



# FIGHTING STIGMA THROUGH FASHION (16150)

A UNIQUE APPROACH TO ENGAGE DIVERSE COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN COMBATING THE EFFECTS OF STIGMA IN FLORIDA'S BROWARD COUNTY EMA

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## Introductions

HIV stigma has a negative impact on all aspects of the HIV Continuum of Care. Perceived HIV-related stigma in the community may cause people living with HIV to internalize stigma and anticipate stigmatizing experiences, resulting in adverse health and psychosocial outcomes [1]. South Florida's Broward County HIV Health Services Planning Council (HIVPC) represents its community and informs the work of the Part A Recipient of Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) funding. One of the important aspects of the RWHAP is its focus on community health planning for HIV care and treatment. Involving the community in this process can often mean combating stigma associated with HIV. The HIVPC chose to normalize the discussion about HIV by hosting a fashion show highlighting the impact of stigma on people with HIV. "Fighting Stigma through Fashion" engaged community members of different ages, diverse cultures, and status divisions in battling the effects of stigma.

[1] Reference: Turan, B., Budhwani, H., Fazeli, P. L., Browning, W. R., Raper, J. L., Mugavero, M. J., & Turan, J. M. (2017). How Does Stigma Affect People Living with HIV? The Mediating Roles of Internalized and Anticipated HIV Stigma in the Effects of Perceived Community Stigma on Health and Psychosocial Outcomes. *AIDS and behavior*, 21(1), 283-291. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-016-1451-5>

## Methods and Activities

The HIVPC formed a subcommittee of its Community Empowerment Committee to focus its energy on the development of the Fashion Show. This subcommittee developed the program of events, selected scene themes, and collaborated with community partners to attain the necessary resources.

**Fighting Stigma through Fashion** highlighted three aspects of the HIV experience: 1. HIV Awareness, 2. the availability and importance of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and 3. HIV Stigma. Between each scene, the audience watched videos of people detailing their experiences with HIV and associated stigma and participated in quizzes & contests to maintain engagement. Success was measured based on registrants' ages and affiliation with organizations working in HIV care and services.

To see a 4-minute video of the event go to <https://youtu.be/fwVf-v07K4Q>.



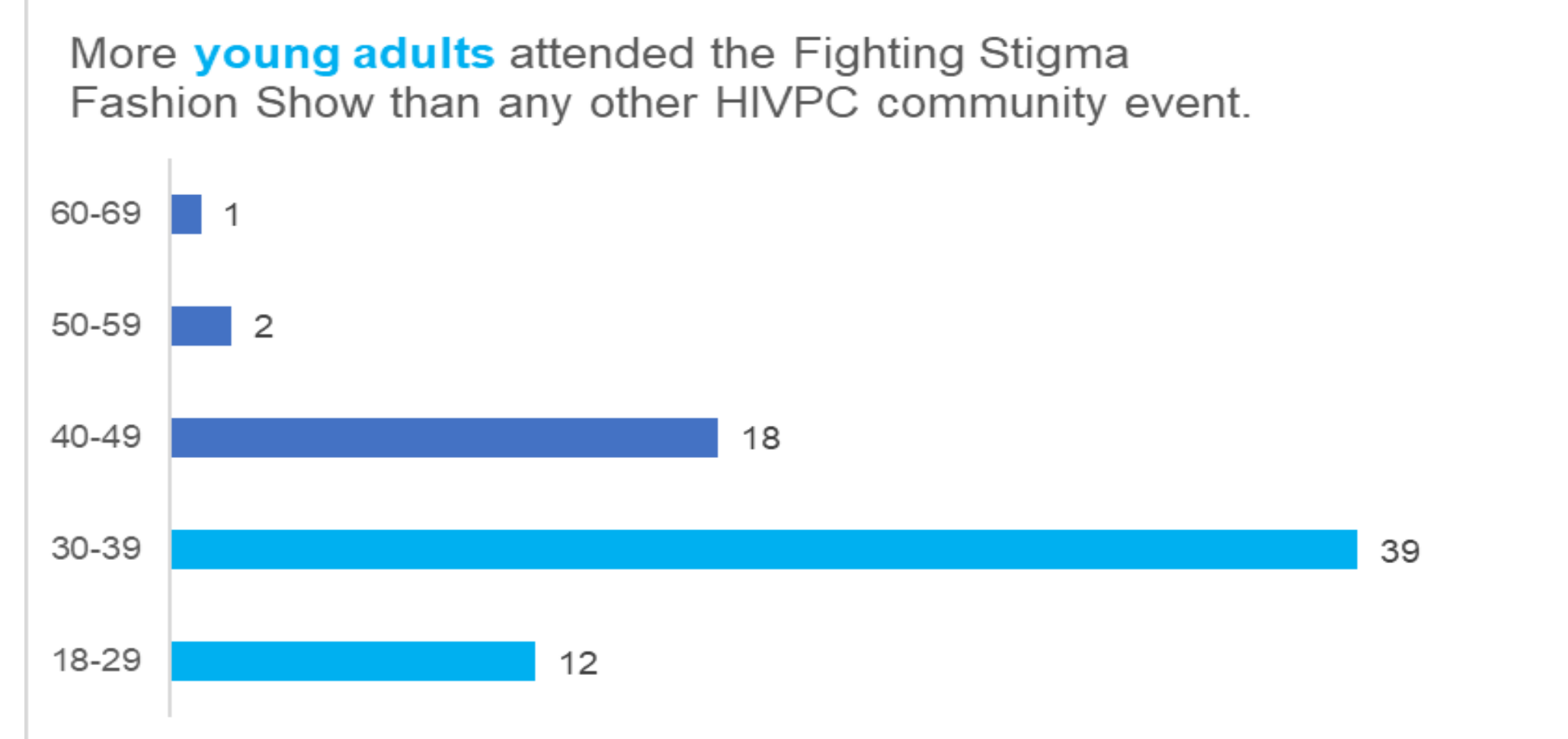
## Results

The HIVPC subcommittee identified two goals to measure success. The results of the measures reveal that the event exceeded the goals as it fostered awareness and addressed stigma within the community.

