USING MAI FUNDS EFFECTIVELY: TAILORING SERVICES FOR LOCALLY IDENTIFIED SUBPOPULATIONS

This resource explains the history and goals of the Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI), describes allowable uses of MAI funds, offers sound practices for planning councils allocating MAI funds, identifies challenges, and gives examples of how planning councils have used MAI funds to support responsive, tailored services.

Resource Overview

Goals/Purpose of MAI funding
The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program's (RWHAP) Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) provides additional funding under RWHAP Parts A, B, C, D, and F to improve access to HIV care and health outcomes for racial and ethnic minority populations disproportionately affected by HIV. Under RWHAP Part A, MAI formula grants are used to fund core medical and support services that will improve access and reduce disparities in health outcomes for minority populations in metropolitan areas hardest hit by HIV/AIDS.

Populations of focus for MAI-funded services
RWHAP Part A jurisdictions are expected to identify specific minority subpopulations to focus on as they work to strengthen the local HIV service system. Planning councils use local data to identify population-based differences in linkage to care, retention in care, and viral suppression, as well as barriers to access for different groups. In identifying populations of focus, planning councils may go beyond race and ethnicity (e.g., all African Americans or all Latinos) to consider additional characteristics that affect service needs, such as gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, and age.

Types of services that can be supported with MAI funds
RWHAP Part A MAI funds should be used to support "population-tailored services" – specially designed, culturally responsive medical or support services that will improve treatment access and outcomes for the jurisdiction's particular minority subpopulations of focus. In addition, services supported with MAI funding should employ innovative approaches or interventions that address the unique needs of the different subpopulations of focus.

Separate allocation process for MAI funds
In priority setting and resource allocation (PSRA), planning councils are expected to separately allocate RWHAP Part A and MAI funds, and to report separately on priorities, allocations, expenditures, and number of clients served. A separate allocation process helps to ensure that MAI funds are used to implement tailored services or new service models that will improve access and treatment outcomes for the jurisdiction's identified subpopulations of focus.

Using MAI Funds Effectively: Tailoring Services for Locally Identified Subpopulations

Introduction

The Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) provides funding through agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to reduce disparities in HIV access, treatment, care, and outcomes for racial and ethnic minorities. Under Part A of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP), the HIV/AIDS Bureau expects MAI funds to be used to support culturally-responsive core medical and related support services designed to address the unique barriers and challenges faced by disproportionately impacted racial and ethnic minority subpopulations as identified by each jurisdiction. It is not sufficient for MAI funds to be used to pay for services to racial and ethnic minorities. These services should be "population-tailored" so that they contribute to positive treatment outcomes, including increased levels of sustained viral suppression among subpopulations of focus.

This resource summarizes the history and purpose of MAI and then focuses on use of MAI funds under RWHAP Part A. It explains the continuing need for MAI, describes expectations for use of MAI funds, provides examples of MAI projects, identifies challenges, and describes the MAI-related roles of RWHAP Part A planning councils/planning bodies (PC/PBs). It is designed to help PC/PBs ensure that such funds improve HIV treatment outcomes and reduce HIV-related health disparities for racial and ethnic minorities.

History

In March of 1998, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) brought together a group of African American community leaders and service providers for a briefing that presented new surveillance data showing the extremely high and disproportionate rates of HIV infection among African Americans. The data led the leaders to declare a "state of emergency" in the African American community regarding HIV. They called upon the federal government to declare a public health state of emergency. Both the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA) endorsed this action. In October 1998, President Bill Clinton described HIV as a "severe and ongoing health care crisis" in racial and ethnic minority communities and announced a new initiative to address it. Initially known as the CBC Initiative, it received FY 1999 funding of about $165 million, including newly appropriated and reprogrammed funds. The name later became the Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) to reflect a broader focus on racial and ethnic minority communities, including African Americans, Alaska Natives, Latinos, American Indians, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.[1]

Congressional intent for use of MAI funds was specified in FY 2002:

> These funds are for activities that are designed to address the trends of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in communities of color based on the most recent estimated living AIDS cases, HIV infections and AIDS mortality among ethnic and racial minorities as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.[2]

MAI implementation is decentralized, with funds going to various parts of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), CDC, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the Office of the Secretary. By FY 2004, MAI funds totaled about $400 million and were supporting over 50 separate projects in prevention, care and treatment, and research. Total MAI funding across the four agencies totaled about $416 million in FY 2011.

