (PLWH) in New Orleans. Of 7,610 PLWH in NOMSA during 2014, 67% were MSM (including 89 known TWSM). Of all known MSM living with HIV in the metro area, 47% were white, 46% black, 5% Hispanic/Latino, and 1% were Asian. Linkage and retention to HIV care and rates of viral suppression are low among MSM and consistently worse for MSM of color; in 2014, 49% to MSM of color, compared to 63% of white MSM living with HIV were virally suppressed.

## Overview of Louisiana's Project PrIDE Plan

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health STD/HIV Program (SHP) will implement the New Orleans Louisiana Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Program (NOLA PrEPP) to increase PrEP awareness and utilization by MSM, transgender (TG) individuals, and other persons at risk of acquiring HIV, and reduce HIV incidence in the New Orleans Metropolitan Statistical Area (NOMSA). SHP will implement New Orleans Links (NOLA Links) in the New Orleans MSA by expanding and enhancing the LA Links data-to-care strategy. NOLA Links will prioritize PLWH that are MSM, transgender persons, and men with no previously reported HIV risk information, particularly men of color, to increase their linkage to and retention in HIV care and viral suppression during and after the current demonstration project.

## Programmatic Activities

### Category 1:

Louisiana's NOLA PrEPP program will:

- Create a Community Advisory Board to ensure community buy-in and engagement and create PrEP screening tools.
- Conduct a PrEP social marketing campaign for providers and members of priority populations.
- Utilize Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) to educate and link individuals to PrEP Navigation.
- Provide health care providers with cultural competency and PrEP clinical management trainings.
- Modify HIV testing and partner services protocols to include screening for STDs and PrEP appropriateness, PrEP education, and linkage to PrEP navigation services.
- Expand partnerships with CBOs to provide PrEP navigation and adherence services to priority populations in the New Orleans MSA.

- These activities will be implemented to increase accessibility of PrEP and PrEP support and to increase knowledge and awareness of PrEP among providers and the prioritized populations.

Category 2:

The NOLA Links will use the following strategies to enhance the data to care program and increase the number of priority population members who are provided linkage, reengagement and treatment adherence services in the New Orleans MSA and reduce the average length of time of successful linkage to HIV care amongst the priority population. Local evaluation results will be used to increase the quality of the NOLA Links data to care services.

Louisiana's SHP will:

- Hire linkage DIS staff to identify and provide linkage, reengagement and treatment adherence services to PLWH.
- Create new and update existing policies, procedures, and protocols on the use of HIV surveillance data to link and reengage members of priority populations in HIV care.
- Train SHP staff and community partners on data to care strategies and work with priority populations to increase buy-in and the effectiveness of NOLA Links.
- Enroll priority populations in NOLA Links and provide them with linkage, reengagement and/or treatment adherence services.
- Improve the timeliness of linkage to care and partner services provided by DIS.
- Improve the timeliness of reengagement to care and treatment adherence services provided by LCCs

**PROGRAM POINT(S) OF CONTACT**

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