

HIV Outbreak in Kanawha County Associated with Injection Drug Use

Epidemiology and Challenges

Shannon McBee, MPH, CHES

State Epidemiologist

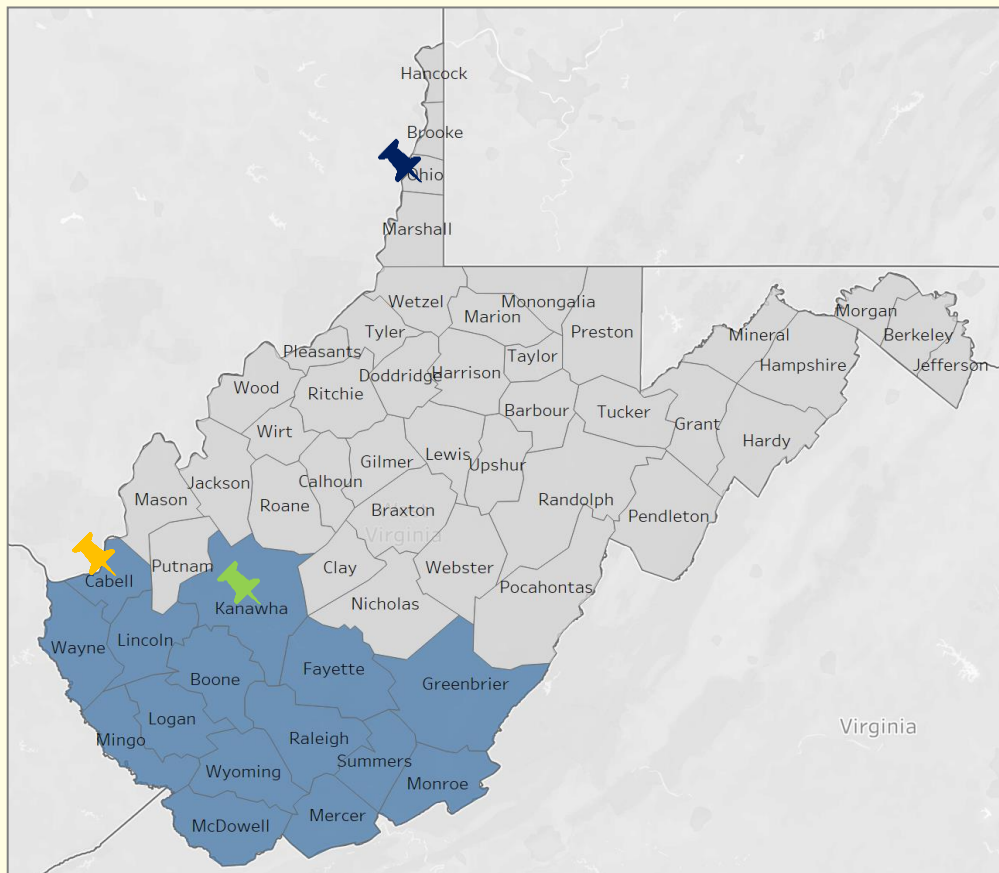
February 11, 2020

Kanawha County HIV Taskforce Meeting



Background

- The substance misuse epidemic that Appalachia is experiencing has significantly increased the transmission of infectious conditions through injection drug use
- WV saw the emergence of HIV among persons who inject drugs (PWID) beginning in 2017
- During 2018, the number of persons diagnosed with HIV who self-reported injection drug use (IDU) as a risk factor was higher than expected statewide



- Southern Counties Cluster 2017
- Ohio County Cluster 2018
- Cabell County Cluster 2018-2019
- Kanawha County Cluster 2018-2019

People Who Inject Drugs (PWID)

Substance Use Disorder is a complex severe health issue:

- Stigmatized, recurring, high rates of co-morbidities
- PWID are vulnerable to HIV and other blood borne pathogens as a result of sharing contaminated syringes and other injecting equipment
- 1 in 10 HIV diagnoses in the United States are among PWID
- PWID are 22 times more likely to acquire HIV than among the general population
- Despite the increased risk of HIV among PWID they are among the least access to prevention, treatment, and healthcare

Epidemiology of HIV in Kanawha County

- Based on a five-year average (2013-2017), the expected number of cases in Kanawha County per year is 14 with less than five cases associated with injection drug use
- Significant increase in new HIV diagnosis began in 2019 driven by cases associated with injection drug use (IDU)

2018		2019		2020*		2021*	
Total HIV	Risk Factor IDU	Total HIV	Risk Factor IDU	Total HIV	Risk Factor IDU	Total HIV	Risk Factor IDU
16	<5	29	15	42	35	1	1

*Data are provisional as of 2/10/21 and subject to change based on subsequent information

Epidemiology of HIV in Kanawha County

- Since January 1, 2019, 51 newly diagnosed cases of HIV associated with injection drug use have been reported in Kanawha County
 - 53% male
 - 83% of cases are between 20 and 40 years of age
 - 59% 30-39 years old; 24% 20-29 years old
 - 53% of cases were diagnosed in a hospital setting
 - 83% received care after HIV diagnosis
 - 71% within 30 days of diagnosis
 - 16% received care within the last 90 days
 - 18% have no evidence of care
 - 31% have ever been virally suppressed

*Data are provisional as of 2/10/21 and subject to change based on subsequent information

Challenges with HIV Cases in Kanawha County

- Individuals are difficult to locate for case investigation, care and support services
- Almost half of the individuals have been diagnosed in a hospital setting because they are in crisis
- Individuals are not accessing traditional models for healthcare and support services
- Deep entrenchment in addiction is a significant barrier to care and support services
- COVID-19 significantly impacted individual's access to support services such as shelter, food, etc. and has increased patterns of depression, addiction and overdose

Responding to the Outbreak

- Increased testing efforts in order to detect undiagnosed cases
- Accessing the population where they seek services through outreach with community organizations
- Case management services to support HIV care, treatment and supportive services and referral of individuals for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) if at high-risk for sexual transmission of HIV or needle sharing is critical
- Services and linkage to care are available for cases at the time of diagnosis; however, the IDU population is very difficult to keep engaged in care.