The MAI program within the RWHAP was codified in Section 2693 of the 2006 reauthorization: "to evaluate and address the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on, and the disparities in access, treatment, care, and outcomes for, racial and ethnic minorities."[3] The 2009 reauthorization called for synchronization of the schedules for MAI and the applications for each Part. MAI is a component of Part F, with funds allocated to each grant recipient on a formula basis. To receive an MAI grant, an entity must have received a grant under the relevant RWHAP Part. In FY 2021, MAI funding under Part A totaled almost $51.7 million.

Strategies and uses of MAI funds have changed over the years. For example, MAI was restructured in 2010, with the release of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS). The intent remains unchanged: to reduce HIV-related disparities and improve outcomes for disproportionately impacted racial and ethnic minorities.

Allowable Uses of MAI Funds under RWHAP

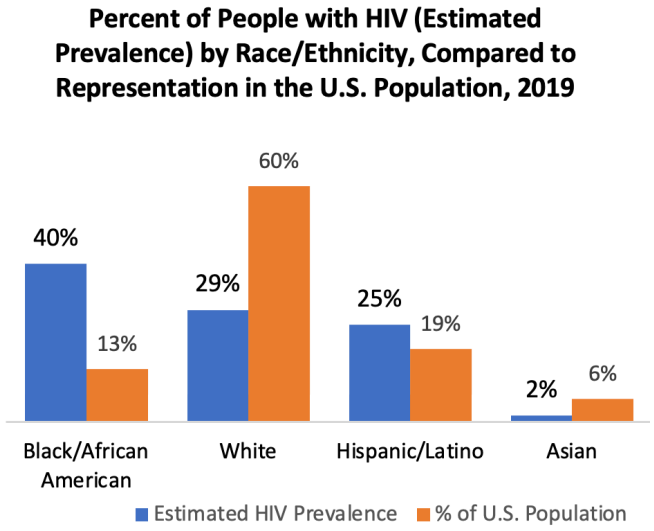
Several HHS agencies receive MAI funding, and each agency and each RWHAP Part uses funds differently. Use of funds under each RWHAP Part is summarized below. Expectations for other agencies are provided in Attachment A and may help PC/PBs in developing resource inventories covering other funding streams.

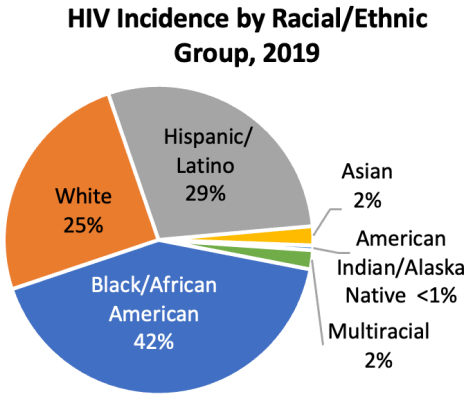
MAI funding under RWHAP is legislatively authorized, and the HIV/AIDS Bureau has specified allowable uses by Part: [4]

- **Part A:** for "core medical and related support services to improve access and reduce disparities in health outcomes in metropolitan areas hardest hit by HIV/AIDS."
- **Part B:** to "fund outreach and education services designed to increase minority access to needed HIV/AIDS medications," including the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). Part B recipients receive MAI funding only if they choose to request it and provide the required narrative in their application.
- **Part C:** for "the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate care for racial and ethnic minority populations."
- **Part D:** for "eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in the delivery of comprehensive, culturally and linguistically appropriate HIV/AIDS care services for women, infants, children, and youth."
- **Part F:** for "increasing the training capacity of AIDS Education and Training Centers to expand the number of health care professionals with treatment expertise and knowledge about the most appropriate standards of HIV-related treatments and medical care for racial and ethnic minority adults, adolescents, and children with HIV."

