

# HEARING FROM CHICAGO VOICES

## VIIV HEALTHCARE'S LISTENING IN ACTION

### Place and Purpose

When it comes to HIV prevention and care, where you live matters. To disrupt HIV disparities, there's a need to commit to the hyper-local voices, networks and efforts that drive change.

Chicago is one of the most culturally rich cities in the world. However, its complicated HIV funding landscape intersects with historic structural racism to exacerbate housing, economic and food insecurity. Ongoing racial tension and relentless violence, homophobia and transphobia have gotten worse over the past year. In response to these compounded crises, community leaders have expanded their vision and their essential supports for food, housing and mental health; have simplified systems and improved access to care; and have created lifesaving, affirming spaces and services despite overwhelming challenges and loss.

ViiV Healthcare is collaborating with community advisors to design a listening strategy to better understand what's working locally and where disruption and community support can accelerate the end of the HIV epidemic. Here's what we heard.

### Key Insights

#### Grassroots organizations expanded and enhanced their efforts to support the community during the COVID-19 crisis

- Smaller, grassroots community-based organizations changed their delivery approach and expanded their services to meet the significant demands that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations provided food, direct funds to cover living expenses, COVID-19 testing/vaccination, social and emotional supports, and shelter.

#### Funding and supporting trusted, smaller organizations and informal networks offer an opportunity to expand the reach within communities

- Smaller, POC-led community-based organizations, grassroots organizations and networks are not often resourced to succeed or expand.
- Local collaborations and partnerships that fund participants for their time and efforts, employ listening strategies and feedback loops and prioritize "for us, by us models" show promise.
- There are grassroots and emerging efforts to create safe spaces and offer new access to care to re-engage people most often left behind. This looks like workshops that help people build job skills, money skills, wellness practices, as well as opportunities for people to access gender-affirming clothing and supplies.

#### Affirming, whole-person care focused on an empowering narrative can increase trust, re-linkage to care and prevention

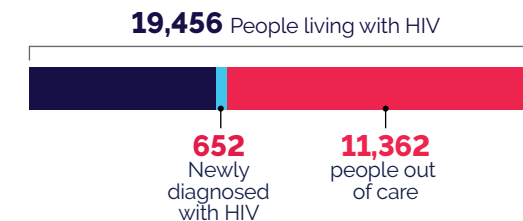
- Support creative outlets to help reduce stigma, facilitate engagement in care, and shift the narrative from one of suffering to stories of empowerment and resilience.

- Promote coordinated community outreach and navigation led by dedicated, specialized staff in physical and virtual spaces people naturally socialize, regularly spend their time or access services to meet their basic needs.
- Cultivate relationships with and support leaders in the House Ballroom community, formal and informal networks, faith- and spirituality-based groups, and other affirming organizations on Chicago's West and South sides.

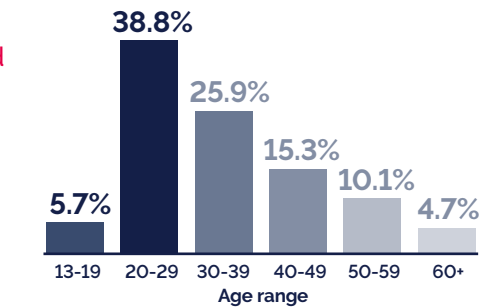
#### Organizations prepare to meet increased HIV numbers and other needs as the effect of COVID-19 widens geographic, racial, ethnic and gender disparities, particularly in the West and South sides of Chicago

- Compared to pre-COVID-19, organizations report higher positivity rates, more dual HIV/AIDS diagnoses and increased viral loads.
- As health systems remain in the COVID-19 crisis, local organizations are bracing to increase outreach, testing, and re-linkage to care resources.
- Leaders push to prioritize investment in the West and South sides of Chicago, addressing under-resourced areas of need and at a more micro, neighborhood level, to understand access and community norms.
- Housing, employment, mental health, food insecurity and substance use are the most urgent social needs at the intersection of HIV prevention and care.

