

Sacramento County  
Department of Health Services  
HIV Health Services Planning Council  
Needs Assessment Committee  
[www.sacramento-tga.com](http://www.sacramento-tga.com)

**Meeting Agenda**

June 4, 2024, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

**Meeting Location**

**4600 Broadway, Sacramento, CA 95820**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference/Community Room 2020**

**Facilitator:** Ronnie Miranda – Chair

**Scribe:** Angelina Olweny – Council Staff

**Meeting Invitees:**

- NAC Members
- Open to the Public

Public Comment: This provides opportunities for the public to address the Council as a whole in order to listen to opinions regarding matters within the jurisdiction of the Council during Regular meetings and regarding items on the Agenda at all other meetings. Public Comment time limit is three (3) minutes.

\*Action items

| <b>Topic</b>                                      | <b>Presenter</b> | <b>Start Time</b> | <b>Length</b> |
|---|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Welcome and Introductions                         | Miranda          | 3:00 PM           | As Needed     |
| Announcements                                     | All              |                   |               |
| Public Comments-Agenda Items- 3-Minute Time Limit | Miranda          |                   |               |
| June Agenda Review*                               | Miranda          | As Needed         |               |
| Minutes Review of May 2024*                       | Miranda          |                   |               |

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|                                  |         |         |  |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|--|
| Needs Assessment Final Draft*    | Joy     |         |  |
| Public Comments-Non-Agenda Items | Miranda |         |  |
| Technical Assistance             | Miranda |         |  |
| Adjournment                      | Miranda | 4:30 PM |  |

\*Action Items

Attachments:

Minutes of May 2024\*

Needs Assessment Final Draft\*

Next Meeting: **September 3, 2024**

Sacramento County  
Department of Health Services  
HIV Health Services Planning Council  
Needs Assessment Committee  
May 7, 2024

**HIV HEALTH SERVICES PLANNING COUNCIL – Needs Assessment Committee (NAC)**

**Meeting Minutes**

May 7, 2024, 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Meeting Location:**

**4600 Broadway, Sacramento, CA 95820 Community/Conference Room 2020**

**Facilitator:** Ronnie Miranda – NAC Chair

**Scribe:** Angelina Olweny, Council Staff

**Committee Member Attendees:** Jake Bradley-Rowe, Kelly Gluckman, Lenore Gotelli, Melissa Willett, Ronnie Miranda.

**Members Excused:** Richard Benavidez

**County Staff:** Danielle Caravella, Paula Gammell, Chelle Gossett

Sacramento County  
 Department of Health Services  
 HIV Health Services Planning Council  
 Needs Assessment Committee  
 May 7, 2024

| Topic   | Minutes   |
|---|---|
| Welcome, Introductions and, Announcements                             | Welcome and introductions began at 3:03 PM<br><br>N/A   |
| Public Comments- Action Items   | N/A   |
| Agenda Review*<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Minutes Review* | <p>The May agenda was presented for review and approval. Jake Bradley-Rowe motioned to accept the agenda as presented and Lenore Gotelli seconded the motion. The motion passed with a majority.</p> <p>Approve: Jake Bradley-Rowe, Kelly Gluckman, Lenore Gotelli, Melissa Willett, Ronnie Miranda<br/>         Oppose: N/A<br/>         Abstain: N/A</p> <p>The March minutes were presented for review and approval. Melissa Willett motioned to accept the agenda as present and Jake Bradley-Rowe seconded the motion. The motion passed with a majority.</p> <p>Approve: Jake Bradley-Rowe, Kelly Gluckman, Lenore Gotelli, Melissa Willett, Ronnie Miranda.<br/>         Oppose: N/A<br/>         Abstain: N/A</p> |
| FY23 Needs Assessment   | <p>The draft Needs Assessment report on HIV and Aging was discussed at the meeting.</p> <p>The Needs Assessment identified existing knowledge barriers in the population ages 50 and over. Unmet needs exist because some consumers are unaware that services that support them exist.</p>  |

Sacramento County  
 Department of Health Services  
 HIV Health Services Planning Council  
 Needs Assessment Committee  
 May 7, 2024

| Topic                                | Minutes   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
|                                      | <p>The committee will continue the Needs Assessment discussion at the Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) June meeting. Lili Joy will give a presentation on the findings and recommendations from the Needs Assessment Report to the Planning Council.</p>  |
| FY24 Work Plan                       | <p>The FY24 Work Plan was presented for review and approval. The committee selected strategies from the California Integrated HIV Surveillance, Prevention, and Care Plan that apply to the work of the Needs Assessment Committee. Jake Bradley-Rowe motioned to accept the Work Plan as presented and Kelly Gluckman seconded the motion. The motion passed with a majority.</p> <p>Approve: Jake Bradley-Rowe, Kelly Gluckman, Melissa Willett, Ronnie Miranda.<br/>         Oppose: N/A<br/>         Abstain: N/A</p> |
| Public Comments-<br>Non-agenda items | N/A   |
| Technical Assistance                 | For technical assistance reach out to Ronnie Miranda  |
| Adjournment                          | 4:16 PM   |

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**Sacramento Transitional Grant Area (TGA)  
HIV Services Program**



**2023-24**

**HIV AND AGING  
TARGETED NEEDS ASSESSMENT  
PLWH 50+**

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**HIV AND AGING  
TARGETED NEEDS ASSESSMENT  
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APPENDIX

Attachment 1: Sacramento TGA 2022 Needs Assessment Survey Tool

# HIV AND AGING TARGETED NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLWH 50+

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

The HIV Health Services Planning Council (Council) conducts bi-annual needs assessments of People Living with HIV (PLWH) who receive Ryan White (RW) funded services to learn about their service needs, barriers to care, successes and challenges. Getting input directly from clients assists the Council with effective funding and service delivery for the Transitional Grant Area (TGA) of Sacramento, El Dorado, and Placer Counties.

Given the increasing age of RW clients and their higher costs and complexity of care, the Council's Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) voted to conduct a targeted analysis of aging clients 50 and older compared to clients under age 50 by drilling down into the extensive data collected through the 2022 needs assessment survey of 191 clients, of which 64% were ages 50+. This executive summary provides pertinent highlights of findings and recommendations which are detailed in the full report.

### PARTICIPANT FINDINGS

#### Demographics and HIV Epidemiology

The disproportionate impact of HIV on older people found in the HIV Needs Assessment data was validated by analysis of the TGA's HIV Epidemiology reports provided by the California State Office of AIDS, as well as RW client demographic profiles. Several demographic disparities existed between those 50 years or older compared to those under age 50. For example, among older PLWH 50+ there were fewer people of African American, Latinx, American Indian and mixed race; fewer transgender and non-binary people; and fewer people with Male-to-Male Sex as their mode of HIV transmission.

#### Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

Disparities in SDOH between clients in these two age cohorts show that, on average, aging PLWH 50 years and over reported being more impacted by unemployment and disability, but less impacted by poverty and homelessness, than those under age 50 as follows:

**Poverty.** Older respondents ages 50+ were less likely to report living under 100% of Federal Poverty Level than under age 50 (54% vs. 70%).

**Supplementary Income.** Older clients 50+ reported receiving more benefits than those <50 (e.g., 38% of clients 50+ receive Supplemental Security Income vs. 19% of clients <50).

**Employment / Disability.** Older PLWH 50+ were employed at lower rates than clients <50 (15% vs. 38%), partly due to disability (55% vs. 22%) and retirement (11% vs. 1%).

**Housing Status.** Older PLWH ages 50+ were less likely to report being homeless than those under age 50 (13% vs. 26%) or temporarily housed in a shelter/motel (12% vs. 32%). Clients ages 50+ were more



likely to report stable housing than clients <50 (84% vs. 58%). Further analysis of older PLWH found that those ages 50-59 had a higher unmet need for housing than senior PLWH ages 60+ (20% vs. 6%).

### **HIV Healthcare Status and Engagement**

**Health Status Rating.** Older PLWH 50+ were less likely to report their health as “much better” now than when they first sought HIV treatment compared to clients <50 (44% vs 52%). More PLWH 50+ reported that their physical health was “much worse” now compared to those <50 (8% vs. 3%).

### **HIV Healthcare Engagement**

- Clients 50+ were less likely than PLWH <50 to be out of care for over a year (17% vs. 22%).
- PLWH 50+ reported factors that help them stay in HIV medical care at higher rates than those under age 50; for example, “my HIV case manager or social worker” (66% vs. 48%) and “the support of family and friends” (51% vs. 41%).

### **HIV Prevention Practices**

**Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).** Aging PLWH 50+ reported themselves as less informed about PrEP, less likely to disclose HIV status, and less likely to use condoms compared to PLWH <50, for example:

- 26% of PLWH 50+ had never heard of PrEP compared to 19% of those <50
- PLWH 50+ disclose HIV status to partner(s) at lower rates than PLWH <50 (56% vs. 64%)
- 20% of PLWH 50+ feel comfortable talking to their HIV negative partner(s) about PrEP vs. 30% of those <50
- 16% of PLWH 50+ use condoms if their partner(s) is on PrEP vs. 32% of PLWH <50

**Partner Services** assists PWLH in notifying their sexual and/or syringe sharing partners of possible HIV exposure. PLWH 50+ were less likely than PLWH <50 to know about partner services (41% vs. 47%); to have used partner services (11% vs. 14%) or be willing to use partner services (46% vs. 50%).

### **SERVICE DEMAND FINDINGS**

Service demand (total need) is the number of survey respondents who needed each RW service, including both those who needed and received it (need met) plus those who needed but were not able to receive the service due to barriers to care (unmet need).

Service Demand was at least 10% **higher** for older clients 50+ than clients <50 for the following:

- Medical Case Management (91% vs. 81%)
- Oral Health (80% vs. 67%)
- Outpatient Ambulatory Care (74% vs. 63%)
- Home and Community Based Health Services (46% vs. 24%)

Service Demand was at least 10% **lower** for older clients 50+ than clients <50 for:

- Housing (46% vs. 58%)
- Health Insurance Premium Assistance (42% vs. 58%)
- Early Intervention Services (42% vs. 54%)

- Emergency Financial Assistance (35% vs. 51%)
- Legal or Professional Services (11% vs. 22%)

### **Service Demand Ages 50-59 Compared to Ages 60+**

To examine service demand disparities within the aging 50+ population, a deeper analysis was conducted of 50-59 years old compared to those 60 years and older. For 4 of the 5 services with highest service demand among PLWH 50+, clients ages 60+ had higher demand than those 50-59 for the following 5 services: 1) oral health, 2) non-medical case management, 3) outpatient ambulatory care and 4) medical nutrition. Only one service, outpatient substance use treatment, had a lower service demand for those ages 60+ compared to those 50-59.

### **UNMET NEED FINDINGS**

Unmet need is a subset of service demand and is critical to understanding the services that RW clients need, but have not been able to receive, due to barriers to care that limit access.

### **Top 10 Services with Highest Unmet Need for PLWH 50+ and PLWH <50**

9 of 10 of the services with the highest unmet need were the same among aging PLWH 50+ and PLWH <50: 1) housing, 2) oral health, 3) medical nutrition, 4) emergency financial assistance, 5) mental healthcare, 6) medical transportation, 7) psychosocial support services, 8) home/community-based services and 9) legal Services. 1 of the 10 top services with highest unmet need differed between the two age cohorts as follows:

- Respite care was in the top 10 for aging PLWH 50+
- Food bank / home delivered meals was in the top 10 for clients <50

### **Unmet Need Ages 50-59 Compared to Ages 60+**

To examine unmet need disparities among PLWH 50+, clients 50-59 years old were compared to seniors 60+. For 4 of the 5 services with highest service demand among PLWH 50+, clients ages 50-59 had notably higher unmet need than those 60+ for the following 4 services: 1) housing, 2) mental healthcare, 3) emergency financial assistance, and 4) outpatient substance use treatment). Only one service, medical nutrition, had a higher unmet need for 60+ year olds compared to those 50-59.

### **BARRIERS TO CARE FINDINGS**

Survey respondents were asked to complete the barriers to care section for each service they needed but had been unable to receive due to at least one barrier. To figure out the level of the service delivery system where barriers exist for each service, they are classified into five categories to examine broad-based TGA-wide "Access" and "Knowledge" issues in addition to more specific client-based "Financial", "Health", and "Personal" issues.

### **Top 5 Barriers for PLWH 50+ and PLWH <50**

- The top barrier to care for both age cohorts was “Didn’t know service was available” (47% of PLWH 50+ and 43% PLWH <50).
- 4 of top 5 barriers for aging PLWH 50+ were knowledge barriers: 1) didn’t know service was available, 2) if I was eligible, 3) how to get, or 4) where to receive service.
- 1 of top 5 barriers for 50+ was different than those <50: “appointments not soon enough.”
- 2 of top 5 barriers for PLWH <50 were different than PLWH 50+: “previous incarceration” and “no transportation.”

### **Barriers to Care by Service Categories with Highest Unmet Need**

Barriers were asked for each service category to clarify what barriers limited access to which services for each age cohort. Knowledge barriers were the greatest contributors to unmet need for most services. The 5 services with the highest unmet needs among PLWH 50+ were: 1) Oral Health, 2) Emergency Financial Assistance, 3) Housing, 4) Medical Nutrition and 5) Mental Healthcare, follows are examples of disparities in barriers reported by clients ages 50+ compared to those <50:

**Oral Health.** 14% of respondents ages 50+ with an unmet need stated transportation was a barrier to access, compared to none of the respondents under 50. The most common barrier among PLWH under 50 was lack of insurance (18%), over twice the rate of older PLWH 50+ (7%).

**Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA).** A higher percentage of clients 50+ didn’t know EFA was available (45% vs. 25%), didn’t know they were eligible (36% vs. 7%), or didn’t know where to get it (27% vs. 7%) compared to clients <50.

**Housing.** PLWH 50+ had more knowledge barriers that limited access to housing than those <50, such as: didn’t know they were eligible (31% vs. 12%); didn’t know how to get help (37% vs none) and didn’t know where to go to find housing (25% vs. 12%). Fewer PLWH ages 50+ reported that previous incarceration was a barrier to housing compared to PLWH under age 50 (12% vs. 25%).

**Medical Nutrition.** PLWH <50 reported inconvenient times were a barrier at five times the rate of older respondents (37% s. 7%) and that childcare was more of an issue (25% vs. 7%).

**Mental Healthcare.** Although half of respondents 50+ reported knowledge barriers, no clients under <50 did, but instead reported access and personal barriers at much higher rates than clients 50+.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Priority Setting and Allocation Adjustments**

For the Council to use the client input gained through this needs assessment to guide the priorities and allocations process, it’s important to understand recent funding trends. The full report includes the TGA’s RW service expenditures for FY22 and FY23, including year-over-year changes.

**Consider Funding Increase.** The following services had the highest service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+ and should be considered for increased FY24 funding to improve access to care:

- **Oral Health** had the highest combination of service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+, and service demand was even higher for those over age 60. 86% of clients ages 60+ vs. 75% of PLWH 50-59 needed oral health. Despite these high service demands for oral health, funding decreased 10% between FY22 and FY23. Increased funding should be considered for FY24 with expanded efforts to secure more dental professionals to serve PLWH (e.g., offer higher compensation to dentists to serve more patients who have complex medical and oral health needs).
- **Mental Health Care** ranked #2 for PLWH 50+ in combined service demand and unmet need but only had a 10% funding increase between FY22 and FY23. The Council should consider increased FY24 funding for mental health services and increased recruitment of mental health professionals.
- **Medical Transportation** ranked #3 in combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+ with only a small increase of 8% in funding between FY22 and FY23. The Council should consider increasing transportation funding in FY24. In addition, RW service providers should be encouraged to use other sources of funding for client transportation. For example, Medi-Cal's non-emergency medical transportation and non-medical services should be accessed for clients with Medi-Cal.
- **Psychosocial Support Services** ranked #4 in combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+ but was not funded in FY22 or FY23. This should be reconsidered by the Council.
- **Housing** ranked #5 for combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+. Clients ages 50-59 had higher unmet need for housing than those 60+. Funding for housing decreased by 39% between FY22 and FY23 and expenditures for housing were only \$19K, or 0.4% of the total RW expenditures in FY23. Given that housing is critical to keeping PLWH in medical care, the Council should consider increased funding in FY24.
- **Home and Community Based Services** ranked #6 for combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+ but haven't been funded in recent years which should be reconsidered by Council.
- **Medical Nutrition Therapy** ranked #7 for combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+ and was the only service with higher unmet need for clients 60+ than those 50-59. Between FY22 and FY23 there was a 175% increase in medical nutrition therapy and it comprised only 1% of the service budget at \$42K. Increased funding for FY24 should be considered.

**Consider Funding Decrease.** The following services have some of the lowest reported unmet need (1%-2%) for PLWH 50+. These three categories represented over half of the \$4.4M spent on direct services in FY23. The Council should consider the following for FY24: 1) decreasing funding for these services, 2) reallocating those funds towards the services listed above, and 3) maximizing use of other funding sources such as Medi-Cal and Medicare for service payment.

- **Medical Case Management** had the highest service demand at 91% but an unmet need of only 2%, however it was the most highly funded service at 35% of the total budget with a 7% increase in funding between FY22 and FY23.
- **Non-Medical Case Management** had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest service demand at 76% and an unmet need of only 1%, however it had a 75% increase in funding between FY22 and FY23.
- **Outpatient Ambulatory Care** had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest service demand at 71% and an unmet need of only 2%. Ambulatory Care had a 10% decrease in funding between FY22 and FY23 but was still the second most highly funded service in 2023 at 17% of the total budget.

### **SERVICE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS**

Although not an exhaustive list of strategies, what follows are examples of service system improvements the Council should consider to meet client service demand, reduce unmet need, and decrease barriers to care for PLWH 50+:

- **Address Knowledge Barriers.** 4 of top 5 barriers for aging PLWH 50+ were knowledge barriers. Models of care for outreach, education and case management should be assessed and improved. For example, service providers should increase awareness of services through targeted strategies of direct client contact, tailored outreach, and social media campaigns. Case Managers and support staff should contact clients directly to provide information and referrals to services and follow up with clients and providers to ensure services are received. In addition, cost-effective models of care that use peers to conduct outreach and education should be expanded.
- **Medical Care Retention.** To support retention in ongoing medical care, case managers and support staff should continue to increase efforts to contact patients directly to encourage and incentivize re-entry into medical care. All RW service agencies should continue to: 1) make appointment reminder calls, 2) facilitate transportation assistance; and 3) improve and implement “no-show” tracking and follow up protocols.
- **Partner Services.** 61% of PLWH 50+ reported never being informed of partner services; 56% reported that they would be willing to use them; but only 6% had done so. The HIV Services Program should consider supporting efforts to increase education and provision of client incentives for partner services.
- **PrEP** was reported as underutilized: 26% of aging PLWH 50+ had never heard of PrEP vs. 19% of those <50. Strategies to improve PrEP education, referrals, and navigation services, including client follow up and release of information between service providers, should be supported.
- **Technical Assistance/Capacity Building.** The Council should work with organizations across the TGA to share this and prior HIV needs assessments, as well as other local HIV data (see last bullet

below). These data sharing efforts should be used to develop and implement technical assistance and capacity building strategies to improve services along the HIV continuum of care.

- **Provider Access to Health Insurance Payments.** HIV service program providers report difficulties determining how to bill Medi-Cal and Medicare. If these barriers could be addressed, health insurance organizations could provide significant other sources of funding to our providers for the services they offer to PLWH. The Council should consider polling the HIV provider community to assess barriers and needs related to health insurance provider enrollment and reimbursement. Based on the results of this survey, the Council also should consider supporting strategies for funding and delivering a collection of capabilities targeted at maximizing provider reimbursement from third party sources. For example, insurance billing services and data sharing between providers for referral follow up and continuity of care.
- **Quality Improvement.** The Council's Quality Advisory Committee should expand efforts to get input from PLWH and service providers as part of its Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts. The HIV Services Program should consistently get input from PLWH in local planning, decision-making and service delivery improvements. For example, client and service provider focus groups should be facilitated to evaluate the TGA's overall service delivery system, including coordination of care and provider collaboration. These quality improvement strategies should continue to prioritize issues of racial equity and stigma reduction across all strategies of communication, program development and implementation.
- **Leverage Local HIV Data.** The HIV Services Program should continue to use its database, Sacramento HIV/AIDS Reporting Engine (SHARE) to generate "Clients Not in Care" reports to identify those not in HIV medical care; to resolve data issues; to track progress of CQI projects; to identify areas for program improvement; and to assist with re-engaging clients in medical care. In addition, the HIV Services Program should share data, such as that reflect the trends, needs and community-based strategies to improve the system of HIV care and inform resource allocation.

***Needs Assessment Survey Tool and Survey Process:*** Complete recommendations are included at the end of the full report (page 39-41)

In addition to the recommended revisions to the HIV Needs Assessment survey tool included at the end of the full report, there are a few improvements to the process that may ensure that each participant's input is represented accurately and thoroughly. The quality and completeness of data would likely be improved if each respondent's completed survey was reviewed by survey administration staff prior to providing the respondent with a gift card. Staff could answer any questions the client has about the instructions, format, or intent of the survey questions. This is particularly important for client's whose primary language is not English.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The 2023-24 Sacramento TGA's HIV and Aging Needs Assessment Report has been a collaborative effort among the TGA's HIV Services Program, RW service providers, consumers of RW services, and the HIV Health Services Planning Council (the Council). The Council would like to recognize the following individuals and organizations for their dedication to plan, coordinate, implement and evaluate a community Young Adult HIV Needs Assessment for RW clients:

### **Members of the HIV Health Services Planning Council**

#### **Members of the Planning Council Needs Assessment Committee:**

Ronnie Miranda (Chair), Richard Benavidez, Jake Bradley-Rowe, Kristina Kendricks-Clark, Joshua Kooman

#### **Ryan White Service Providers in Sacramento Region:**

CommuniCare+OLE, Golden Rule Services, Harm Reduction Services, One Community Health, Sacramento Sexual Health Clinic, Sierra Foothills AIDS Foundation, Sunburst Projects, UC Davis Pediatric Infectious Disease

#### **Ryan White CARE Program Staff:**

Danielle Caravella, MPH, Health Educator, Sacramento County DHS  
Paula Gammell, MPA, RW Program Planner, Sacramento County DHS  
Chelle Gossett, RW CARE Program Coordinator/AIDS Director, Sacramento County DHS

#### **Consultant:**

Lili Carbone Joy, MPH, Community Health Impact

Most importantly, the Planning Council would like to thank each Person Living with HIV (PLWH) who took the time and effort to participate in the needs assessment process by completing the comprehensive survey. Without each person, the needs assessment would not have been possible. By learning more about PLWH, their unmet service needs and barriers to care, the TGA can more effectively focus its resources to enhance service delivery.

*This project was supported through a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This information, content and conclusions are those of the author(s) and should not be construed as the official position or policy of nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.*

## **A. METHODOLOGY**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

The Sacramento TGA's HIV Health Services Planning Council (Council) is responsible for allocation of funding under the Ryan White (RW) Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act. A unique characteristic of this program is its requirements for local control of funding decisions and, very importantly, community input from People Living with HIV (PLWH) into those decisions.

The Council's Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) conducts a bi-annual assessment of PLWH in the Sacramento TGA, which includes the counties of Sacramento, El Dorado, and Placer. The HIV Needs Assessment collects and analyzes data on Service Demand, Unmet Needs and Barriers to Care to assist the Council with effective planning for service funding and delivery.

The Council has had many discussions over the years about the rising age of PLWH in the TGA and the impact the aging population is having on the region's HIV services. The majority of RW clients were ages 50 or older in 2022-23 (55%, (916/1,135). In addition, the number of RW clients over 60 was 44% higher than those ages 50-59 (669 vs. 466). Of the 191 RW clients who completed the TGA's 2022 Needs Assessment survey, 64% were aged 50+ and 36% were under age 50.

Given the increasing number and complex needs of older RW clients, NAC voted to conduct a targeted needs assessment of clients ages 50 and over in 2023-24. It was decided that a detailed analysis would be conducted by drilling down into the comprehensive data collected in 2022 to compare the demographics, social determinants of health, service demand, unmet needs, and barriers to care by subsets of RW clients ages 50+ and clients <50.

#### **Financial Impact on RW program:**

The fiscal impact of aging PLWH on the RW program continued to increase for clients over age 50, and even more so for clients ages 60 and older in 2022-23. The average cost per RW client was 24% higher for those ages 50 and older compared to clients under age 50 (\$2,224 vs. \$1,797). For clients over age 60, the costs are even higher. The average cost per client for those over age 60 was 11% higher than clients ages 50-59 (\$2,318 vs. \$2,089), and 29% higher than clients under age 50 (\$2,318 vs. \$1,797). Not only are the costs per client higher for clients over age 60, the number of RW clients over 60 was 44% higher than those ages 50-59 (669 vs. 466).

### **2. TARGETED NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

#### **a. Client Survey**

Council and HIV service provider agency staff conducted survey sessions, both in group and one-on-one settings. The Needs Assessment survey tool was created in English but was administered in Spanish during survey sessions as needed. All surveys were completed anonymously. Participants received a \$20 grocery food certificate. Surveys with incentives such as gift cards are vulnerable to duplicate respondents who want to receive an additional incentive. To address this issue, staff kept a



list of the unique confidential identification code created for each survey participant to ensure that each identifier was never used twice.

Another quality control issue included a review of each survey by staff to ensure that each respondent completed all survey questions. While every effort was made to ensure that individuals completing the surveys fully understood the intent of the questions, responses were ultimately based on each respondent's individual interpretation of each question.

Data for all survey respondents have been analyzed by age cohort, including under age 50 compared to ages 50 and older, and ages 50-59 compared to ages 60+. The findings are presented in the tables and graphs throughout the narrative report. In addition, the complete anonymous data set and analytic comparison tables can be requested by contacting Paula Gammell, MPA, Sacramento County Human Services Program Planner, HIV Services Program, at (916) 876-5548.

### **b. Needs Assessment Survey Tool**

The original HIV Needs Assessment survey tool for the TGA was approved in 2003 and has been periodically modified over the years by the Council and Needs Assessment Committee to clarify questions without changing the foundation of the survey so responses could be trended over time. The improvements have decreased the survey's length and increased usability (see Appendix, Attachment 1). Questions were revised to quantify service demand and unmet need for each RW service category to understand which services clients need most (demand), and which services they are having the most difficulty obtaining (unmet need) due to confronting barriers to care.