Continuing Need

CDC data show that HIV-related racial and ethnic disparities remain – in new diagnoses, access to care including medications, viral suppression, and deaths. Three-fourths of new HIV diagnoses in the U.S. in 2018 and in 2019 were among racial and ethnic minorities. African Americans and Latinos together accounted for more than 70% -- 42% were African American and 29% Latino.[5]

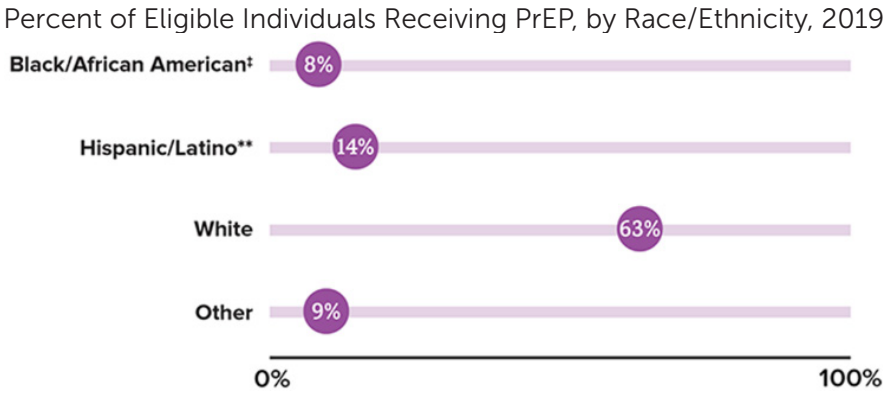




Source: CDC

In 2019, rates of HIV infection were 8.1 times as high among African Americans, 3.6 times as high among Hispanics/Latinos, and 1.9 times as high among American Indians/Alaska Natives as among White non-Hispanics.[6]

Contributing to the rate of new infections, racial and ethnic minorities are less likely than White Americans to use Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). As the figure below shows, while nearly two-thirds of eligible White Americans receive PrEP, the proportion is under 15% for racial and ethnic minorities.[7]



New HIV infections declined by 8% overall between 2015 and 2019, but there was no decline among African Americans. They are still less likely than White Americans to be virally suppressed within six months of diagnosis or to have sustained viral suppression. Death rates are falling for all groups but remain highest among African Americans, who accounted for 43% of HIV-related deaths in 2019.[8]

MAI under RWHAP Part A

Applications and Funding

The amount of MAI funding awarded each RWHAP Part A jurisdiction is calculated annually based on "the number of people with HIV and AIDS who are minorities in a jurisdiction"[9] and their proportion of all minorities with HIV in Part A service areas. In the FY 2022 RWHAP Part A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), MAI allocations by jurisdiction ranged from about $150,000 to $8.6 million. Jurisdictions are expected to separately allocate RWHAP Part A and Part A MAI funds, and to report separately on priorities, allocations, expenditures, and number of unduplicated clients served with MAI funds.

Applicants prepare an MAI narrative as part of the RWHAP Part A application. Focusing on identified "minority subpopulations of focus" (groups that are "disproportionately affected by HIV, as a result of specific needs"), applicants describe "how MAI services will be implemented to address the needs" of each identified subpopulation of focus, and how the planned MAI services "may prevent new HIV infections, improve health outcomes, and decrease health disparities and inequities" among those subpopulations.[10]

HIV/AIDS Bureau Expectations

All RWHAP Part A funds serve racial and ethnic minority subpopulations, who are a majority of RWHAP clients – 73.6% in 2020.[11] Part A MAI funds should support "population-tailored services" – specially designed, culturally appropriate services that improve treatment access and outcomes for the jurisdiction's particular minority populations of focus. As stated in the FY 2022 RWHAP Part A NOFO:

> "MAI funds must be used to deliver ***services designed to address the unique barriers and challenges faced by hard-to-reach, disproportionately impacted individuals*** within the EMA/TGA"(Eligible Metropolitan Area/Transitional Grant Area) [Emphasis added] [p 21]

> "MAI services must be consistent with the epidemiologic data and the identified need, and be ***culturally appropriate***. Furthermore, effective MAI service provision should ***employ the use of population-tailored, innovative approaches or interventions*** by specifically addressing the unique needs of MAI subpopulations most disproportionately impacted by HIV. Similar to the other components of RWHAP Part A, the goal of the MAI is ***viral suppression*** among ***identified minority subpopulations***. [Emphasis added] [p 23]

RWHAP Part A jurisdictions are expected to identify specific minority subpopulations to focus on. They can design MAI services for both broadly and narrowly defined subpopulations. Recent RWHAP Part A NOFOs have asked applicants to identify three subpopulations of focus in the Demonstrated Need section, and these are typically, though not always, the populations of focus for MAI. One large EMA simply notes "Blacks and Hispanics." Another has identified the following subpopulations: MSM of color aged 18-29, MSM of color aged 30 and older, and transgender women of color. Following are some other examples of groups identified for MAI services: African immigrants, Asian Americans, recently diagnosed Latinos, Black women of childbearing age, transgender Latinas, African American women living in outlying counties, immigrants who have dropped out of care, and African American men over age 55. The choices typically reflect the local epidemic, needs assessment findings, HIV care continuum data, and client outcomes data.

