

THEMES FROM

# “Equity, Innovation, and Synergy: Building Connections to End the HIV Epidemic”

VIRTUAL CONVENING

## Overview

In August 2021 NASTAD in partnership with Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) and Systems Coordination Provider (SCP) partners, hosted a 3-day virtual technical assistance meeting for EHE Phase 1 jurisdiction health department staff and community members, federal partners, and technical assistance providers. This collaborative effort between CDC and HRSA featured over 16 presentation breakout sessions, 16 workshop breakout sessions, and nine networking sessions for local and state health departments and community partners. Over 400 attendees participated in sessions focused on community-focused messages and approaches, workforce development and representation, and active collaboration across programs to End the HIV Epidemic.



## Challenges



- The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing challenges for HIV prevention and care programs within state and local health departments.
- The COVID-19 pandemic brought upon new challenges for health departments already trying to meaningfully engage the community in EHE planning.
- The meeting addressed workforce development issues including staff turnover, lack of succession planning, an aging workforce, etc.
- The meeting acknowledged the limited collaboration across health department programs including STI, hepatitis and harm reduction.
- The meeting acknowledged structural and policy constraints faced by HIV prevention and care programs at the federal, state and local levels.

## Successes & Innovations



- The meeting convened state and local health departments and community-based organizations from across all 57 EHE jurisdictions.
- The meeting illustrated innovative interventions for the four EHE pillars: Diagnose, Treat, Prevent, and Respond.
- The meeting highlighted alignment of EHE efforts across CDC and HRSA funded programs.
- The meeting created an environment for peer networking among local and state health departments and community.
- Attendees participated in action planning to forecast future EHE needs and goals.

## Collaboration



- The meeting emphasized the de-siloing of programs through active coordination and relationship building within existing HIV prevention and care programs.
- Participants explored opportunities and shared best practices for external partner engagement.
- Presenters showcased evidence-informed HIV prevention and care interventions.

## Community Engagement



- The meeting focused on intentional inclusion of community leaders in EHE work.
- TA providers shared lessons learned through CDC's CBA Supplemental Community Engagement Project.
- Participants identified next steps to strengthen community engagement.