To help the TGA examine which level of the service system that the barriers to care exist, they are classified into five barrier categories which span from examining broad-based TGA-wide "Access" and "Knowledge" issues to more specific client-based "Financial", "Health", and "Personal" issues.

To allow for trending of findings over time, survey tool questions have remained fairly consistent for demographics (i.e., age, race, gender, mode of HIV transmission); social determinants of health (SDOH) (i.e., health insurance, income, substance use, housing, incarceration); and medical care history (i.e., stage of HIV infection, viral load, medication adherence and co-occurring conditions). However, several SDOH and co-morbidity questions have been removed over the years to reduce the survey's length and to inquire only about client information that is not collected from clients in other ways (i.e., client intake forms and SHARE database).

### **c. Drilldown Data Analysis**

The 2023-24 Targeted HIV and Aging Needs Assessment was conducted using a variety of data sources. The primary data source was the full data set from the TGA's 2022-23 HIV Needs Assessment. 64% of the 191 RW clients who completed the survey were PLWH 50 years or older, the target population for the 2023-24 assessment. It was decided that an extensive analysis which drilled down into the large

amount of data collected was the most effective way to compare input from RW clients ages 50+ to those under age 50. The drill-down analysis allowed the Council to gain the most amount of information without over burdening the RW client population with an additional survey.

Needs Assessment data from each completed survey was entered by Council staff using Microsoft Excel. All open-ended questions and survey comments were compiled. Data was checked for consistency and skip patterns. Survey data were analyzed by Lili Carbone Joy, MPH, Community Health Impact, using Microsoft Excel. Data were stratified by age cohorts to identify meaningful distribution findings in demographics, social determinants of health, co-morbidities, service demand, unmet need and barriers to care.

The drilldown analysis found several significant differences between the survey cohorts. The data and analytic findings are presented through graphs and tables, as well as in narrative form. Numbers are rounded to the nearest integer (e.g., 16.7% rounded to 17%). In cases where multiple rounded numbers are added together, the total may not appear to equal the sum of the parts.

## **B. PARTICIPANT FINDINGS**

### **1. DEMOGRAPHICS AND HIV EPIDEMIOLOGY**

#### **a. TGA's HIV Epidemiology**

Of growing concern in the TGA is the aging PLWH population and increasing numbers transitioning into the senior population with an AIDS diagnosis. Based on HIV epidemiology data from the California State Office of AIDS for the three-year periods of 01/01/18-12/31/20 compared to 01/01/20–12/31/22, new AIDS cases (incidence) among people ages 45 and older were much higher than those under age 45. AIDS incidence among people ages 45 and older experienced a large increase of 73%, (from 48 to 83); and new AIDS cases for people ages 65+ increased 10% (from 10 to 11). For younger people, however, the number of new AIDS cases diagnosed among people under age 45 remained steady over both three-year periods (131 and 130 new AIDS cases).

The increasing number of aging PLWH in the TGA continues to disproportionately impact the RW program. 55% of RW clients were ages 50 and over in 2022-23, and the number of RW clients over 60 was 44% higher than those ages 50-59 (669 vs. 466).

Geographically, the Sacramento TGA is an over 4,000 square miles that includes the primarily urban and suburban County of Sacramento, and primarily rural El Dorado and Placer Counties. Although Yolo County isn't part of the RW Part A TGA, it receives RW Part B funds input from its RW clients is valuable to the survey. Sacramento County accounted for 72.2% of the TGA's population and 88.1% of the PLWH in the TGA as of 12/31/22. El Dorado County accounted for 8.8% of the TGA's population and 4.3% of the PLWH, while Placer accounted for 19.0% of the population and 7.6% of the PLWH. All TGA counties participated in the survey, although El Dorado County was underrepresented: 85% of respondents were from Sacramento, 8% Placer, 1% El Dorado, 9% Yolo and 2% unspecified.

**b. Demographic Analysis and Trends**

Growth in the TGA’s HIV epidemic impacts the RW Program, especially when it comes to older adults. Over the last twenty years, the percentage of RW clients over age 50 has more than doubled, from 23% to 65%, between 2003 and 2022. The fiscal impact of aging PLWH on the RW program continues to be felt. In 2022-23, the average cost per RW client was 24% higher for those ages 50+ compared to clients <50. Further, the number of RW clients 60+ was 44% higher with an average cost per client 11% higher than clients ages 50-59. An analysis of demographic profiles of the 122 RW clients ages 50+ compared to the 67 clients under age 50 shows that the following subpopulations were over or underrepresented in each age cohort:

**Age**

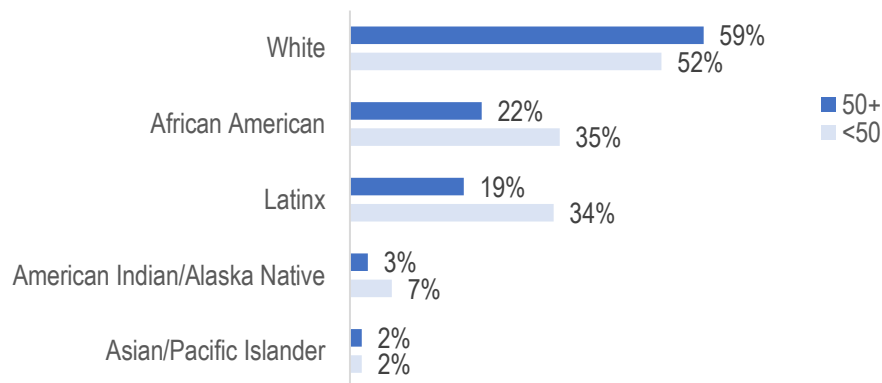
64% of the 191 RW clients who completed the needs assessment survey in 2022 were ages 50 or older, which is representative of the 55% of clients ages 50+ served by the RW program in 2022-23.

**Gender**

| Gender                                |     |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Age                                   | <50 | 50+ |
| Male                                  | 69% | 70% |
| Female                                | 23% | 25% |
| Transgender / Nonbinary / Unspecified | 9%  | 1%  |

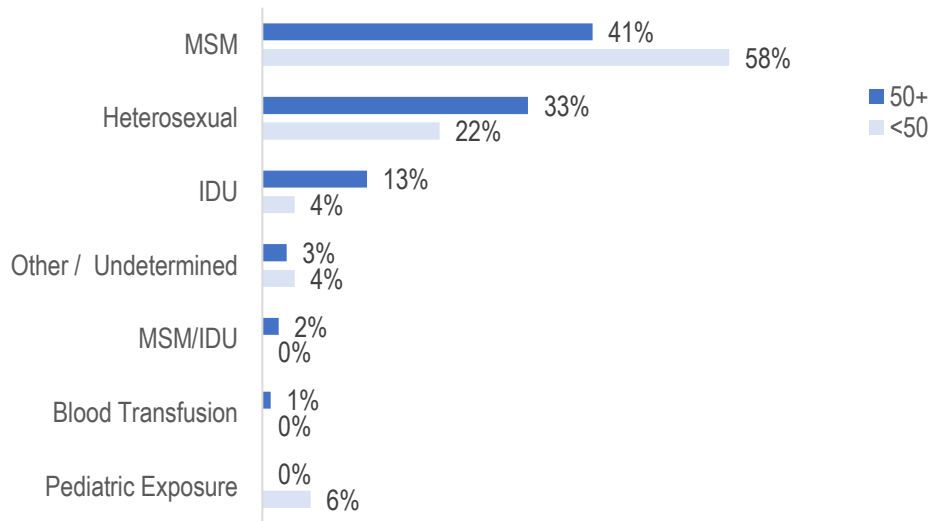
- Both the <50 and 50+ age groups had similar percentages of males and females represented among survey respondents. Transgender/non-binary survey respondents, however, were overrepresented in the <50 age group (9%) as compared to those ages 50+ (1%).

**Race**



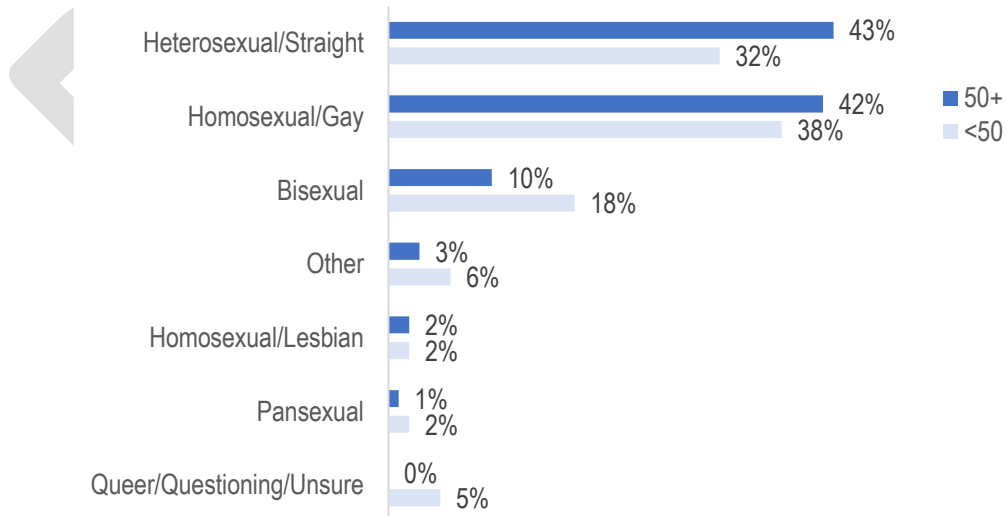
- The majority of older 50+ survey respondents were White (59%) compared to those <50 who were more likely to be African American, Latinx, American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Older adults 50+ were less likely to report more than one race (5%) compared to younger adults <50 (30%)

### Mode of HIV Transmission



- Survey respondents ages 50+ were more likely to report their mode of HIV transmission as Heterosexual (33%) compared to those <50 (22%)
- Injection Drug Use as mode of HIV transmission was higher for older adults (13% vs. 4%).
- Survey respondents <50 reported MSM as their mode of transmission at higher rates than older adults 50+ (58% vs. 41%, respectively).
- 6% of clients <50 reported pediatric exposure transmission compared to 0% of PLWH 50+

### Sexual Orientation



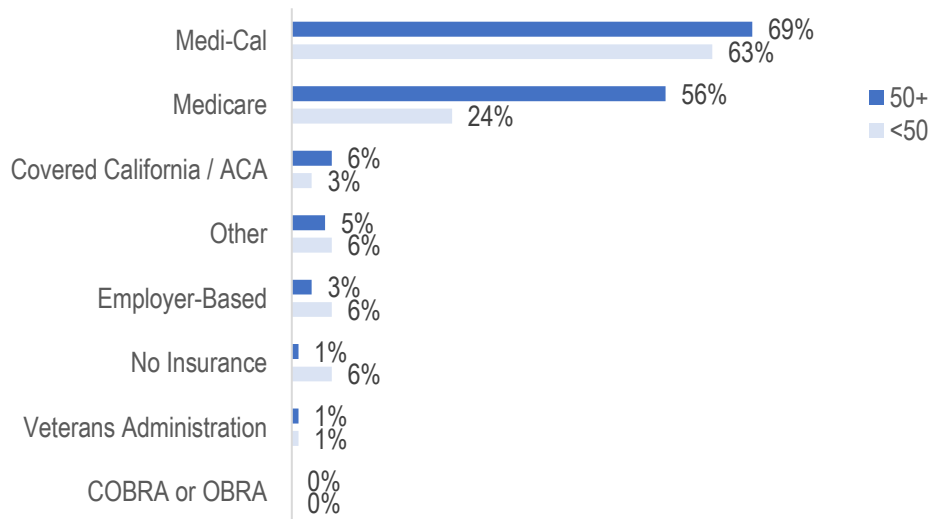
- PLWH ages 50+ were more likely to report their sexual orientation as Heterosexual (43%) or Homosexual/Gay (42%) than those <50 (32% and 38%, respectively)

- Survey respondents under age 50 were more likely to report their sexual orientation as Bisexual, Pansexual, Queer or other (31%) than older adults ages 50+ (14%)

## 2. SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND CO-OCCURRING CONDITIONS

The graphs and analyses below provide data on a range of social determinants of health and co-occurring conditions that add to the complexity of care for RW clients. Complicating factors such as homelessness, incarceration, poverty, insurance status, and income level were analyzed to determine where clients 50+ surveyed in 2022 reported being impacted at higher or lower rates than clients <50.

### a. Health Insurance Coverage



- Older PLWH 50+ reported higher levels of health insurance coverage across all types of public insurance and only 1% had no insurance coverage.
- 6% of clients <50 reported that they were uninsured and 6% had employer-based insurance.