Inappropriate Use of MAI Funds under RWHAP Part A

Some Part A jurisdictions have used Part A MAI funds to support any core medical-related and support services delivered to people with HIV who are racial or ethnic minorities. For example, one TGA described how it used to put funds into service categories based on overall need, and direct providers to charge racial and ethnic minority clients receiving those services to MAI instead of regular Part A. This approach is not considered acceptable, since it does not involve designing or refining services to meet subpopulation needs.

Examples of MAI Activities in RWHAP Part A EMAs/TGAs

Following are examples of strategies and activities supported with RWHAP Part A MAI funds. Many involve use of peers – people from similar backgrounds to the individuals they serve, often people with HIV who have direct lived experience with the local system of HIV care – and/or other provider staff of the same racial/ethnic background as the subpopulations of focus.

- ***Tailored Early Intervention Services (EIS).*** MAI funds have been used to implement a variety of EIS models. For example:
  - One jurisdiction hired personnel from its subpopulations of focus to work with testing sites, linking individuals with a new HIV diagnosis to care and providing support for the first 3-6 months following linkage. They help ensure that these individuals feel fully connected to their medical provider and know how to request other services when needed.
  - Another used peers to locate people with HIV who had been diagnosed at least six months before but were not in care, and linked or re-linked them to services, accompanying them to the first few medical, case management, and other HIV-related appointments.

- ***Specialized case management.*** Jurisdictions have tailored case management models and strategies for specific racial and ethnic subpopulations. Some examples:
  - A TGA initiated strength-based Case Management for African American women.
  - Several jurisdictions added peers as "case management assistants" who provide navigation and treatment adherence services for clients who need extra support either long- or short-term.
  - Another jurisdiction assigned bilingual non-medical case managers to Spanish-dominant Latinos, with a focus on helping clients obtain the full range of needed services, apply for entitlements or other financial assistance, and identify non-RWHAP services to address other aspects of their lives that affect treatment outcomes, such as job training and placement.
- ***Culturally competent navigation services.*** Navigators, often linked to case managers and matched to subpopulations of focus in race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or age, support linkage to care, retention and treatment adherence, and re-engagement in care. Services are intensive but time limited.

- ***Clusters of coordinated services.*** Sometimes MAI funds support a group of linked and coordinated services for the same group of clients. For example, one jurisdiction has used MAI funds to support a cluster of linked and coordinated core medical-related and support services designed to meet the needs of Latino and African immigrants.

MAI funds support a combination of outpatient ambulatory health services, medical case management, mental health services, medical transportation, outreach services, psychosocial support services, and linguistic services that support interpreters where providers are unable to hire bilingual staff.

- ***Services to address social determinants.*** MAI funds can be used for support services that address various social determinants of health and contribute to HIV-related disparities. For example, one jurisdiction's needs assessment highlighted racially-based disparities in housing and access to non-medical services, from childcare to nutritional support. To respond, it allocated MAI funds to housing and to non-medical case management, to help clients access needed services beyond HIV care.

PC/PB MAI-related Roles

Part A planning councils/planning bodies (PC/PBs) have many roles related to MAI. For example:

- ***Needs assessment:*** Epidemiologic and HIV care continuum data can identify population-based differences in linkage to care, retention in care, adherence to treatments, and viral suppression. Surveys, focus groups, or special needs assessment studies can collect and analyze data about service barriers by race and ethnicity, and identify disproportionately affected subpopulations. This can be a multi-step process, as described in the box.

Using Needs Assessment in MAI Planning

Step 1: Survey people with HIV, asking about their experience with services and barriers to care, and collecting demographic data; if possible, use trained peers to maximize response rates and obtain frank responses.

Step 2: Analyze findings by race/ethnicity and identify racial and ethnic populations with the greatest barriers to care.