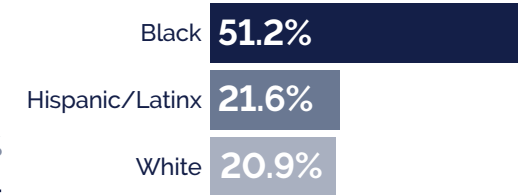
In 2019, 652 people were newly diagnosed with HIV. The Ending the HIV Epidemic goals aim for a 90% reduction in new diagnoses and for 90% to receive sustained antiretroviral therapy. Of the 19,456 people living with HIV in Chicago, 58% were out of care.<sup>1</sup>



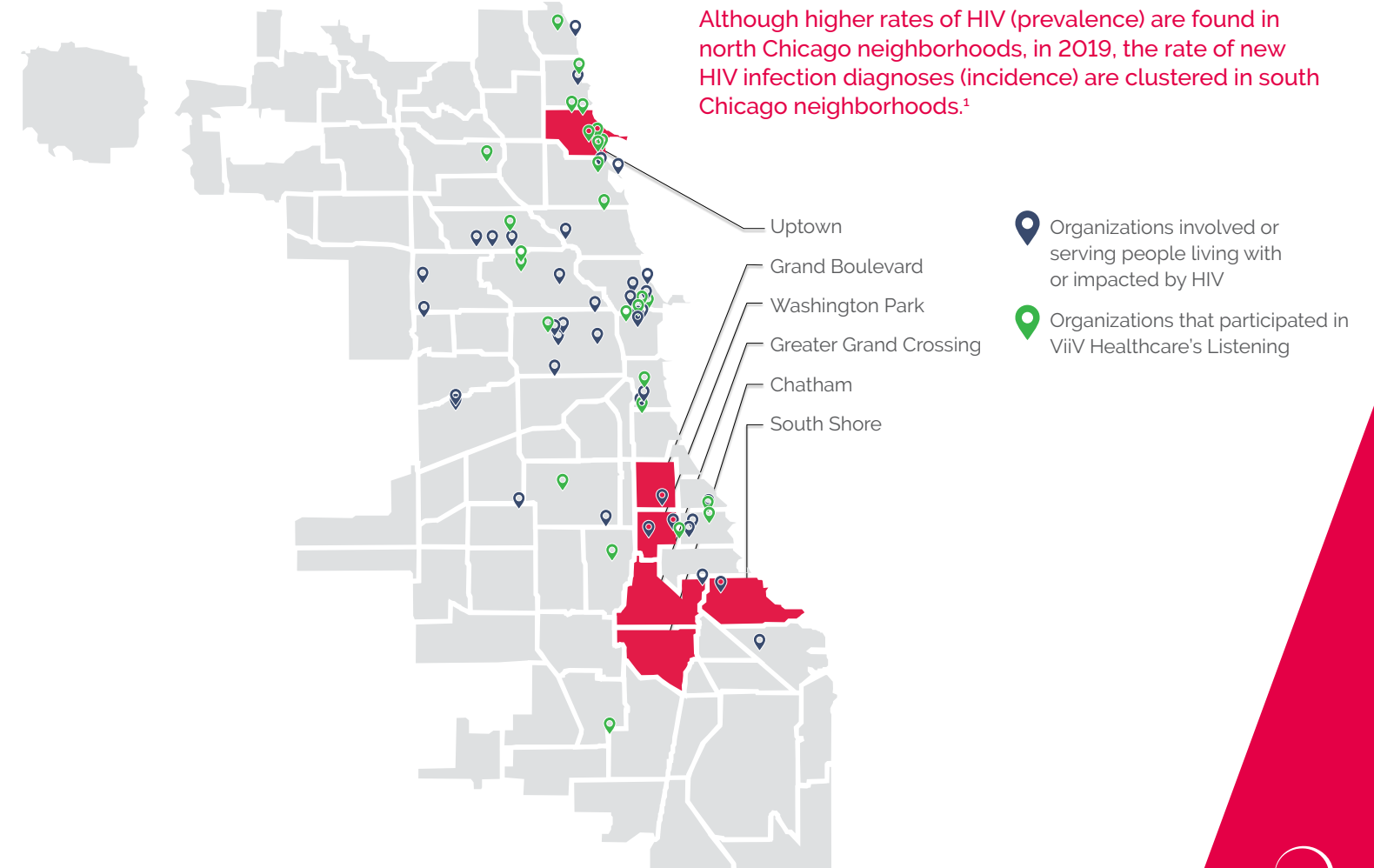
#### New diagnoses by age<sup>1</sup>



#### The burden of HIV weighs heaviest on Black and Hispanic/Latinx populations.<sup>2</sup>



Although higher rates of HIV (prevalence) are found in north Chicago neighborhoods, in 2019, the rate of new HIV infection diagnoses (incidence) are clustered in south Chicago neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup>