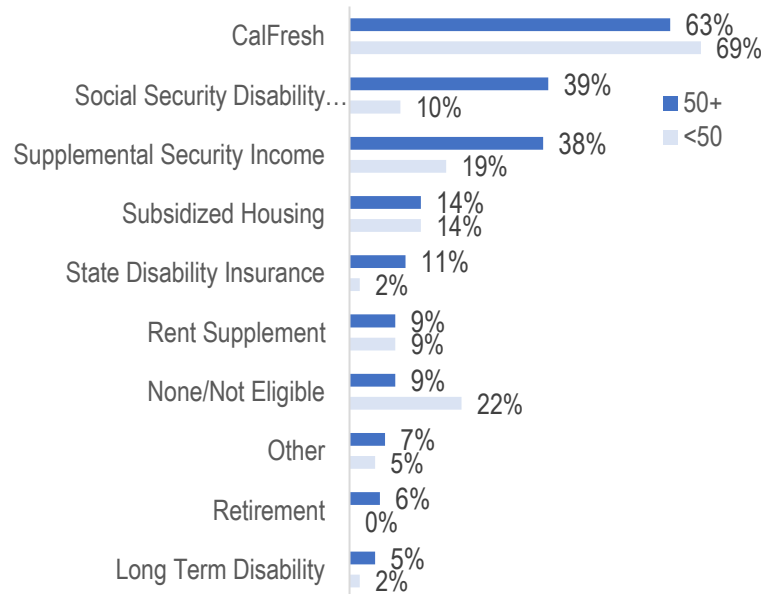
### b. Income Status and Sources

Ryan White funded services are through a payor of last resort. To receive RW benefits each client must have no other means of paying for or obtaining services. The needs assessment found that more clients aged <50 were living under 100% of Federal Poverty Level than those ages 50+ (70% vs. 54%).

#### **Supplementary Income**

Given the low income of RW clients, the majority rely on supplementary income benefits. The graph below shows the top 10 supplementary income sources reported by survey respondents. Overall, older PLWH 50+ reported receiving more benefits than those <50.

*NOTE: Unemployment wasn't on survey in 2022 but it's recommended for subsequent surveys.*



- 36% of clients 50+ receive Social Security Disability vs. 10% of clients <50
- 38% of clients 50+ receive Supplemental Security Income vs. 19% of clients <50
- 11% of clients 50+ receive State Disability Insurance vs. 2% of clients <50
- Rent Supplement and Subsidized Housing were reported at equal rates by both age cohorts (9% and 14% respectively). Housing assistance is discussed in more detail below.
- RW clients under age 50 were more likely to report receiving NO supplemental income (22%) compared to older clients 50+ (9%)

### **Employment Income**

Older clients ages 50+ were much less likely to be employed than younger clients <age 50, in part due to being disabled (55%) and retirement (11%):

- Among ages 50+, only 6% were employed full-time and 9% part-time, compared to 23% and 15% of those <50.
- 9% of unemployed PWLH 50+ were looking for work compared to 35% of those <50.
- 11% of PLWH 50+ were retired compared to 1% of those <50.
- PLWH 50+ reported being disabled at over twice the rate of those under age 50 (55% vs. 22%).

### **c. Previous Incarceration**

Aging RW clients ages 50+ reported much fewer issues with incarceration or criminal record than RW clients under age 50. Only 1% of 50+ year old clients reported having been incarcerated in the previous 12 months compared to 6% of clients under age 50.

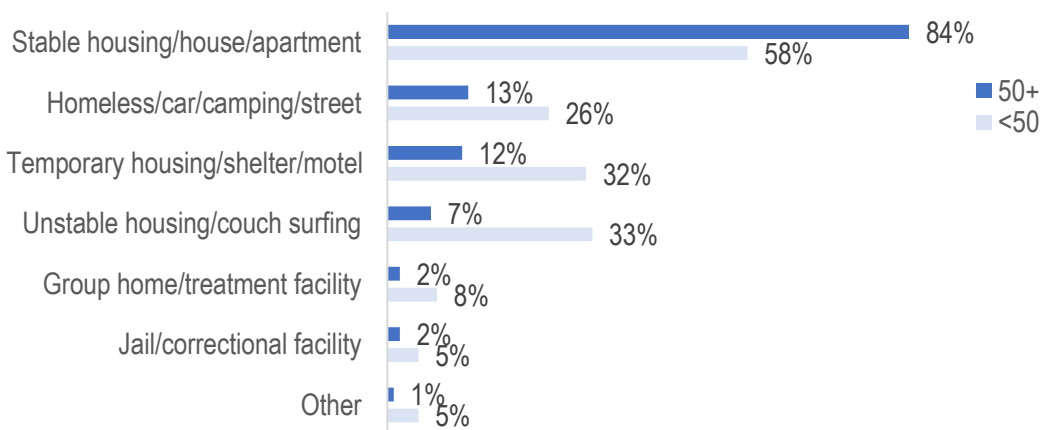
The survey asked about HIV medical care for PLWH who had been incarcerated over 48 hours in the past 12 months. 100% of those who had been incarcerated reported that the jail/prison knew their

HIV status and they continued HIV medical care after release. However, only 50% of those under age 50 got HIV medical care and medications while incarcerated, compared to 100% of those who were over age 50.

**d. Housing**

The 2022 survey asked RW clients which places they have lived over the prior 12-months. A large percentage (26.2%) reported they had been homeless (car, camping, street), or in temporary housing (shelter, motel). This extreme rate of homelessness/temporary housing among RW clients continues to be disproportionately high when compared to the TGA's general population, which was 0.48% based on the 2022 Point-in-Time homeless count coordinated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It must be noted that HUD's count includes those who report being unsheltered, in emergency shelter or in temporary shelter on the day of being surveyed, rather than anytime during the prior 12-months as in the RW survey.

For this targeted Needs Assessment, comparison of older survey respondents ages 50+ to those <50 show the following:



- RW respondents 50+ were less likely to be homeless than those under age 50 (13% vs. 26%) or temporarily housed in a shelter or motel (12% vs. 32%)
- Older RW survey respondents ages 50+ are much more likely to be in stable housing than clients under age 50 (84% vs. 58%)

**Housing Assistance**

The needs assessment survey includes several questions about receipt of housing referrals and placements (at any previous time), as well as housing assistance, waiting lists, placements, and barriers to placement (during previous 12-months). Please see the barriers to care section (D3) of this report for the barriers to housing placement analysis. In addition, please see the future needs assessment recommendations section (E3) for input regarding potential revisions and additions to the housing section questions.

### **Subsidized Housing**

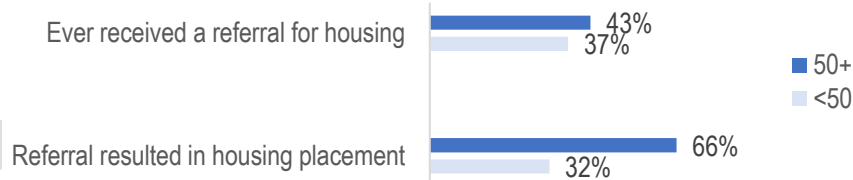
As can be seen below, PLWH 50+ were much less likely to have received a subsidized housing placement after being on a waiting list over the previous 12-months.

| <b>Subsidized Housing Waiting List and Placement</b>              |               |            |
|---|---------------|------------|
| <b>Age</b>  | <b>&lt;50</b> | <b>50+</b> |
| Been on a waiting list for subsidized housing over last 12-months | 27%           | 31%        |
| Waiting list resulted in subsidized housing placement             | 33%           | 8%         |

- PLWH 50+ were slightly more likely to be on a waiting list for subsidized housing over the last 12 months than respondents under age 50 (31% vs. 27%).
- PLWH 50+ were less likely to receive a subsidized housing placement than clients <50 (8% vs. 33%) over the previous 12-month period.

### **Housing Referral and Placement**

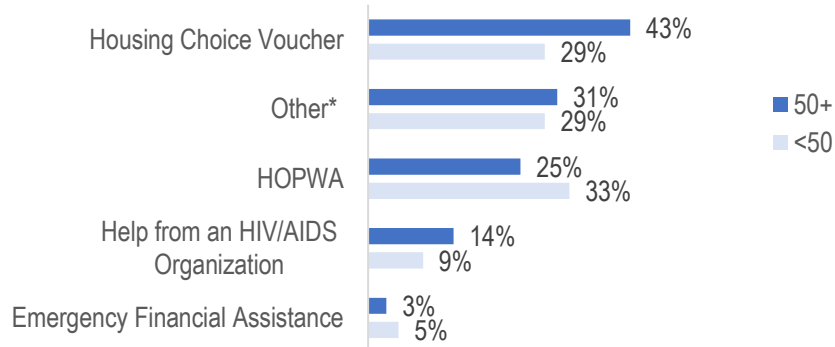
Note: See recommendations section regarding housing survey question #16 which asks “Have you ever received a referral for housing? If yes, did it result in housing placement?” The responses to this question are included below, even though they are skewed towards showing more success for older clients ages 50+ who have had many more years to receive those referrals and placements.



- 43% of PLWH ages 50+ had ever received a referral for housing, which was higher than PLWH <50 (37%).
- 66% of clients 50+ who received a housing referral secured a housing placement compared to 32% of clients <50.



## Financial Housing Assistance



\*Other sources included: Shelter Plus, Mercy Housing, SHRA

- Overall, PWLH 50+ reported currently receiving financial housing assistance at higher rates than those <50 (53% vs. 31%)

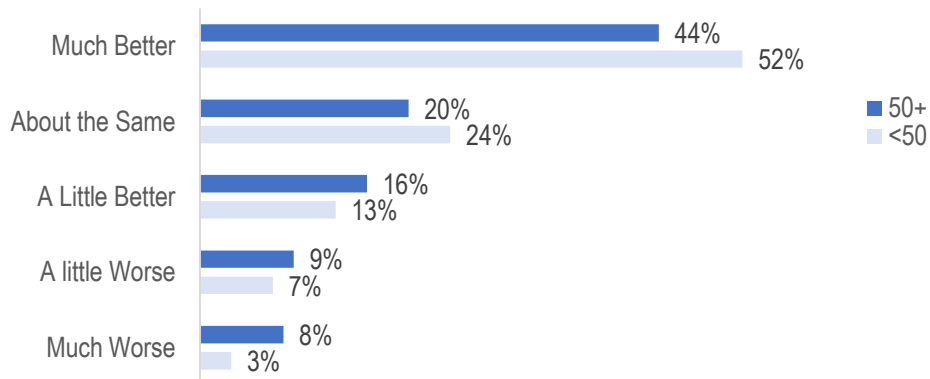
### e. Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)

Survey respondents were asked, “Has a medical or service provider ever told you that you have Hepatitis C? RW clients under age 50 were twice as likely to respond “yes” to this question than those ages 50+. Please see the future needs assessment recommendations section (E3) later in this report for input regarding potential revisions to this question to increase clarity and usefulness.

## 3. HIV HEALTHCARE ENGAGEMENT

### a. Health Status Self Rating

The survey asked, “How would you rate your physical health now as compared to when you first sought treatment for your HIV infection?”



- Overall, these findings are very encouraging for both age cohorts, even more so for PWLH <50.
- 44% of PLWH 50+ and 52% of PLWH <50 reported that their health was “much better” now than when they first sought treatment for HIV.

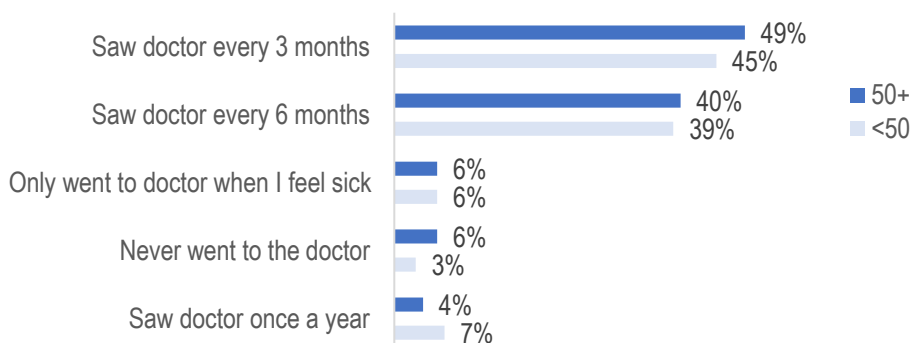
- Only 8% of PLWH 50+ and 3% of PLWH <50 reported that their physical health was much worse now than when they were first diagnosed.
- An additional 9% of PLWH 50+ and 7% of those <50 reported their health as “a little worse.”

### b. HIV Medical Care Engagement

The survey asked, “What HIV medical care have you received over the last 12 months?” Older PLWH 50+ reported receiving higher levels of HIV medical care during the past year than those <50 as shown below:

| HIV Medical Care Engagement<br>Past 12 months |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
|   | <50 | 50+ |
| Took HIV medication (HAART)                   | 97% | 99% |
| Had Viral Load test                           | 93% | 98% |
| Had CD4 test                                  | 93% | 98% |

Survey participants also were asked “How frequently do you see your HIV doctor?”