Step 3: Do additional analyses of the same survey data by subpopulations defined by multiple characteristics, including race/ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, and/or other locally-defined factors – for example, African American MSM under 30; limited-English-proficient Latinx immigrants; recently incarcerated African American men; African American women experiencing homelessness. Determine which subpopulations appear to face the greatest barriers and HIV-related disparities.

Step 4: The following year, do specialized needs assessment – e.g., focus groups, analysis of service utilization data, review of Clinical Quality Management data -- that looks at these identified subpopulations, to better understand barriers they face and strategies that can help overcome them.

Step 5: Use this information to inform MAI priority setting and resource allocation.

- ***Integrated planning:*** Integrated HIV prevention and care planning provides an opportunity to document the need for improving viral suppression or other service outcomes for particular racial/ethnic subpopulations, and to lay out objectives and tasks for refining services to address those subpopulation-specific needs.

- ***Care strategies:*** The PC/PB can work with the recipient to identify or refine service strategies or develop innovative service models to help overcome barriers to care and improve treatment outcomes for identified racial/ethnic subpopulations.

- ***Priority setting and resource allocation (PSRA):*** PC/PBs are responsible for setting service priorities and allocating resources, including MAI funds, to prioritized service categories. The expectation is for separately allocating Part A and Part A MAI funds to serve subpopulations of focus and implement tailored services or new service models that the data indicate are most needed to improve their treatment outcomes.

- ***Directives:*** As a part of PSRA, PC/PBs can provide directives to the recipient on how best to meet each priority. Once a new service model or strategy is identified or developed, a directive may call for testing it with a specific subpopulation. The recipient then uses the directive in contracting for services. The box below provides an example of such a process.

Using Allocations and Directives to Improve Subpopulation Treatment Outcomes

Available data show that Latinas with HIV in your jurisdiction have high rates of viral suppression when retained in care but are less likely than other subpopulations to be linked to care promptly after diagnosis and much more likely to drop out of care in the first few months after linkage. A special study including focus groups found that this subpopulation includes many recent immigrants with limited English proficiency and identified two key problems: (1) current EIS staff do not speak Spanish; and (2) none of the current medical providers focus on women, and the only one with Spanish-speaking medical personnel is overbooked and has not been accepting new patients for almost two years. The PC/PB and recipient agree on the need for tailored services and cost out some options. The PC/PB allocates MAI funds to EIS, OAHS, and Language Services, and adopts two directives. One calls for a coordinated pilot project including a Latina-focused, peer-based EIS project to link newly diagnosed and out-of-care Latinas to care and provide support for up to six months and support more Spanish-speaking medical personnel. The second requires all medical providers without bilingual staff to use trained interpreter/navigators. The recipient uses the model, allocations, and directives in putting out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to implement the new model. The recipient also redesigns Language Services under MAI to involve trained interpreter/navigators. Careful monitoring and evaluation of linkage, retention in care, and viral suppression data are planned, as well as a Spanish-language client satisfaction study for Latinas.

Challenges in Using MAI Funds Effectively

PC/PBs have identified a number of challenges in developing and implementing MAI projects that can demonstrate success. They include the following:

- ***Amount of MAI funding.*** MAI funding for Part A jurisdictions for FY 2021 ranged from about $146,000 to $8.6 million. The median amount was about $554,000, but seven

jurisdictions received less than $300,000, and nine others less than $400,000. Smaller allocations make it harder for PC/PBs to support potentially effective strategies for multiple minority subpopulations. Some smaller jurisdictions may need to focus on one or two disproportionately impacted subpopulations.

- ***Demonstrating increased viral suppression.*** Jurisdictions are expected to demonstrate that MAI funds are contributing to improved health outcomes, with a focus on viral suppression. This can be challenging with some strategies. For example, an MAI EIS project that focuses on getting people into care – and hands them off to case managers after the first few medical visits – may find it hard to demonstrate increased viral suppression for the clients served by that initiative. It may, however, be able to demonstrate that clients from that subpopulation have high rates of viral suppression if they are retained in care, and to show that their model increases retention in care.

- ***Lack of PC/PB familiarity with MAI expectations.*** Jurisdictions, including their PC/PBs, vary in their knowledge of the history and development of MAI and its intended use to help address HIV-related disparities. They may need a better understanding of HIV/AIDS Bureau expectations and assistance in establishing processes to meet these expectations through a combination of priority setting, resource allocation, directives, and service design.