**Goal 1 Age of Registrants: Half (50%) of attendees should be between the ages of 18 and 38.**

Reasoning: During FY2018, viral suppression for this age range was 71% compared to the EMA's general viral suppression of 85%. Thus, the event was geared toward a younger audience with the intention to educate, build awareness, and reach community members who were not typically engaged in or aware of the work of the HIVPC.

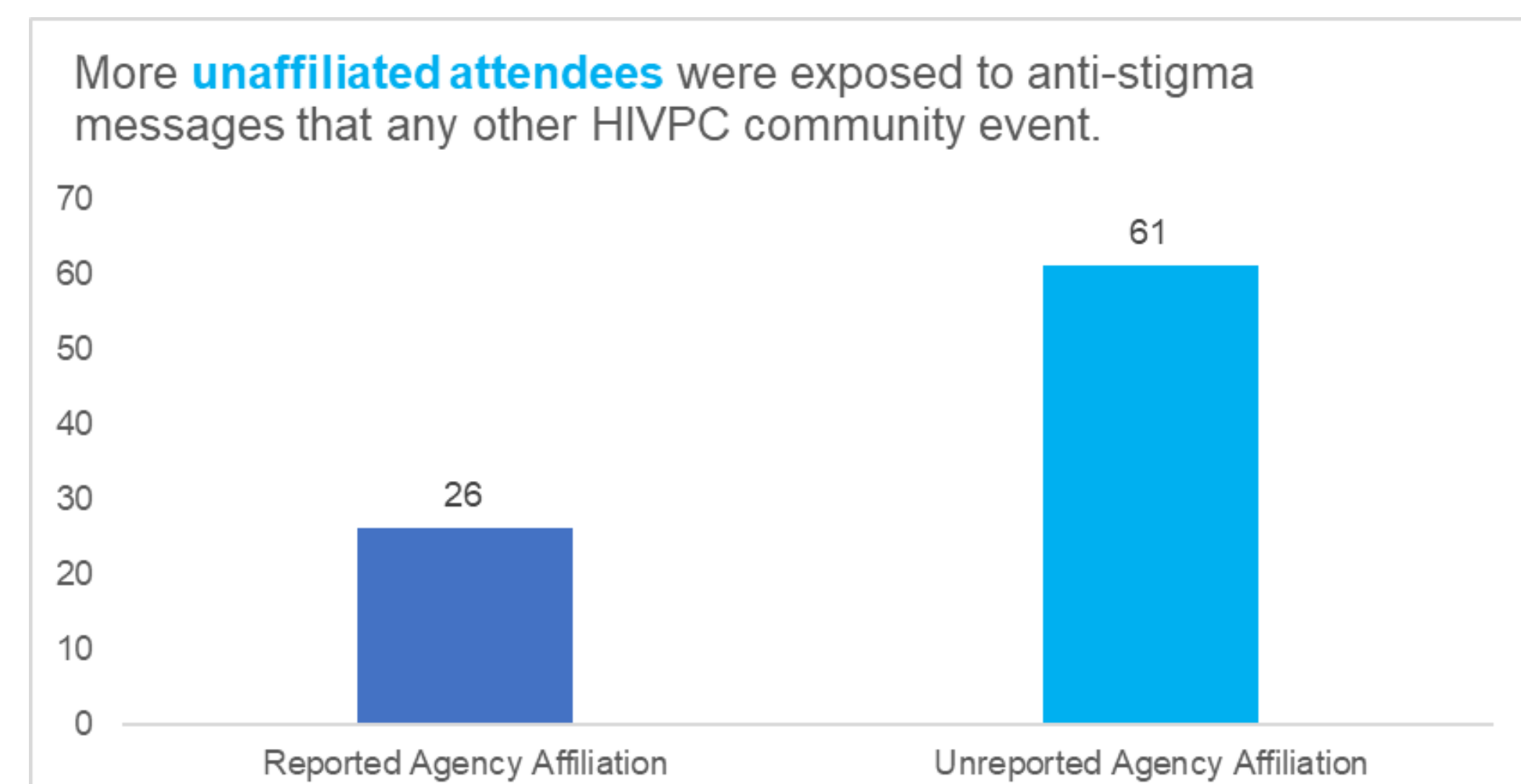
Result: Ages were self-reported by registrants who had the option not to report. 72 of 150 registrants provided their ages and 51 of the 72 respondents (70.8%) were between the ages of 18 and 38.



**Goal 2 Affiliation: Half (50%) of attendees should be community members unaffiliated with organizations working in HIV.**

Reasoning: This event represented an effort to engage community members who were not aware of the impact of HIV stigma or the role of the HIVPC.

Result: Attendees self-reported their affiliations on the registration form and had the option not to report. Eighty three percent (83%) 124 of 150 registrants reported not working for an HIV Provider organization.



## Lessons Learned

- Fighting Stigma through Fashion utilized a non-traditional method of community engagement.
- This event engaged more attendees than have attended any other HIVPC event to date. Moreover, it brought in community members who do not typically attend HIV-focused events.
- Community agencies & organizations volunteered their assistance in planning and assembling the fashion show.



## Challenges / Limitations

- This event took significant planning efforts. This included developing programming, recruiting models & entertainers, and collaboration with organizations & agencies.
- Regulatory obstacles impeded promotion and collaboration efforts.
- The event took place during a local public works predicament that required additional planning.



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