- Overall, PLWH 50+ saw their HIV doctor a bit more frequently than those <50; however, PLWH 50+ were more likely than those <50 to report never going to the doctor (6% vs. 3%)
- PLWH 50+ were more likely than those <50 to see their doctor every 3 months (49% vs. 45%)
- PLWH 50+ and <50 were almost equally likely to see their doctor every 6 months (40% vs. 39%)
- PLWH 50+ were less likely to see their doctor only annually compared to those <50 (4% vs. 7%)
- Aging 50+ were less likely to be out of care over a year compared to those <50 (17% vs. 22%)

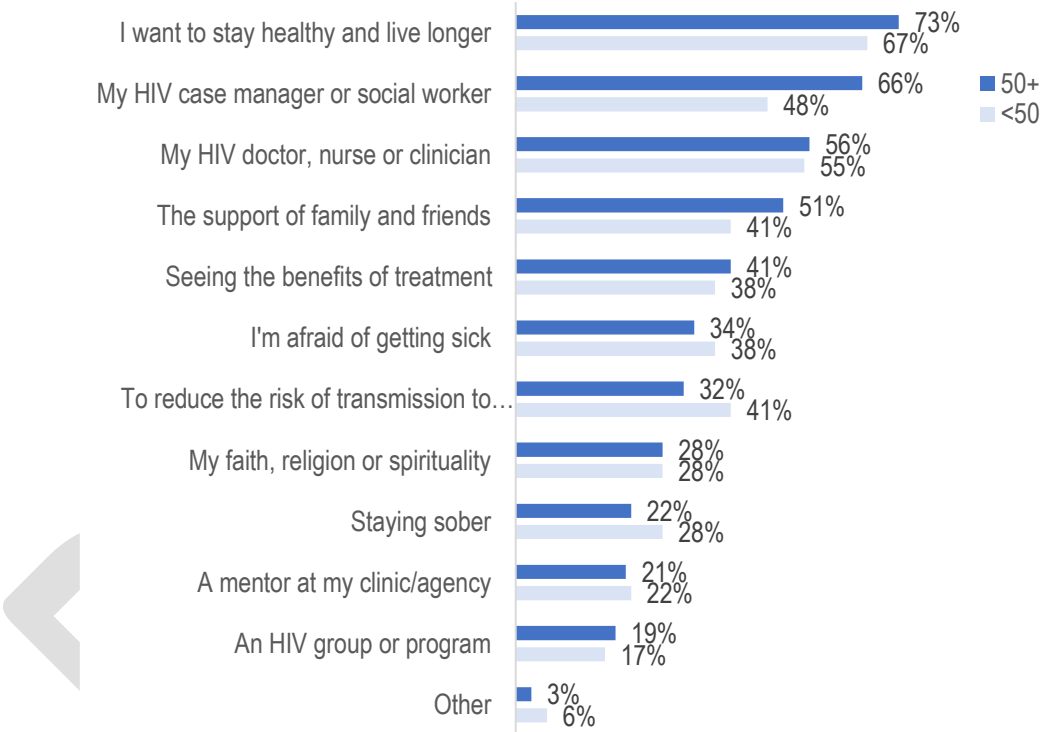
### c. Factors Decreasing HIV Medical Care Engagement

The survey asked “If you ever stopped seeing a doctor for 12 months or more [since your HIV diagnosis], why did you stop?”

- Older PLWH 50+ were more likely than those <50 to report the following reasons they stopped seeing a doctor for over a year: felt fine; didn't want to take meds; side effects of medications; viral load was undetectable; and doctor or case manager left.
- PLWH 50+ were less likely than PLWH<50 to report they stopped seeing a doctor for over a year due to the following: lost health insurance; lost RW support services; substance use; mental health issue; no transportation; and overwhelmed.

**d. Factors Increasing HIV Medical Care Engagement**

PLWH were asked “What kinds of things help you keep up with your HIV medical care?”



Overall, PLWH 50+ reported factors that increased engagement for them at higher rates than those under age 50, particularly “my HIV case manager or social worker” (66% vs. 48%) and “the support of family and friends” (51% vs. 41%).

- 4 of the 5 top factors that PLWH reported kept clients in care were the same for both aging PLWH 50+ and those <50, although they were reported at higher rates by aging PLWH 50+, as follows:
  - I want to stay healthy and live longer (73% vs. 67%)
  - HIV case manager or social worker (66% vs. 48%)
  - My HIV doctor, nurse or clinician (56% vs. 55%)
  - Support of my family and friends (51% vs. 41%).

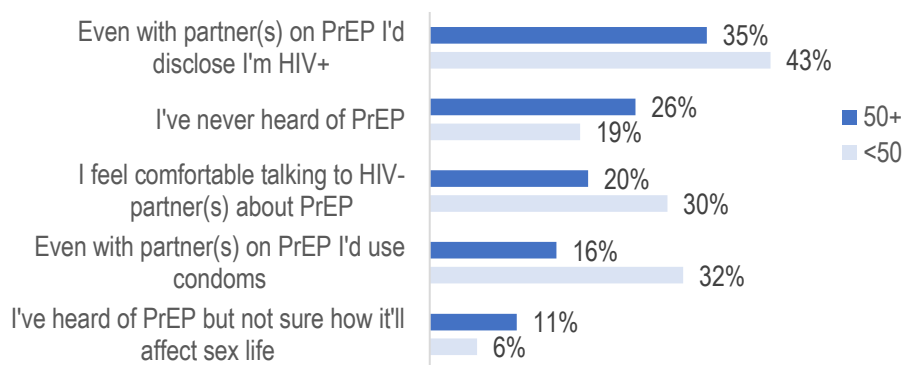
- Older PLWH reported the following in their top 5 reasons: “Seeing the benefits of treatment.”
- PLWH under age 50 reported the following in their top 5: “To reduce the transmission to others”.

#### 4. HIV PREVENTION PRACTICES AND PARTNER SERVICES

The 2022 Needs Assessment includes questions about HIV Prevention and Partner Services. Although these services are not directly funded by the RW Part A Program, getting input from clients about their knowledge and use of HIV prevention strategies is imperative to improving outcomes along the HIV Continuum of Care.

##### a. Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

PrEP is the use of anti-retroviral medications (ART) to keep HIV negative people from becoming infected with HIV. PLWH were asked “which of the following statements about PrEP are true for you”?



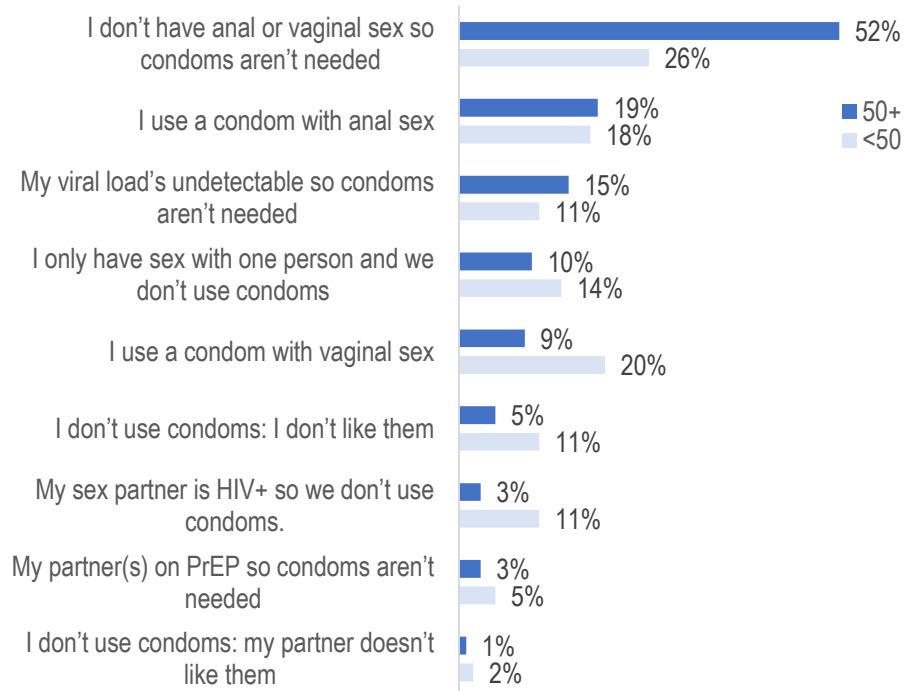
Aging PLWH ages 50+ reported themselves as less informed about PrEP than PLWH <50 as follows:

- 26% of aging PLWH 50+ had never heard of PrEP vs. 19% of those <50.
- 35% of older PLWH 50+ would disclose they are HIV+ compared to 43% of younger PLWH <50.
- Of PLWH 50+ who had heard about PrEP, 11% weren't sure how it would affect their sex life.
- 20% of PLWH 50+ felt comfortable talking to their HIV negative partner(s) about PrEP vs. 30% of those <50.
- 16% of PLWH 50+ would use condoms if their partner(s) was on PrEP vs. 32% of PLWH <50.

Sacramento County data for 2022 supports this needs assessment finding that older PLWH underutilize PrEP: PLWH 55+ had the lowest PrEP-to-Need ratio (number of PrEP users to number newly diagnosed with HIV) of any age group.

##### b. Condom Use

The survey asked, “Which of the following statements about condom use are true for you?”



Overall, the survey found that both age cohorts use condoms at fairly low rates, with aging PLWH 50+ using condoms at lower rates than those ages <50 as follows:

- 52% of PLWH 50+ reported they don't have anal or vaginal sex, so condoms aren't needed compared to 26% of PLWH <50.
- 15% of PLWH 50+ don't use condoms because viral load is undetectable vs. 11% of PLWH <50.
- 10% of PLWH 50+ and 14% <50 don't use condoms because they have sex with one person.
- 3% of PLWH 50+ and 5% of <50 don't use condoms because their partner is on PrEP.
- 6% of PLWH 50+ don't use condoms because either they or their partner don't like them compared to 14% of PLWH <50.
- Condom use for anal sex was low for both PLWH over and under age 50 (19% and 18%).
- Condom use for vaginal sex was lower for aging PLWH than those <50 (9% vs. 20%).

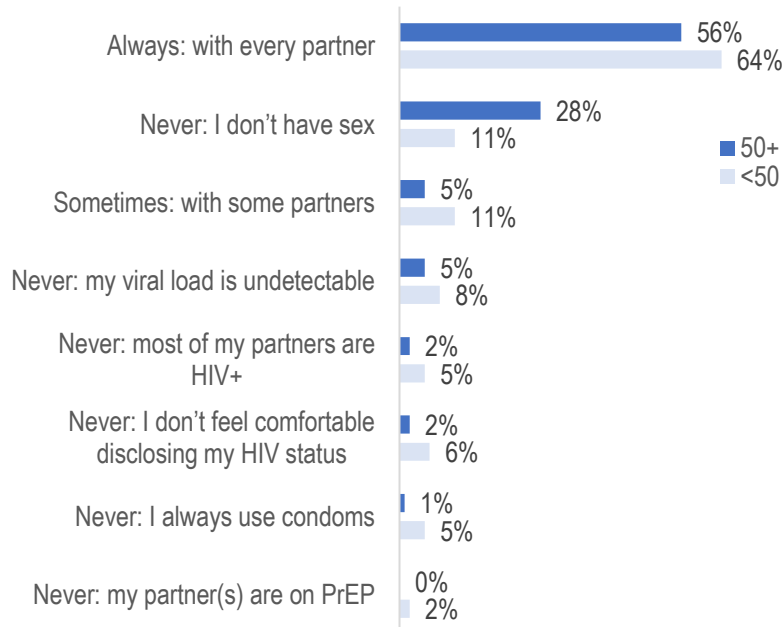
### Other Sexual Health Practices

The survey asked about other sexual health practices during the previous 12 months that could increase the risk of HIV/STI transmission. Although the numbers were small, younger PLWH reported engaging in these risk behaviors at higher rates than aging PLWH 50+ as follows:

- 9% of PLWH <50 had sex to get money, drugs, housing compared to 3% of PLWH 50+
- 9% of PLWH <50 had sex with someone who shares syringes vs. 2% of aging PLWH 50+

### d. HIV Disclosure

Survey participants were asked: "When do you choose to disclose your HIV status to sex partners?"

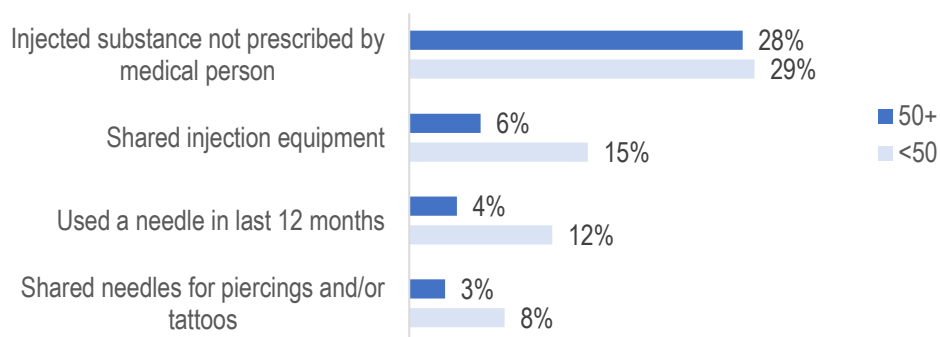


Overall, HIV disclosure rates are lower than needed to effectively reduce HIV transmission rates for both age cohorts and to effectively decrease the stigma associated with HIV/STIs, as follows:

- 56% of aging PLWH 50+ and 64% of PLWH <50 reported they always disclose their HIV status with every partner.
- 5% of aging 50+ and 11% of <50 reported sometimes, with some partners.
- 10% of aging 50+ and 26% of PLWH <50 never disclose their HIV status because of the at least one of the following: viral load is undetectable, partner(s) are HIV+, don't feel comfortable, always use condoms or their partner(s) are on PrEP.

#### d. Syringe Use and Practices

Survey participants were asked "Which statements about syringe use practices are true for you?"



Although both aging PLWH 50+ and those under age 50 reported injecting substances not prescribed by a medical person at similar rates (28% and 29%, respectively), older PLWH 50+ were less likely than PLWH <50 to have high risk behaviors around syringe use as follows:

- 6% of PLWH 50+ reported sharing injection equipment compared to 67% of PLWH <50.
- 4% of PLWH 50+ used syringes in the last 12 months vs. 12% of those <50.

