



The Syndemics of HIV, HCV, STIs, and Overdose

Austin Tarumoto, MPH
September 4, 2025



Agenda

About the Unit

Harm Reduction

Substance Use and Sexual Health

The State of STIs in Sacramento

County Response



About Us

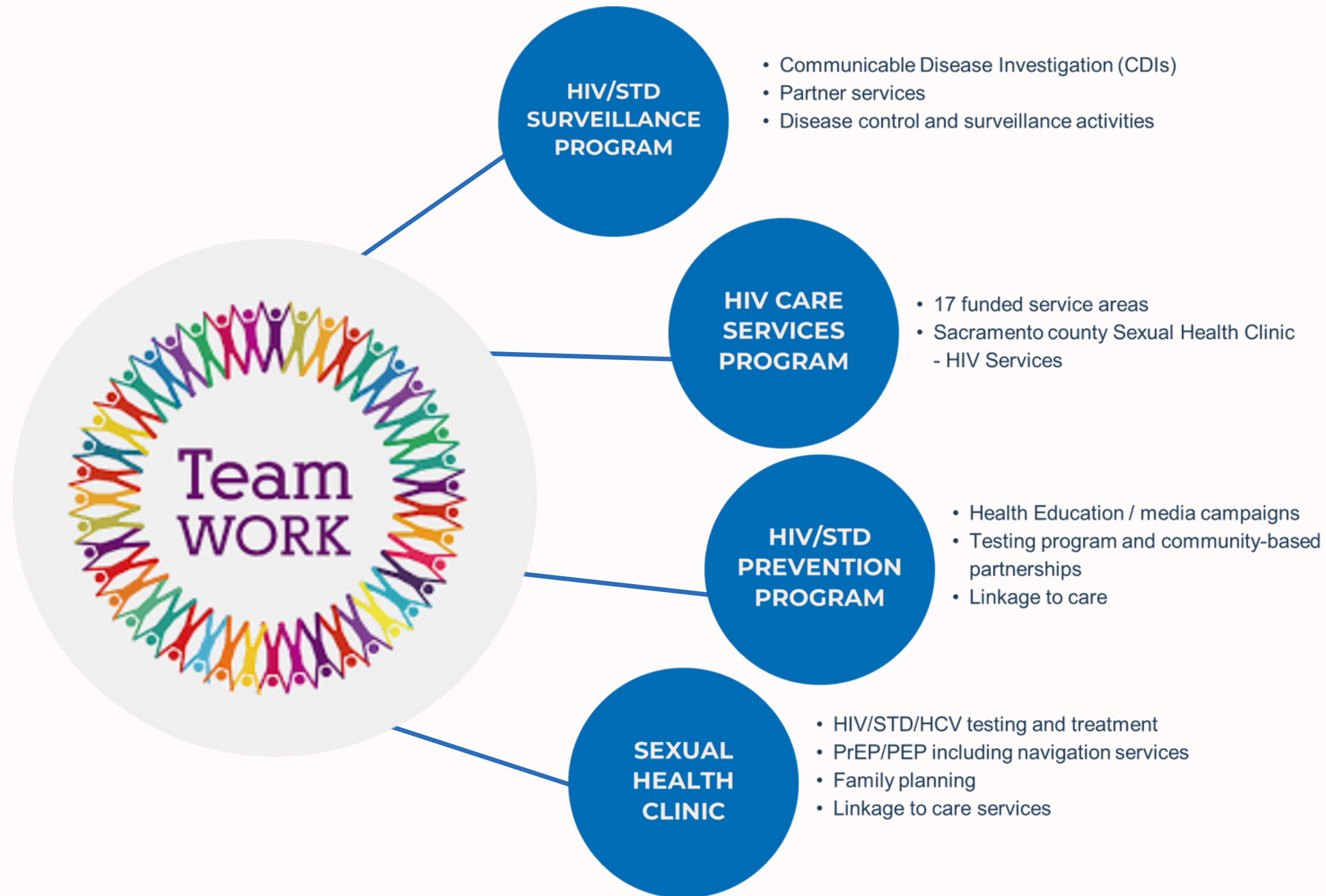
Sexual Health Promotion Unit (SHPU)

Mission: The Sexual Health Promotion Unit (SHPU) works to provide comprehensive STD/STI services to Sacramento County through education, awareness, and access