“ One lesson learned during the pandemic was that the social determinants that were illuminated by [research report] aren't the only ones that the community is dealing with. [We saw] unsafe coping mechanisms; increases in meth use and drug use on both the South and West sides, including increases in overdoses. ”

—Chicago Listening Participant

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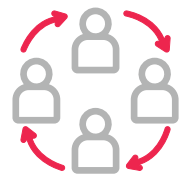
## VIIV HEALTHCARE'S LISTENING IN ACTION

### Our Listening Approach

ViiV Healthcare's External Affairs' approach is to listen to community voices, activate programming with grants and resources, amplify the bright spots and lessons learned and sustain the efforts with supported leadership and learning. The listening in Chicago was driven by three key strategies:



**1** Review of the HIV data, landscape of services and current community investments in the city



**2** Small-group conversations with stakeholder organization leaders and frontline staff



**3** Community-based discussion sessions led by Community Captains

Local community members ("Captains") closely connected to the Chicago community were identified to work closely with ViiV Healthcare to customize the community listening approach to represent their deep understanding of the nuances of their local communities. Community captains and qualitative research analysts came together to debrief insights from each community listening session. During a natural break in the listening work, researchers used qualitative data analysis software to sort the notes consistently by topic. Researchers worked to identify patterns and themes in responses.

Community Captains, research collaborators and advisors came together to discuss and 'make meaning' and recommendations based on the insights from the listening activities. These insights inform ViiV Healthcare's community investments to disrupt disparities in care.

“ Ensure that community is leading community and bringing back resources to community. Hire folks that look like and love like us, [put us on] board and in leadership positions. Value partnerships with other entities focused on health equity.

—Chicago Listening Participants



ViiV Healthcare is the only company solely focused on HIV, and we work to galvanize people and organizations, leverage relationships and provide fresh resources that are needed to change the systems, spaces, and places that drive disparities in HIV care.

### POSITIVE ACTION

ViiV Healthcare was established to take an innovative approach to the challenge of HIV—and we do. It's who we are.

An innovative approach means we go beyond developing new medicines. We seek insights to better understand the unmet needs of people living with HIV. We connect individuals and communities to help drive solutions focused on providing the same standard of care for all people living with HIV. We develop and support community programs that focus on HIV prevention, care and treatment. The voice of the HIV community informs everything we do.

As the only company solely focused on HIV, we think differently, act differently and connect differently to improve the lives and outcomes for all people affected by HIV. Positive Action has supported more than 300 programs across the globe since 1992.

### OUR LISTENING INCLUDED:

 **26**  
listening sessions

 **20**  
organizations

 **66**  
individual community and organization stakeholders

- **Organization staff** included: board members, executives, managers and frontline staff.
- **Diverse community sessions** were inclusive of: Black and Latinx gay and bi men, Black and Latinx cis women, trans women of color, and youth of color.

Our sincere gratitude to the Chicago community for their generous participation in our listening sessions and to our community captains, Noel Green and Tatyana Moatan, MBA, for their guidance and support.

### From Insights to Action

The insights and connections from the listening activities build on lessons learned from the **accelerate** initiative in Baltimore and Jackson—ViiV Healthcare's pilot 'place-based approach' to ending the HIV epidemic. Informed by this listening, ViiV Healthcare is **activating new resources** for projects that expand access to education, quality prevention, care, and supportive services; foster community collaborations; and disrupt HIV health disparities. With a focus on networks, linkage and re-linkage to care and advocacy, we aim to help more people get the HIV prevention and care they need.

To learn more, visit [viivhealthcare.com/en-us/](https://viivhealthcare.com/en-us/) and follow us @ViiVUS



1. Chicago Department of Public Health. HIV/STI Surveillance Report, 2019. Chicago, IL: City of Chicago; December 2020. Available at: [https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/statistics\\_and\\_reports/CDPH-HIV-STI-REPORT-2020.pdf](https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/statistics_and_reports/CDPH-HIV-STI-REPORT-2020.pdf).
2. Source: AIDSVU ([aidsvu.org](https://aidsvu.org)). Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health. Available at: <https://aidsvu.org/local-data/united-states/midwest/illinois/chicago>. Accessed 21 June 2021.