**e. Partner Services**

The survey asked about Partner Services, which is a free service to assist HIV positive persons in notifying their sexual and/or needle sharing partners of possible exposure to HIV.

| <b>Partner Services</b>   |               |            |
|---|---------------|------------|
| <i>Which of the following statements about Partner Services are true for you?</i> |               |            |
|   | <b>&lt;50</b> | <b>50+</b> |
| Have you been informed of Partner Services before this survey?                    | 47%           | 41%        |
| Have you used Partner Services before?  | 14%           | 11%        |
| Would you be willing to use Partner Services?                                     | 50%           | 46%        |

- PLWH 50+ were less likely than those <50 to have known about Partner Services prior to the survey (41% vs. 47%); have used Partner Services before (11% vs. 14%) and be willing to use Partner Services (46% vs. 50%).

**C. SERVICE DEMAND AND UNMET NEED FINDINGS**

**1. SERVICE DEMAND BY SERVICE CATEGORY**

Service demand (total need) is the number of survey respondents who needed each RW service category. This includes both those who needed the service and received it (need met) plus those who needed the service but did not receive it due to barriers to care (unmet need).

**a. Service Demand Findings: Clients Ages <50 Compared to 50+**

| <b>Service (% Demand All Ages)</b>                | <b>&lt;50</b> | <b>50+</b> |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Medical Case Management (87%)                     | 81%           | 91%        |
| Case Management (Non-Medical) (77%)               | 78%           | 76%        |
| Oral Health (75%)                                 | 67%           | 80%        |
| Outpatient Ambulatory Care (69%)                  | 63%           | 74%        |
| Mental Health (64%)                               | 58%           | 67%        |
| AIDS Drug Assistance Program (61%)                | 58%           | 61%        |
| Health Education/Risk Reduction (57%)             | 58%           | 56%        |
| Food Bank/Home Delivered Meals (54%)              | 57%           | 53%        |
| Medical Transportation (53%)                      | 49%           | 56%        |
| Psychosocial Support Services (53%)               | 54%           | 52%        |
| AIDS Pharmacy Assistance (51%)                    | 54%           | 49%        |
| Housing (51%)                                     | 58%           | 46%        |
| Health Insurance Premium Assistance (47%)         | 58%           | 42%        |
| Early Intervention Services (46%)                 | 54%           | 42%        |
| Referral for Health Care & Support Services (44%) | 48%           | 43%        |
| Medical Nutrition (42%)                           | 39%           | 43%        |
| Emergency Financial Assistance (41%)              | 51%           | 35%        |
| Outreach Services (40%)                           | 46%           | 37%        |
| Home/Community-Based Health Services (38%)        | 24%           | 46%        |
| Substance Abuse Services – Outpatient (30%)       | 33%           | 29%        |
| Rehabilitation Services (27%)                     | 25%           | 27%        |
| Home Health Care (18%)                            | 15%           | 20%        |
| Legal or Professional Services (16%)              | 22%           | 11%        |
| Substance Abuse Services – Residential (16%)      | 18%           | 15%        |
| Legal Services (15%)                              | 13%           | 16%        |
| Respite Care (13%)                                | 13%           | 13%        |
| Linguistic Services (6%)                          | 9%            | 5%         |
| Child Care (4%)                                   | 7%            | 2%         |
| Hospice (3%)                                      | 4%            | 2%         |

- Aging PLWH 50+ reported at least 10% higher demand for the following services compared to clients under age 50:
  - Medical Case Management (91% vs. 81%)
  - Oral Health (80% vs. 67%)
  - Outpatient Ambulatory Care (74% vs. 63%)
  - Home and Community Based Health Services (46% vs. 24%)



- Clients aged 50+ have at least a 10% lower demand for:
  - Housing (46% vs. 58%)
  - Health Insurance Premium Assistance (42% vs. 58%)
  - Early Intervention Services, Emergency Financial Assistance (42% vs. 54%)
  - Legal or Professional Services (11% vs. 22%)

To add to the comparison between survey respondents ages <50 and older clients ages 50+, the top ten ranked services with highest service demand for each age cohort are detailed below:

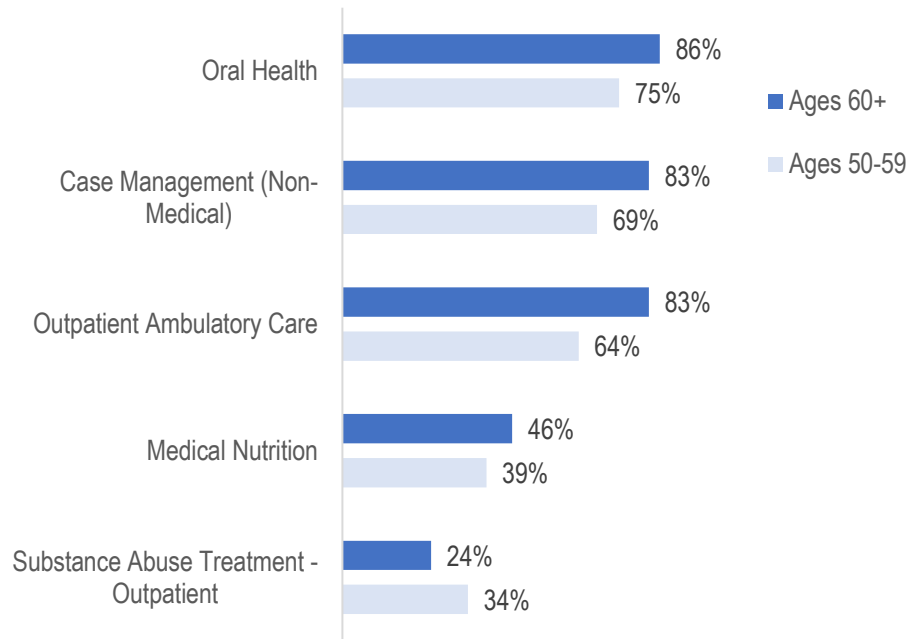
| <b>SERVICE DEMAND<br/>TOP TEN SERVICES<br/>Clients ages &lt;50 compared to 50+</b> |   |                  |                                       |
|--|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>&lt; 50</b>   |   | <b>Aging 50+</b> |                                       |
| 1  | Medical Case Management (81%)             | 1                | Medical Case Management (91%)         |
| 2  | Oral Health (67%)                         | 2                | Oral Health (80%)                     |
| 3  | Case Management Non-Medical (78%)         | 3                | Case Management Non-Medical (76%)     |
| 4  | Outpatient Ambulatory Care (63%)          | 4                | Outpatient Ambulatory Care (74%)      |
| 5  | Mental Healthcare (58%)                   | 5                | Mental Healthcare (67%)               |
| 5  | AIDS Drug Assistance Program (58%)        | 6                | AIDS Drug Assistance Program (61%)    |
| 5  | Health Education/Risk Reduction (58%)     | 7                | Health Education/Risk Reduction (56%) |
| 5  | Housing (58%)                             | 7                | Medical Transportation (56%)          |
| 5  | Health Insurance Premium Assistance (58%) | 8                | Food Bank/Home-Delivered Meals (53%)  |
| 6  | Food Bank/Home-Delivered Meals (54%)      | 9                | Psychosocial Support Services (52%)   |

- 8 of 10 services that ranked in the top 10 for highest service demand were the same for aging PLWH 50+ and PLWH <50 with the following exceptions:
  - Medical transportation and psychosocial support services were in the top for PLWH 50+
  - Housing and health insurance assistance were in the top 10 for clients < age 50.

**b. Service Demand Findings: Clients Ages 50-59 Compared to Ages 60+**

To determine service demand disparities within the ageing 50+ population, a deeper analysis was conducted to compare clients 50-59 years old to those 60 years and older. Clients over age 60 had notably higher service demand for 4 of the top 5 services (oral health, non-medical case management, outpatient ambulatory care and medical nutrition). Only one service, outpatient substance use treatment, had a higher service demand for those 50-59 years old compared to those 60+.

### Service Demand Ages 50-59 Compared to Ages 60+



#### 2. UNMET NEED BY SERVICE CATEGORY

Services with high unmet need are critical to address because these are services that clients report that they need but are unable to receive due to various barriers that limit access to care.

## Unmet Need Findings

| Service (% Unmet Need All Ages)                  | <50 | 50+ |
|--|-----|-----|
| Oral Health (14%)                                | 16% | 11% |
| Emergency Financial Assistance (14%)             | 21% | 9%  |
| Housing (13%)                                    | 12% | 13% |
| Medical Nutrition (13%)                          | 12% | 12% |
| Mental Health (9%)                               | 9%  | 8%  |
| Medical Transportation (8%)                      | 7%  | 7%  |
| Home and Community-Based Health Services (7%)    | 9%  | 6%  |
| Psychosocial Support Services (7%)               | 9%  | 7%  |
| Food Bank/Home Delivered Meals (6%)              | 12% | 2%  |
| Legal or Professional Services (6%)              | 7%  | 5%  |
| Legal Services (5%)                              | 3%  | 6%  |
| Substance Abuse Services – Outpatient (5%)       | 4%  | 5%  |
| Respite Care (5%)                                | 4%  | 5%  |
| Health Education/Risk Reduction (4%)             | 6%  | 2%  |
| Outreach Services (4%)                           | 9%  | 2%  |
| Outpatient Ambulatory Care (4%)                  | 6%  | 2%  |
| Case Management (Non-Medical) (4%)               | 7%  | 1%  |
| Early Intervention Services (4%)                 | 4%  | 2%  |
| Medical Case Management (3%)                     | 6%  | 2%  |
| AIDS Drug Assistance Program (3%)                | 1%  | 3%  |
| AIDS Pharmacy Assistance (3%)                    | 4%  | 2%  |
| Home Health Care (3%)                            | 1%  | 3%  |
| Referral for Health Care & Support Services (3%) | 3%  | 3%  |
| Rehabilitation Services (3%)                     | 6%  | 2%  |
| Health Insurance Premium Assistance (3%)         | 4%  | 2%  |
| Substance Abuse Services – Residential (3%)      | 6%  | 1%  |
| Child Care (2%)                                  | 3%  | 2%  |
| Hospice (2%)                                     | 3%  | 1%  |
| Linguistic Services (1%)                         | 1%  | 1%  |

- Clients ages 50+ had a 12% lower unmet need for emergency financial assistance than those under age 50.
- These older respondents had a 10% lower unmet need for food bank/ home delivered meals.

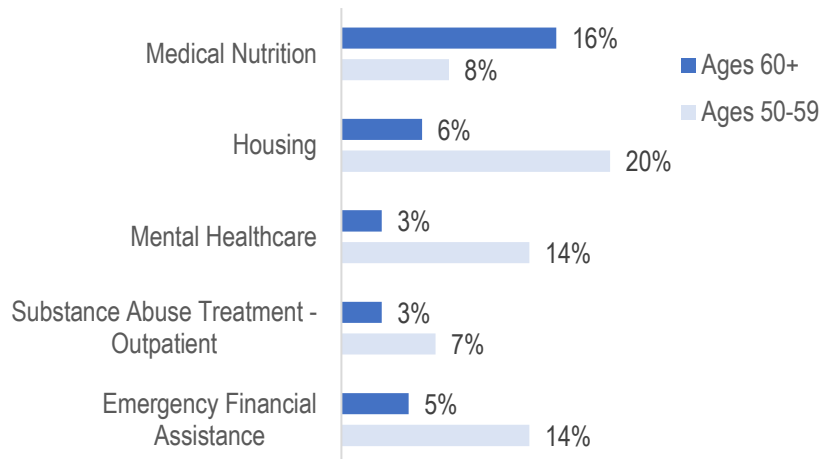
To add to the previous unmet need comparison between respondents ages <50 and older clients ages 50+, the top ten ranked services with highest unmet need for each age cohort are detailed below:

| UNMET NEED - TOP TEN SERVICES<br>Clients ages <50 compared to 50+ |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|   | < 50                                      |   | Aging 50+                                 |
| 1   | Emergency Financial Assistance (21%)      | 1 | Housing (13%)                             |
| 2   | Oral Health (16%)                         | 2 | Oral Health (11%)                         |
| 3   | Housing (12%)                             | 3 | Medical Nutrition (11%)                   |
| 3   | Medical Nutrition (12%)                   | 4 | Emergency Financial Assistance (9%)       |
| 3   | Food Bank / Home Delivered Meals (12%)    | 5 | Mental Healthcare (8%)                    |
| 6   | Mental Healthcare (9%)                    | 6 | Medical Transportation (7%)               |
| 6   | Home/Community Based Health Services (9%) | 6 | Psychosocial Support Services (7%)        |
| 6   | Psychosocial Support Services (9%)        | 8 | Home/Community Based Health Services (6%) |
| 9   | Medical Transportation (5%)               | 8 | Legal Services (6%)                       |
| 9   | Legal Services (5%)                       | 8 | Respite Care (6%)                         |

- 9 of 10 services that ranked in the top for highest unmet need were the same among aging PLWH 50+ and PLWH <50 with the following exceptions:
  - respite care was in the top 10 for aging PLWH 50+
  - food bank / home delivered meals was in the top 10 for clients < age 50.

**c. Unmet Need Findings: Clients Ages 50-59 Compared to Ages 60+**

To determine unmet need disparities within the aging 50+ population, a deeper analysis was conducted to compare clients 50-59 years old to those 60 years and older. As shown below, clients ages 50-59 had notably higher unmet need for 4 of the top 5 services (housing, mental healthcare, emergency financial assistance, outpatient substance use treatment). Only one service, medical nutrition, had a higher unmet need for 60+ year olds compared to those 50-59.