- ***Knowledge and experience in designing tailored projects.*** Some jurisdictions have been providing subpopulation-tailored services for many years. Others have far less experience in designing services for specific groups – or may need to focus on a different subpopulation due to changing epidemiologic trends. Review of completed Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS) initiatives can help increase PC/PB familiarity with models and strategies that have been effective with specific subpopulations.

- ***Staffing.*** Racial and ethnic minority staff play an extremely important role in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Some PC/PBs have used directives to encourage hiring of staff from disproportionately impacted subpopulations, but providers may find that a variety of factors – such as limits on salaries and benefits combined with challenging jobs – make it hard to compete successfully for minority social workers, mental health counselors, and other professional staff. Providers in one TGA said that young professionals often stay only a year or two, then use their experience to move on to higher-paid, less-demanding positions.

- ***Providers.*** In the early days of MAI, a key focus was providing capacity-building services to enable minority-focused providers with strong program skills but limited federal funding experience to compete for MAI funds and meet federal subrecipient management requirements. This has become less common. Many jurisdictions have been funding the same group of providers for a long time. PC/PBs can use directives to encourage efforts to broaden the provider network, and recipients can encourage new applicants. However, the number of minority-focused providers varies considerably by jurisdiction. EHE funding has encouraged community health center engagement, and some jurisdictions have used EHE funds to support additional providers and try new approaches.

Sound Practices for PC/PBs in Using MAI Funds

- ***Understand MAI purposes and HIV/AIDS Bureau expectations.*** This requires including MAI in new member orientation and/or as a topic for a mini-training session during a PC/PB meeting. The appropriate PC/PB committee should receive and review any new guidance or clarifications provided to the recipient, including findings from a comprehensive site visit or changes in the Notice of Funding Opportunity NOFO) instructions for preparing the MAI narrative in the Part A application. Many PC/PBs provide refresher sessions at the beginning of the PSRA process; MAI should be a part of such discussions.

- ***Regularly collect, receive, and review MAI-relevant data.*** This includes analyzing and reviewing available epi, client utilization, outcomes, and needs assessment data (usually provided by the recipient) by race and ethnicity, with special attention to HIV care continuum data for Part A clients. The PC/PB should work with the recipient to identify subpopulations that have lower rates of viral suppression, as well as longer delays between testing and linkage to care, lower retention rates or less frequent doctor visits, and lower rates of adherence to medications, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data.

- ***Participate in discussions about the jurisdiction's subpopulations of focus.*** The needs assessment section of the Part A application typically asks each EMA or TGA to identify three disproportionately affected subpopulations of focus, based on local data. In identifying these subpopulations, it is usually best to go beyond race and ethnicity (e.g., all African Americans or all Latinos) to consider additional characteristics that affect service needs, such as gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, and age. Local data may indicate that other characteristics may also be important. For example, the jurisdiction may have a large subpopulation of people with HIV who are immigrants that speak primarily a language other than English (like Spanish) or come from a particular country (like Haiti). In a jurisdiction that includes urban, suburban, and rural areas, place of residence within the EMA or TGA may be important. A jurisdiction may identify subpopulations based on multiple characteristics, like young African American MSM aged 13-34, transgender Latinas, Haitian immigrants with limited English proficiency, recently incarcerated African American men, or Latinas living in the outlying counties.

- ***Engage people from your subpopulations of focus in developing service models.*** In addition to PC/PB members, input to design of MAI service strategies can be obtained through "roundtables" that focus on particular subpopulations, task forces or work groups, and community listening sessions. For example, one PC/PB obtained specific service model recommendations from an African American Task Force of people with lived experience. Another held listening sessions with disproportionately impacted subpopulations (e.g., Latino immigrants and aging/older African American adults with HIV) as a basis for service design or redesign.

- ***Have a process in place to guide the allocation of MAI funds.*** MAI allocations should be done separately from other Part A allocations, and with some different considerations. Since non-MAI Part A funds already support many people of color with HIV, MAI funds can be focused on a limited number of service categories that require special strategies

to better serve a specific subpopulation. Often the appropriate PC/PB committee (e.g., Care Strategy) works closely with the recipient to ensure the availability of information needed to make such decisions. For example, the PC/PB's process may call for identifying service categories that need to be tailored to better serve identified subpopulations. This may require allocations to more than one service category (for example, EIS and medical case management to improve linkage and retention, or non-medical case management and housing to address homelessness and food insecurity); development of directives; and consultation with the recipient to estimate the cost for implementing a new or refined service model. Having a clearly defined process helps ensure an efficient, data-driven process.

