

# Advancing HIV Prevention through Cluster Detection and Response

## Responding to Emerging HIV Clusters

To end the HIV epidemic, it is critical to deliver timely, appropriate care and prevention services wherever HIV is spreading. With CDC support, state and local health departments are using several strategies to **detect and respond to growing clusters of HIV infection**.

Cluster detection strategies, such as *partner services* and *monitoring for increases in HIV diagnoses*, have been used by some health departments for many years. Now, many health departments are also using a newer strategy – *HIV molecular analysis* – to detect growing clusters of HIV infection more quickly and precisely than ever before, allowing prevention and treatment services to be directed where they are needed most.

## Detecting Clusters through HIV Molecular Analysis: 5 Things to Know

- 1** Molecular analysis identifies groups of HIV strains that are very similar. Because HIV evolves quickly, **similar viral strains** signal that HIV transmission is occurring rapidly within a common network.


- 2** Health departments can use molecular analysis to quickly identify areas where HIV may be spreading and provide prevention and treatment services, **breaking the chain of transmission**.


- 3** Molecular analysis uses laboratory data that are already generated through **routine medical care** after a person is diagnosed with HIV.


- 4** Molecular analysis examines the genetics of the virus – not the person – and **doesn't identify who infected whom**.


- 5** As health departments collect and analyze molecular data, they must follow state and local laws and strict CDC guidelines designed to **protect data and maintain privacy and confidentiality**. Personal identifying information is not shared with CDC.



# Engaging Communities for HIV Prevention

As health departments conduct HIV cluster detection and response activities, including molecular analysis, insights and support from community members – including people with HIV, providers and community-based organizations – will be critical.

Working together, health departments and communities can ensure that all stakeholders are well informed, have an opportunity to share input and concerns, and can assist as needed with detecting and responding to increases in HIV transmission.

Health departments can organize **community discussions** with HIV planning bodies, providers, and local organizations



Health departments can use many channels to engage community members and assess their perceptions and concerns, including **discussion forums, focus groups, interviews and surveys**



Communities can guide health departments in developing **educational materials** and web content that are tailored to local needs



Health departments can work with community partners on **cluster response**, getting HIV prevention and treatment services to affected populations



## Online Resources

- ➔ **CDC resources on HIV cluster and outbreak detection and response**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HIVcluster>
- ➔ **CDC Data Security and Confidentiality Guidelines**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/programintegration/docs/pcsidatasecurityguidelines.pdf>
- ➔ **Ethical Considerations for a Public Health Response Using Molecular HIV Surveillance Data: A Multi-Stakeholder Approach**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/programresources/guidance/cluster-outbreak/cdc-hiv-Ethical-Considerations-Report.pdf>
- ➔ **National Minority AIDS Council Community Engagement Toolkit**  
<http://www.nmac.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NMAC-Community-Engagement-Toolkit-Web.pdf>