### 3. HIGHEST RANKED SERVICES: DEMAND AND UNMET NEED

Services that have both a high service demand *and* a high unmet need are particularly important to focus on from a budgeting and programming perspective. These are the services that clients need at a high rate, but they also have not been able to receive them due to high rates of barriers to care.

The following seven services ranked in the top half of service categories for both service demand and unmet need. This targeted assessment drilled down further to figure out what disparities exist between clients ages 50+ and those under age 50 in these high priority services as follows:

**HIGHEST RANKED SERVICES  
TOP HALF OF SERVICE DEMAND AND UNMET NEED  
Clients Ages <50 compared to 50+**

| Service Category                 | <50 Unmet Need | 50+ Unmet Need | <50 Demand | 50+ Demand |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Oral Health                      | 16%            | 11%            | 67%        | 80%        |
| Mental Health                    | 9%             | 8%             | 58%        | 67%        |
| Food Bank / Home Delivered Meals | 12%            | 2%             | 57%        | 53%        |
| Housing                          | 12%            | 13%            | 58%        | 46%        |
| Medical Transportation           | 5%             | 7%             | 49%        | 56%        |
| Psychosocial Support Services    | 9%             | 7%             | 54%        | 52%        |
| Health Education/Risk Reduction  | 6%             | 2%             | 58%        | 56%        |

## D. BARRIERS TO CARE

### 1. BARRIERS TO CARE CATEGORIES

Survey respondents were asked to complete the barriers to care section for each service they needed but had been unable to receive due to at least one barrier. Barriers were asked separately for each service category to clarify what barriers limited access to which services. To determine the level of the service delivery system where barriers exist for each service that clients reported an unmet need, they are classified into five categories to examine broad-based TGA-wide “Access” and “Knowledge” issues to more specific client-based “Financial”, “Health”, and “Personal” issues as follows:

- **Knowledge Barriers** include facts not known by the client that limit access to services, such as: “Didn’t know service was available,” “Didn’t know I was eligible for service,” “Didn’t know how to get service,” and “Didn’t know where to receive service.”
- **Access Barriers** include factors that limit a client’s ability to obtain a service when they need it and include issues such as: “Appointments not soon enough”, “Times not convenient,” “No childcare,” “Language barriers,” and “No cell phone.”

- **Financial Barriers** include issues such as: “Co-pay was too high,” “Service costs too much,” and “No insurance coverage.”
- **Personal Barriers** include individual concerns such as: “Treated with disrespect,” “Jail/Prison history,” and “Wanted privacy of HIV status, mental health or substance use.”
- **Health Barriers** include medical issues such as: “Didn’t want to take medications,” “Hard to navigate system due to physical, mental or substance use issues,” and “Thought viral load was undetectable.”

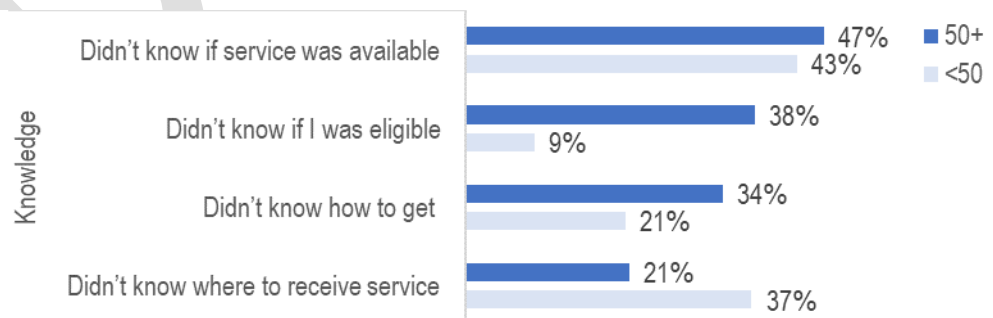
## 2. BARRIERS TO CARE RANKINGS

TOP 5 BARRIERS BY AGE COHORT

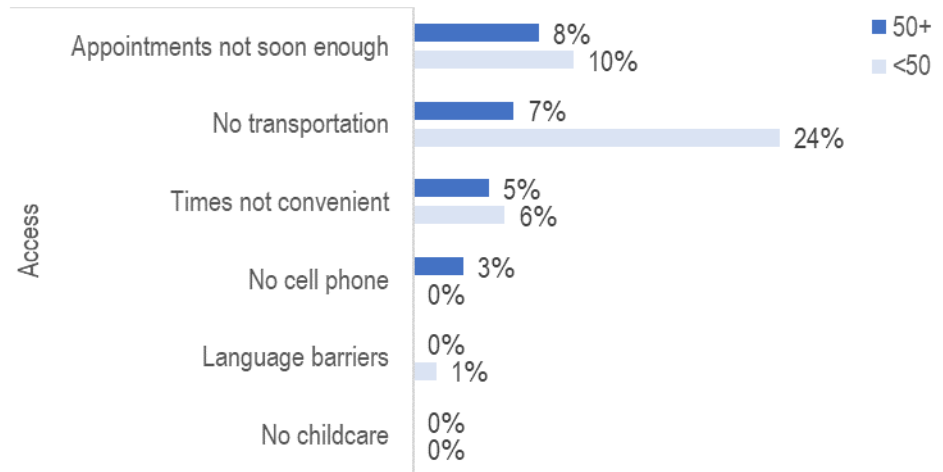
|   | Under 50                                   |   | 50 or older                                |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Didn’t know service was available (43%)    | 1 | Didn’t know service was available (47%)    |
| 2 | Didn’t know where to receive service (37%) | 2 | Didn’t know if I was eligible (38%)        |
| 3 | Previous incarceration (25%)               | 3 | Didn’t know how to get (34%)               |
| 4 | No transportation (24%)                    | 4 | Didn’t know where to receive service (21%) |
| 5 | Didn’t know how to get (21%)               | 5 | Appointments not soon enough (8%)          |

- The top barrier to care for both age cohorts was “Didn’t know service was available” (47% of PLWH 50+ and 43% PLWH <50).
- 4 of top 5 barriers for aging PLWH 50+ were knowledge barriers: 1) Didn’t know service was available, 2) if I was eligible, 3) how to get or 4) where to receive service.
- 1 of top 5 barriers for PLWH ages 50+ was different than those <50: “Appointments not soon enough.”
- 2 of top 5 barriers for PLWH under age 50 were different than PLWH 50+: “Previous incarceration” and “No transportation.”

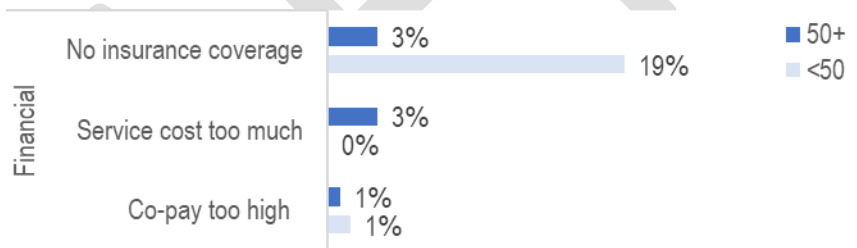
### a. Knowledge Barriers by Age



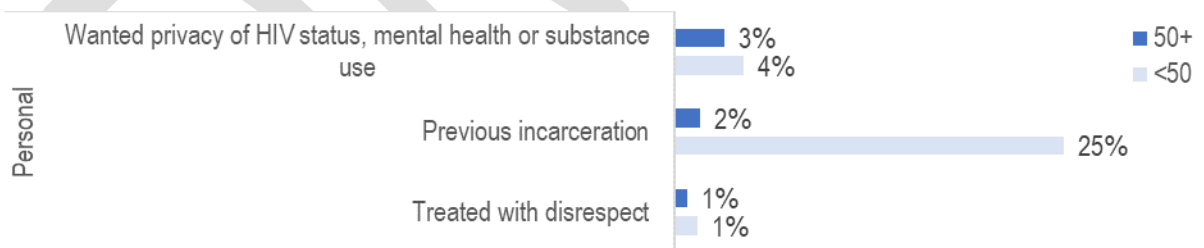
**b. Access Barriers by Age**



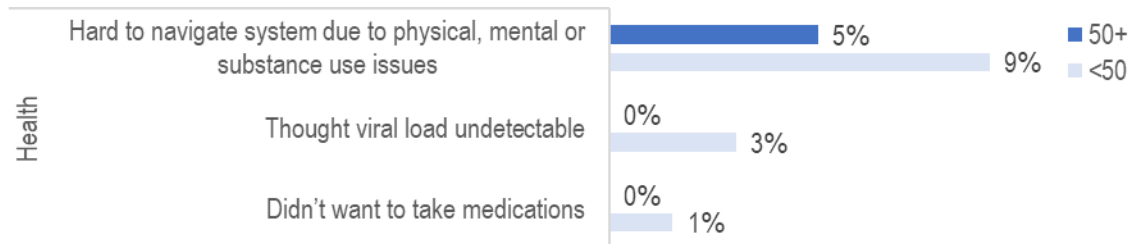
**c. Financial Barriers by Age**



**d. Personal Barriers by Age**



### e. Health Barriers by Age



- Older PLWH 50+ were more likely than PWLH<50 to report that they stopped seeing a doctor for over a year for the following: felt fine; didn't want to take meds; side effects of medications; viral load was undetectable; and doctor or case manager left.

### 3. BARRIERS FOR SERVICES WITH HIGHEST UNMET NEED

Barriers to care for the top 5 services with the highest unmet need are shown below by survey respondent age group. With few exceptions, knowledge barriers were the greatest contributors to unmet need for most service categories. However, among those 5 services with the greatest unmet needs, Oral Health, Emergency Financial Assistance, Housing, Medical Nutrition and Housing Services, there were disparities between clients ages 50+ vs. those <50 in sub-barriers that limited access as follows:

#### Oral Health

- 14% of respondents ages 50+ with an unmet need for oral health services indicated transportation was a barrier to access, compared to none of the respondents under 50.
- 27% of respondents under 50 with an unmet need for oral health services had a financial barrier to obtaining those services compared to 7% of those 50 and older. The most common barrier among respondents under 50 was lack of insurance (18%), over twice the rate of older respondents (7%).

#### Emergency Financial Assistance

- Compared to clients under 50, a higher percentage of clients 50 and older with an unmet need for emergency financial assistance didn't know it was available (45% vs. 25%), didn't know they were eligible (36% vs. 7%), or didn't know where to get the assistance (27% vs. 7%).

#### Housing

- A slightly higher proportion of respondents 50 and older with unmet housing needs had knowledge barriers to obtaining housing (56%) compared to younger respondents (50%), with disparities in the types of sub-barriers that were greater for PWLH 50+, such as:
  - Not knowing they were eligible (31% vs. 12%)
  - Not knowing how to get help with housing (37% vs none)
  - Not know where to go to find housing (25% vs. 12%).



- Younger clients with unmet housing needs reported that the cost of housing was a problem more frequently than older respondents (25% vs. 12%).
- 25% of respondents under 50 with unmet housing needs indicated that previous incarceration was a barrier to obtaining housing compared 12% of respondents 50 and older.

| <b>Barriers to Receiving Housing Placement</b><br><i>(check all that apply)</i> |               |            |
|---|---------------|------------|
|   | <b>&lt;50</b> | <b>50+</b> |
| Previous incarceration/criminal record  | 17%           | 0%         |
| Significant other's criminal record   | 8%            | 0%         |
| Rental history  | 3%            | 0%         |
| Not enough money  | 25%           | 27%        |
| Housing location  | 8%            | 3%         |
| Mental health   | 0%            | 3%         |
| Physical health   | 0%            | 6%         |
| Substance Use   | 0%            | 6%         |
| Other   | 0%            | 12%        |

### **Medical Nutrition**

- Both younger and older respondents with unmet medical nutrition needs indicated access barriers (25% vs. 20%). Younger respondents said inconvenient times were a problem at five times the rate of older respondents (37% vs. 7%) and that childcare was more of an issue (25% vs. 7%).
- Personal barriers were a much greater problem for PLWH <50 with unmet medical nutrition needs compared to older PLWH 50+ (25% vs. 7%). One quarter of those <50 reported that previous incarceration was a problem compared to none of the respondents 50 and older.

### **Mental Health**

- Half of respondents 50+ with unmet mental health service needs indicated knowledge barriers such as not knowing the service was available (30%), not knowing they were eligible (30%), and not knowing how to get mental health services (30%).
- No clients under age 50 with unmet mental health needs had knowledge barriers, but had many more access and personal barriers to care than older PLWH as follows:
- 33% of respondents under 50 with unmet mental health service needs had an access barrier compared to 10% of respondents over 50 (17% of clients <50 had a language barrier compared to no clients 50+).
- No older respondents with unmet mental health needs reported financial barriers to these services, however 17% of younger respondents did (all reported it was due to lack of insurance).
- One third of younger respondents with unmet mental health needs faced personal barriers (previous incarceration and privacy of sensitive health information were each 17%), however no older respondents indicated personal barriers accessing mental health services.

- 17% of younger respondents with unmet mental health needs faced health-related barriers compared to none of the respondents ages 50 and older. Top barriers were lack of desire to take medications (17%) and difficulty in navigating the system of care (17%).