- ***Ask for and review progress and outcomes data on MAI services.*** MAI requires evaluation of outcomes. Regular – perhaps twice annual – review and discussion of such data enable the PC/PB to consider what service categories and strategies should continue to receive support and whether refinements or new models are needed.

- ***Maintain ongoing collaboration with the recipient.*** The PC/PB and recipient share responsibility for establishing and maintaining a comprehensive, culturally appropriate system of care and for the many tasks to accomplish that. For example, the PC/PB is responsible for PSRA including directives; the recipient contracts for services. Year-round cooperation on MAI-related tasks – e.g., sharing of epi and client data, discussion of service needs and barriers for specific subpopulations, review of Quality Management findings, agreement on strategies to refine and improve viral suppression -- is necessary for maintaining a system of care that meets the needs of all people with HIV, including disproportionately impacted racial and ethnic minorities.

Putting It All Together: A Comprehensive Scenario

The scenario that follows describes a process that can be used by a PC/PB for identifying a subpopulation in need of MAI funds, learning more about their needs and service barriers, and working with the recipient to design, implement, and evaluate an appropriate strategy or service model.

Tailoring Services to Improve Subpopulation Treatment Outcomes

Two years ago, an analysis of HIV care continuum data by subpopulation showed that young African American MSM aged 13-29 in your jurisdiction had the lowest rate of viral suppression among identified subgroups. Overall, 67% of people diagnosed with HIV had achieved viral suppression, compared with 57% of young African American men. To better understand the situation, the PC/PB and recipient analyzed RWHAP Part A client data on viral suppression and found that overall viral suppression among clients was much higher at 88%, but the rate for African American MSM aged 13-29 was 79%. Further analysis of service utilization and Clinical Quality Management (CQM) data found that members of this subpopulation were also less likely to see a medical provider regularly or to adhere to prescribed medications. Young African American MSM were noted as a subpopulation of

focus in the Part A application that year.
Last year, your PC/PB did a survey of people with HIV as part of its needs assessment and analyzed the data by race/ethnicity, risk factor, gender, and age. The survey explored barriers to care and found that young African American MSM were especially likely to report unstable housing, incomes below the poverty level, frequent periods of unemployment, and lack of health insurance.

A special study as part of the needs assessment this past winter, including focus groups with young African American MSM and with key informants (several of them peers) who work with this subpopulation, confirmed these findings and identified some issues with the local system of care. They included the following: few African American medical personnel or case managers, some provider facilities where these clients didn't feel comfortable due to their age and race, and not enough use of peers with similar life experiences. Those living outside the central city found it especially difficult to access culturally appropriate care, with the only medical provider facility nearby described as "not welcoming." Getting into town to another provider was challenging given the distance and the lack of evening and weekend hours. Many clients were unaware that they could receive transportation assistance for medical appointments.

Based on the available data, the PC/PB asked the Care Strategy Committee to work with the recipient to identify service strategies to improve retention in care and viral suppression in this subpopulation, develop a directive if needed, and provide advice on resource allocations.

The Committee held a roundtable with people from the focus subpopulation and several provider staff to discuss how to address the identified barriers, and also explored approaches used in other jurisdictions for improving treatment adherence and viral suppression. They identified an EMA and a TGA that reported improved outcomes through a combination of tailored medical services from providers that have African American and relatively young staff, along with the use of peer navigators/case management assistants who help ensure that new clients are aware of available medical and support services and assist them for about six months by providing information, referrals, and adherence counseling. The Committee and recipient studied and refined the model and estimated the cost of implementation. The Committee drafted a directive calling for testing the model by at least one medical provider that would either provide case management directly or work with a medical case management provider able to use peer navigator assistants.

To support the model, the PC/PB allocated MAI funds to OAHS and medical case management and approved the directive. The recipient used the model, allocations, and directive in putting out a Request for Proposals (RFP), and eventually selected two providers to implement the model, one in the central city, the other in an outlying county. Careful monitoring and evaluation of service utilization, retention in care, viral suppression, and client satisfaction were arranged.

