

Section 1: Overview

The epidemiologic profile is a document that describes the effect of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on an area in terms of sociodemographic, geographic, behavioral, and clinical characteristics. The profile is a valuable tool that is used at the state and local levels by those who make recommendations for allocating HIV prevention and care resources, planning programs, and evaluating programs and policies.

Two of the agencies that use HIV/AIDS epidemiologic and surveillance data are the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Both agencies provide guidance and funding for programs for persons with, or at risk for, HIV/AIDS. The goals of these programs are to prevent HIV infections and, for those who are infected, to promote testing, care, and treatment.

Purpose of the Guidelines

The *Integrated Guidelines for Developing Epidemiologic Profiles* is a joint project of CDC and HRSA. The purpose of the document is to provide 1 set of guidelines to help writers appropriately create integrated epidemiologic profiles and advise them on how to interpret epidemiologic data in ways that are consistent and useful in meeting the planning needs of both HIV/AIDS prevention and care programs.

The guidelines describe how to develop an epidemiologic profile. They include all the steps in the process, from determining the scope of the profile through obtaining, analyzing, and presenting data. They also include techniques for creating user-friendly profiles that can be used effectively by end users who have varied experience with interpreting epidemiologic data. The guidelines are intended to serve as a technical assistance tool to help state, territorial, and local health departments develop profiles for HIV prevention and care community planning.

This document should streamline the work of health department staff, community planning groups, and planning councils by reducing redundancy and duplication of effort and by promoting consistency and comparability of data and terms used in prevention as well as care planning. The data analysis and presentation techniques were developed from input provided by a wide range of collaborators. Health department staff who have produced profiles by using methods that they find effective but that differ from the procedures presented here should feel free to adapt the recommendations in this document on the basis of their own experience, community needs, and priorities.

Audience

The audience for the guidelines is writers of HIV/AIDS epidemiologic profiles. However, skills and experience can vary widely—from a person with limited public health experience to a senior epidemiologist with years of experience in preparing profiles.

Because it is beyond the scope of the guidelines to address the skills and needs of **all** profile writers, the document is focused on writers with an intermediate level of experience and expertise with epidemiologic data and profile preparation, such as

- an epidemiologist with knowledge of HIV/AIDS
- a health care professional with clinical experience in HIV/AIDS
- an experienced member of an HIV/AIDS prevention or care planning group with a data or statistics background

What You Will Learn

The guidelines provide the technical assistance guidance and information you need to prepare a profile. This document

- includes questions and elements common to epidemiologic profiles used by prevention and care planning groups
- includes specific data and elements needed to meet individual HRSA or CDC requirements
- can be customized to meet local needs

You will learn a number of specific skills, including

- how to determine the scope of a profile
- the process for developing a profile
- what content to include in an epidemiologic profile and how to organize it
- how and where to obtain the core and supplemental epidemiologic data
- how to analyze, interpret, and present epidemiologic data
- the level of staffing and time required to develop a profile
- techniques for creating user-friendly profiles for a variety of end users
- how to prepare data for a presentation
- how to prepare a plan for disseminating the profile