**E. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. PRIORITY SETTING AND ALLOCATIONS ADJUSTMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

For the Council to use the client input gained through this needs assessment to guide the priorities and allocations process, it’s important to understand recent funding trends. The table below includes the TGA’s RW direct service expenditures for FY22 and FY23.

**RW DIRECT SERVICE EXPENDITURES  
FY22 and FY23**

| Service Category                        | Total              |                    | Percent of Total Budget |             | Change 2022-2023  |            |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|
|   | 2022               | 2023               | 2022                    | 2023        | Δ                 | %Δ         |
| Medical Case Management                 | \$1,466,478        | \$1,563,396        | 34%                     | 35%         | +\$96,918         | +7%        |
| Ambulatory Care                         | \$856,138          | \$773,549          | 20%                     | 17%         | -\$82,590         | -10%       |
| Mental Health                           | \$555,036          | \$611,670          | 13%                     | 14%         | +\$56,634         | +10%       |
| Oral Health                             | \$556,773          | \$503,832          | 13%                     | 11%         | -\$52,941         | -10%       |
| Medical Transportation                  | \$221,888          | \$239,069          | 5.2%                    | 5.4%        | +\$17,181         | +8%        |
| Non-Medical Case Management             | \$118,958          | \$208,755          | 2.8%                    | 4.7%        | +\$89,797         | +75%       |
| Substance Abuse Services - Outpatient   | \$159,661          | \$181,128          | 3.7%                    | 4.1%        | +\$21,467         | +13%       |
| Emergency Financial Assistance          | \$65,949           | \$103,550          | 1.5%                    | 2.3%        | +\$37,601         | +57%       |
| Food Bank/Home Delivered Meals          | \$17,448           | \$83,727           | 0.4%                    | 1.9%        | +\$66,279         | +380%      |
| Outreach                                | \$58,550           | \$58,192           | 1.4%                    | 1.3%        | -\$358            | -1%        |
| Medical Nutrition Therapy               | \$15,361           | \$42,182           | 0.4%                    | 1.0%        | +\$26,821         | +175%      |
| Housing                                 | \$31,201           | \$19,129           | 0.7%                    | 0.4%        | -\$12,072         | -39%       |
| Health Insurance & Cost Sharing Support | \$20,540           | \$19,112           | 0.5%                    | 0.4%        | -\$1,428          | -7%        |
| Substance Abuse Services Residential    | \$58,408           | \$12,910           | 1.4%                    | 0.3%        | -\$45,498         | -78%       |
| Child Care                              | \$20,000           | \$12,900           | 0.5%                    | 0.3%        | -\$7,100          | -36%       |
| Health Education/Risk Reduction         | \$36,634           | \$0                | 0.9%                    | 0.0%        | -\$36,634         | -100%      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                            | <b>\$4,259,023</b> | <b>\$4,433,099</b> | <b>100%</b>             | <b>100%</b> | <b>+\$174,076</b> | <b>+4%</b> |

**Consider Funding Increase.** The following services had the highest service demand and unmet need for PWLH 50+ and should be considered for increased FY24 funding to improve access to care:

- **Oral Health** had the highest combination of service demand and unmet need for PWLH 50+. Service demand was even higher for those over age 60. 86% of clients ages 60+ vs. 75% of PLWH 50-59 needed oral health. Despite these high service demands for oral health, funding decreased 10% between FY22 and FY23. Increased funding should be considered for FY24 with expanded efforts to secure more dental professionals to serve PLWH (e.g., offer higher compensation to dentists to serve more patients who have complex medical and oral health needs).

- **Mental Health Care** ranked #2 for PLWH 50+ in combined service demand and unmet need but only had a 10% funding increase between FY22 and FY23. The Council should consider increased FY24 funding for mental health services and increased recruitment of mental health professionals.
- **Medical Transportation** ranked #3 in combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+ with only a small increase of 8% in funding between FY22 and FY23. The Council should consider increasing transportation funding in FY24. In addition, RW service providers should be encouraged to use other sources of funding for client transportation. For example, Medi-Cal's non-emergency medical transportation and non-medical services should be accessed for clients with Medi-Cal.
- **Psychosocial Support Services** ranked #4 in combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+ but was not funded in FY22 or FY23. This should be reconsidered by the Council.
- **Housing** ranked #5 for combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+. Clients ages 50-59 had higher unmet need for housing than those 60+. Funding for housing decreased by 39% between FY22 and FY23 and expenditures for housing were only \$19K, or 0.4% of the total RW expenditures in FY23. Given that housing is critical to keeping PLWH in medical care, the Council should consider increased funding in FY24.
- **Home and Community Based Services** ranked #6 for combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+ but haven't been funded in recent years which should be reconsidered by Council.
- **Medical Nutrition Therapy** ranked #7 for combined service demand and unmet need for PLWH 50+ and was the only service with higher unmet need for clients 60+ than those 50-59. Between FY22 and FY23 there was a 175% increase in medical nutrition therapy and it comprised only 1% of the service budget at \$42K. Increased funding for FY24 should be considered.

**Consider Funding Decrease.** The following services have some of the lowest reported unmet need (1%-2%) for PLWH 50+. These three categories represented over half of the \$4.4M spent on direct services in FY23. The Council should consider the following for FY24: 1) decreasing funding for these services, 2) reallocating those funds towards the services listed above, and 3) maximizing use of other funding sources such as Medi-Cal and Medicare for service payment.

- **Medical Case Management** had the highest service demand at 91% but an unmet need of only 2%, however it was the most highly funded service at 35% of the total budget with a 7% increase in funding between FY22 and FY23.
- **Non-Medical Case Management** had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest service demand at 76% and an unmet need of only 1%, however it had a 75% increase in funding between FY22 and FY23.

- **Outpatient Ambulatory Care** had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest service demand at 71% and an unmet need of only 2%. Ambulatory Care had a 10% decrease in funding between FY22 and FY23 but was still the second most highly funded service in 2023 at 17% of the total budget.

### **SERVICE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Although not an exhaustive list of strategies, what follows are examples of service system improvements the Council should consider to meet client service demand, reduce unmet need, and decrease barriers to care for PLWH 50+:

- **Address Knowledge Barriers.** 4 of top 5 barriers for aging PLWH 50+ were knowledge barriers. Models of care for outreach, education and case management should be assessed and improved. For example, service providers should increase awareness of services through targeted strategies of direct client contact, tailored outreach, and social media campaigns. Case Managers and support staff should contact clients directly to provide information and referrals to services and follow up with clients and providers to ensure services are received. In addition, cost-effective models of care that use peers to conduct outreach and education should be expanded.
- **Medical Care Retention.** To support retention in ongoing medical care, case managers and support staff should continue to increase efforts to contact patients directly to encourage and incentivize re-entry into medical care. All RW service agencies should continue to: 1) make appointment reminder calls, 2) facilitate transportation assistance; and 3) improve and implement “no-show” tracking and follow up protocols.
- **Partner Services.** 61% of PLWH 50+ reported never being informed of partner services; 56% reported that they would be willing to use them; but only 6% had done so. The HIV Services Program should consider supporting efforts to increase education and provision of client incentives for partner services.
- **PrEP** was reported as underutilized: 26% of aging PLWH 50+ had never heard of PrEP vs. 19% of those <50. Strategies to improve PrEP education, referrals, and navigation services, including client follow up and release of information between service providers, should be supported.
- **Technical Assistance/Capacity Building.** The Council should work with organizations across the TGA to share this and prior HIV needs assessments, as well as other local HIV data (see last bullet below). These data sharing efforts should be used to develop and implement technical assistance and capacity building strategies to improve services along the HIV continuum of care.
- **Provider Access to Health Insurance Payments.** HIV service program providers report difficulties determining how to bill Medi-Cal and Medicare. If these barriers could be addressed, health insurance organizations could provide significant other sources of funding to our providers for the services they offer to PLWH. The Council should consider polling the HIV provider community to

assess barriers and needs related to health insurance provider enrollment and reimbursement. Based on the results of this survey, the Council also should consider supporting strategies for funding and delivering a collection of capabilities targeted at maximizing provider reimbursement from third party sources. For example, insurance billing services and data sharing between providers for referral follow up and continuity of care.

- **Quality Improvement.** The Council's Quality Advisory Committee should expand efforts to get input from PLWH and service providers as part of its Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts. The HIV Services Program should consistently get input from PLWH in local planning, decision-making and service delivery improvements. For example, client and service provider focus groups should be facilitated to evaluate the TGA's overall service delivery system, including coordination of care and provider collaboration. These quality improvement strategies should continue to prioritize issues of racial equity and stigma reduction across all strategies of communication, program development and implementation.
- **Leverage Local HIV Data.** The HIV Services Program should continue to use its database, Sacramento HIV/AIDS Reporting Engine (SHARE) to generate "Clients Not in Care" reports to identify those not in HIV medical care; to resolve data issues; to track progress of CQI projects; to identify areas for program improvement; and to assist with re-engaging clients in medical care. In addition, the HIV Services Program should share data, such as that reflect the trends, needs and community-based strategies to improve the system of HIV care and inform resource allocation.

## FUTURE NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

### Survey Tool

The HIV Needs Assessment Survey Tool was revised in 2022 to streamline the questions of Service Need, Need Met, and Unmet Need by RW service category. In addition, the survey collected data on Barriers to Care and Sub-Barriers by service category. This format resulted in more consistent answers from survey respondents compared to the TGA's past needs assessments. The survey was able to be completed in less time and with less confusion among survey respondents than in previous surveys.

Based on responses from the improved survey format in 2022, there are several additional improvements to the survey format and content that could help improve the reliability and utility of survey responses in the future. There are several questions on the current Needs Assessment Tool that the Council's Needs Assessment Committee may consider making adjustments to, as follows:

- **Benefits question 1b:** Unemployment should be added to the list.
- **Income question 2:** The number of dependents or children is not required to determine Federal Poverty Level so should be deleted and replaced with "how many people are in your household?" which is required.

- **Syringe use question 11a:** “Have you ever injected any substance NOT prescribed by a medical person?” “Provider” should replace “person” and “syringe” should replace “needle.”
- **Syringes add question 11d:** “Where do you *most often* get your clean syringes?” (check one) “I go to syringe exchange agency.” “I get from syringe exchange agency staff who bring them to me.” “I get them from another user of syringes who gets them from syringe access agency.” “Other”
- **Syringes add question 11e:** “How do you *most often* dispose of your used syringes?” (check one) “Bring sterile syringe container back to syringe exchange agency.” “I throw them away.” “Other”
- **Hepatitis C question 12:** “Has a medical or service provider ever told you that you have hepatitis C?” The question should be narrowed to (a) Are you currently HCV positive? and (b) Were you newly infected in the last 12 months? (incidence).
- **Housing question 13:** “Over the last 12 months, have you lived in any of the following places (check all that apply). This data may not be comparable to other point-in-time housing figures for other local, state, and national programs. The Council should consider revising the survey tool to ask about current point-in-time housing status and require a single choice response.
- **Housing question 14:** “If you currently receive housing assistance, what assistance do you receive (check one option)”. The following options should be added, since they’ve been written in as response under “other” over the years: Shelter Plus, Mercy Housing and Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA).
- **Housing question 16:** “Have you ever received a referral for housing? If yes, did it result in housing placement? This question should be specific to the year being surveyed to be consistent with the time period for housing question #15 which asks: “Have you been on a waiting list for housing over the last 12-months? If yes, did it result in housing placement?” If not, why not?”
- **HIV Transmission question 22:** “What is the most likely way that you contracted HIV”? It is intended to be a single selection of listed choices and should say “please check one” and remove MSM/IDU. Respondents could check “other” and write the risk categories that apply to them.
- **Barriers to Care** survey formatting for unmet needs sometimes resulted in inconsistent responses and data input in the “sub-barriers” section, which made analysis of response data for this section challenging. The example below provides a suggested update to the survey tool to more clearly prompt respondents to select specific sub-barriers. Survey data input also would need to be updated to accommodate the increased specificity, including nineteen options/rows for each sub-barrier, indicating whether the respondent selected each specific sub-barrier or not.

| <b>BARRIERS TO CARE</b>  |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| <b>D</b>   | <b>E</b>   | <b>F</b>   | <b>G</b>  | <b>H</b>  |
| <b>Knowledge</b><br>Didn't know:<br>1) if service was available<br>2) if I was eligible<br>3) how to get<br>4) where to receive service<br>5) date/time of appointment | <b>Access</b><br>1) Appointments not soon enough<br>2) times not convenient<br>3) no transportation<br>4) no childcare<br>5) language barriers<br>6) no cell phone | <b>Financial</b><br>1) co-pay too high<br>2) service cost too much<br>3) no insurance coverage | <b>Personal</b><br>1) treated with disrespect<br>2) previous incarceration<br>3) wanted privacy of HIV status, mental health or substance use | <b>Health</b><br>1) didn't want to take medications<br>2) hard to navigate system due to physical, mental or substance use issues<br>3) thought viral load undetectable |
| Check all that apply:  |  |  |   |   |
| ① ② ③ ④  | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥  | ① ② ③  | ① ② ③   | ① ② ③   |

### Survey Process

In addition to the recommended changes to the HIV Needs Assessment survey tool, there are changes to the process that would help ensure that each participant's input is represented accurately and thoroughly. The quality and completeness of the data would be improved if each respondent's completed survey was reviewed by survey administration staff prior to providing the survey respondent with a gift card. Staff could answer any questions the client has about the instructions, format, or intent of the survey questions. This is particularly important for client's whose primary language is not English.