Vision: We envision an equitable & inclusive community that promotes healthy sexual behaviors, sex-positivity, and bodily autonomy



Sexual Health Promotion Unit



Harm Reduction

“Harm reduction refers to policies, programs and practices that aim to minimize the negative health, social and legal impacts associated with drug use, drug policies and drug laws. Harm reduction is grounded in **justice and human rights**. It focuses on positive change and on working with people **without judgement, coercion, discrimination**, or requiring that people stop using drugs as a precondition of support.” [-Harm Reduction International](#)

“Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and **respect** for, the **rights of people who use drugs**.”
[-Harm Reduction Coalition](#)

Harm Reduction in the U.S.

- Harm reduction has been practiced for centuries, as the use of psychoactive substances have been seen in many cultures ³
- Gained traction in the 1980s as a response to the AIDS Epidemic ^{3,12}
 - Syringe exchange programs ³



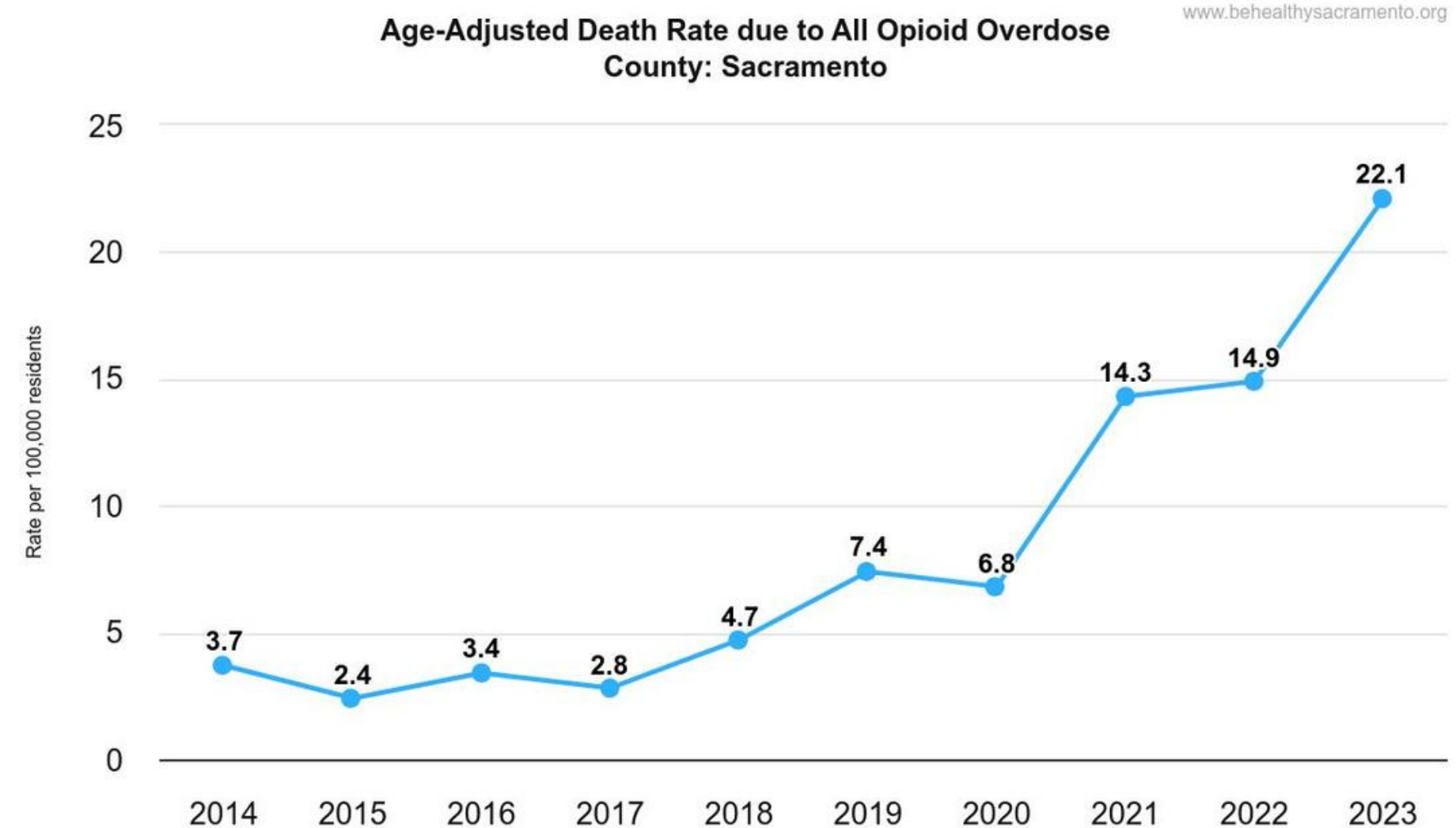
<https://www.actupphilly.org/harm-reduction>