Attachment A:
Uses of Minority AIDS Initiative Funds by Agencies Other than the HRSA HIV/AIDS Bureau

SAMHSA: MAI funds are used for activities including:

- Service Integration to "help reduce the co-occurring epidemics of HIV, Hepatitis, and mental health disorders through accessible, evidence-based, culturally appropriate mental and co-occurring disorder treatment that is integrated with HIV primary care and prevention services" and focuses on racial and ethnic minorities living with or at risk for HIV and/or hepatitis.[12]
- Substance Use Disorder Treatment to "increase engagement in care for racial and ethnic underrepresented individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) and/or co-occurring substance use and mental disorders (COD) who are at risk for, or are living with, HIV/AIDS and receive HIV/AIDS services/treatment."[13]

CDC: MAI funds support various prevention activities tailored to specific racial and ethnic groups, and for the Minority HIV/AIDS Research Initiative (MARI), which helps to build capacity for HIV epidemiologic and prevention research among mostly African American and Hispanic/Latino communities and investigators.[14]

Office of the Secretary: Managed by the Office of Infectious Disease Policy (OIDP) as what is now the Minority HIV/AIDS Fund, resources are used to improve "prevention, care, and treatment for racial and ethnic minorities across federal programs through innovation, systems change, and strategic partnerships and collaboration,"[15] and to "reduce HIV-related disparities among racial/ethnic minority populations."[16] Funds are distributed to up to 10 other HHS agencies, which award the grants. Projects are aligned with National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) priorities, including cross-agency collaboration. Some Minority HIV/AIDS Fund resources help support Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE).

Other HHS agencies: Some MAI funds from the Minority HIV/AIDS Fund are provided to other HHS agencies.

References

[1] Regina Aragon and Jennifer Kates, "The Minority AIDS Initiative," Policy Brief, Kaiser Family Foundation, June 2004; https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/policy-brief-minority-aids-initiative/

[2] FY 2002 Labor and Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations report language for the MAI; quoted in Aragon and Kates, *Ibid.*

[3] Section 2693(b)(2)(A) of the Public Health Service Act.

[4] HRSA Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, About the Program, Program Parts & Initiatives, Part F: Minority AIDS Initiative, at https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/about/parts-and-initiatives/part-f-minority-aids-initiative.

[5] CDC, "HIV in the United States by Race/Ethnicity: HIV Diagnoses," 2019 data, https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/racialethnic/other-races/diagnoses.html.

[6] HIV.gov, What Is the Impact of HIV on Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the U.S.?" 2019 data, accessed from website October 2022, https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/impact-on-racial-and-ethnic-minorities.

[7] CDC, "HIV In the United States by Race/Ethnicity: PrEP Coverage," accessed from website October 2022, https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/racialethnic/other-races/prep-coverage.html.

[8] KFF, "The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States: The Basics," https://www.kff.org/hivaids/fact-sheet/the-hivaids-epidemic-in-the-united-states-the-basics, based on data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *HIV Surveillance Report, 2019*; vol.32, May 2021; http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/library/reports/hiv-surveillance.html.

[9] Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part A HIV Emergency Relief Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity, Fiscal Year 2022, p 8; see https://www.hrsa.gov/grants/find-funding/HRSA-22-018.

[10] *Ibid,* p 24.

[11] HRSA, "Clients Served by the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program 2020: Overview 2020," released December 2021; https://ryanwhite.hrsa.gov/data/reports.

[12] See, for example, SAMHSA Notice of Funding Opportunity No. SM-22-005, Minority AIDS Initiative – Service Integration, announced February 24, 2022; https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-22-005.

[13] See, for example, SAMHSA Notice of Funding Opportunity No. TI-22-004, Minority AIDS Initiative: Substance Use Disorder Treatment for Racial/Ethnic Minority Populations at High Risk for HIV/AIDS, announced February 28, 2022; https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-22-004.

[14] "What CDC is Doing," CDC website; https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/racialethnic/other-races/cdc-efforts.html.

[15] "Minority HIV/AIDS Fund Activities," HIV.gov; https://www.hiv.gov/federal-response/smaif/current-activities.

[16] Ronald O. Valdiserri and Timothy P. Harrison, "The Evolution of the Secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund: The US Department of Health and Human Services Responds to the National HIV/AIDS Strategy," *Public Health Report: 2018 Nov-Dec: 133*(2 Suppl): 3S-5S; https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6262522/