

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE FACT SHEET



HIV IN INDIAN COUNTRY

ISSUE

[HIV](#) (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). HIV is a public health issue among American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people, who represent about 1.7% of the U.S. population. Compared with other racial/ethnic groups, AI/AN people ranked fifth in estimated rates of HIV diagnoses in 2022 with a rate of 10.6 per 100,000* population as compared with Whites at 5.3 per 100,000 population.

BACKGROUND

The Indian Health Service (IHS) [National HIV/HCV/STI Program](#) coordinates and promotes HIV prevention and treatment activities specific to AI/AN people as part of a comprehensive public health approach. The Program's goals are to prevent the further spread of HIV and improve health outcomes for those living with HIV.

The [Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.](#) (EHE) initiative is a bold plan announced in 2019 to end the HIV epidemic in the U.S. by 2030. Agencies across the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the IHS, developed an operational plan to pursue that goal accompanied by a request for additional annual funding.

STATUS

The toll of the HIV epidemic among AI/AN people can best be understood by reviewing some of the most recent data for 2022. The data illustrate various points of inequity.

- **Key Statistics about HIV among American Indian/Alaska Native People**
 - In 2022, there were 215 new diagnoses of HIV infection among AI/AN people.
 - The number of new diagnoses in 2022 increased by 1.9% from 2021 and nearly 30% from 2018.
 - Males accounted for 73% (158 cases) of all new diagnoses, a decrease of 4.2% from 2021 but an increase of 16.2% from 2018.
 - Women accounted for 27% (57 cases) of all new diagnoses, an increase of 24% from 2021 and 90% from 2018.
 - In 2022, the majority (67%) of new HIV diagnoses came from a combination of two age groups: 25-34-year-olds (85 new diagnoses) and 35-44-year-olds (56 new diagnoses).
 - The primary transmission mode among men is male-to-male sexual contact.
 - The primary transmission route among women is heterosexual contact.
 - Between 2018 and 2022, the number of new HIV diagnoses among women attributable to injection drug use nearly doubled from 15 in 2018 to 26 in 2022.
 - In 2022, 77.3% of AI/AN people living with HIV knew their HIV status – the lowest of any racial/ethnic group.
 - In 2022, 77.9% of all AI/AN people diagnosed with HIV 2022 were linked to care, and 61.5% achieved HIV viral suppression within six months as compared to 82.1% and 68.1%, respectively, for Whites.
 - In 2022, out of every 100 AI/AN persons with diagnosed HIV, 76 persons received some care, 54 persons were retained in care, and 65 persons had achieved viral suppression.

- **Disparities in HIV Experienced by American Indian/Alaska Native People**

- In 2022, the rate of new HIV diagnoses among AI/AN persons were 10.6 (per 100,000 population), more than twice the rate of 5.3 (per 100,000 population) experienced by Whites.
- Between 2018 and 2022, new HIV diagnoses among AI/AN persons increased by 30%, making them the only group other than Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders and Hispanic/Latino to see an increase.
- In 2022, AI/AN people had the lowest level of knowledge of HIV status than any other racial or ethnic group.
- In 2022, the rate of HIV diagnosis among AI/AN women (5.5%) were nearly three times as high as the rate of HIV diagnosis among White women (1.9%).

OPPORTUNITIES/PLANS

The IHS National HIV/HCV/STI Program provided funding to support the development of the [*Indigenous HIV/AIDS Syndemic Strategy: Weaving Together the National HIV, STI, and Viral Hepatitis Plans*](#) (IndigiHAS), which seeks to support local AI/AN communities in decreasing HIV, HCV, and STI acquisition and improving outcomes for those currently living with HIV, HCV, or STIs.

The National Program also provides funding to grantees for HIV prevention and treatment programming through the [*Ending the HIV and HCV Epidemics in Indian Country*](#) (ETHIC) cooperative agreement program and the [*Minority HIV/AIDS Fund*](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact the IHS Public Affairs Staff at 301-443-3593 for a referral to the appropriate spokesperson.

*The source for all HIV surveillance data is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. NCHHSTP Atlas Plus. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/about/atlasplus.html>. Accessed August 16, 2024.