RWHAP Data Infrastructure In Focus:
Data Matching & Sharing with HIV Surveillance

Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) recipients are required to submit client-level data to HRSA HAB for both the RWHAP Services Report (RSR) and the AIDS Drug Assistance Program Data Report (ADR). Similarly, states and some jurisdictions funded for HIV surveillance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are required to report data to CDC using the enhanced HIV/AIDS Reporting System (eHARS).

> Given that both RWHAP and CDC-funded recipients are required to collect and report these data which includes common data elements across both programs, there are opportunities for matching and sharing data.

Why match and share data?

Data matching and sharing are beneficial to both RWHAP and HIV surveillance programs. Matching and sharing can improve data quality and completeness, providing more information than would be available if only one data source was used. It can also be useful to identify cases that have not yet been reported to HIV surveillance or labs that are not correctly reporting data. Shared data can also support Data to Care programs by showing if and where someone is receiving care or their most recent viral load result.

Is a data use agreement or other written agreement required?

Data use or other written agreements are important to establish for two reasons: first, written agreements help to ensure that data activities related to data matching and sharing are maintained regardless of staff changes. Second, written agreements are useful in outlining planned activities to data privacy or legal counsel staff to ensure that activities align with existing procedures as well as local and state laws. These staff can also provide guidance about the type of agreement needed.

Here are two examples of how written agreements might be set up for RWHAP recipients:

> A Part B recipient co-located in the same Division as the HIV surveillance program may not need a data use agreement (DUA) but may put a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or other document in place to ensure that there is a formal document for data sharing activities.

> A Part A recipient may establish a written agreement with the Part B recipient, who then will work directly with the HIV surveillance program.

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For an example of the full data matching process, check out DISQ's RWHAP Data Match Resource.

What should be considered when matching and sharing data?

Once everyone agrees to match and share data, it is necessary to discuss some important considerations. The list below includes some important questions to consider:

> ### Data Matching/Sharing Considerations
> 1. What data elements will be used for matching?
> 2. Once data are matched, what data will be shared?
> 3. How often will data be matched/shared?
> 4. How will discrepancies where matched clients differ on demographic characteristics be resolved?
> 5. What software or analytic programs will be used for the matching?

What other resources are needed?

In addition to a written agreement, other resources may be needed. For example, in order to match data, both programs must have the ability to create an extract from their respective programs. In addition, programming in SAS or another software may be needed to match clients. Routine meetings between the RWHAP and HIV surveillance programs are also recommended to discuss any known issues in the data, changes in reporting requirements, or staff turnover that may impact data sharing.

Are there best practices to keep in mind?

Here are some tips and tricks to help use resources wisely when matching and sharing data:

1. **Incorporate the unique identifiers used for HIV surveillance and RWHAP data into both programs' databases to make matching easier in the future.**

HIV surveillance data has a field called STATENO that can be stored in the RWHAP database. Likewise, many RWHAP databases have a unique identifier reflecting a RWHAP number or database number that can be stored in the HIV surveillance database. The first time you match will take more time as you'll need to use names and other data elements to determine a match. However, once you successfully match you will not need to use names again if you can incorporate unique identifiers from HIV surveillance (STATENO) and RWHAP databases (RWHAP or database ID). By integrating these fields, only clients new to the RWHAP database would need to go through the name matching approach, saving limited resources.

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2. Let technology make your life easier by automating data matching and sharing.

While matching new clients will usually require manual oversight, routinely matching and sharing data may be able to be automated. Consider what resources are available for you to do this. If you work with a vendor for your RWHAP data system, see what features may be available in the software.

> Contact the DISQ Team at data.ta@caiglobal.org for individualized technical assistance to help you address your data matching and sharing needs.

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