The State of Opioid Overdose Deaths in Sacramento ⁴

Age-Adjusted Death Rate due to All
Opioid Overdose, 2023

22.1 Sacramento
Rate Per 100,000
Residents

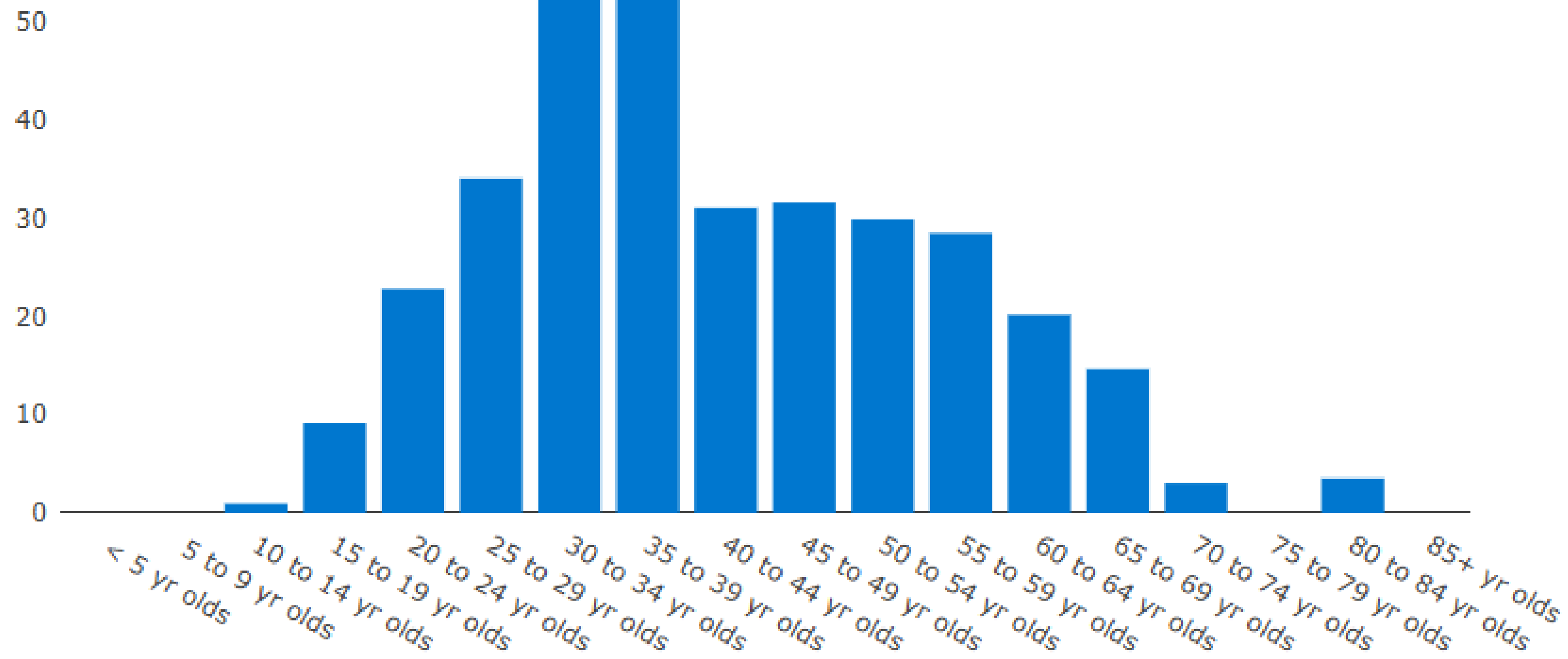
20.8 California
Rate Per 100,000
Residents



Source: California Opioid Overdose Surveillance Dashboard (2023)

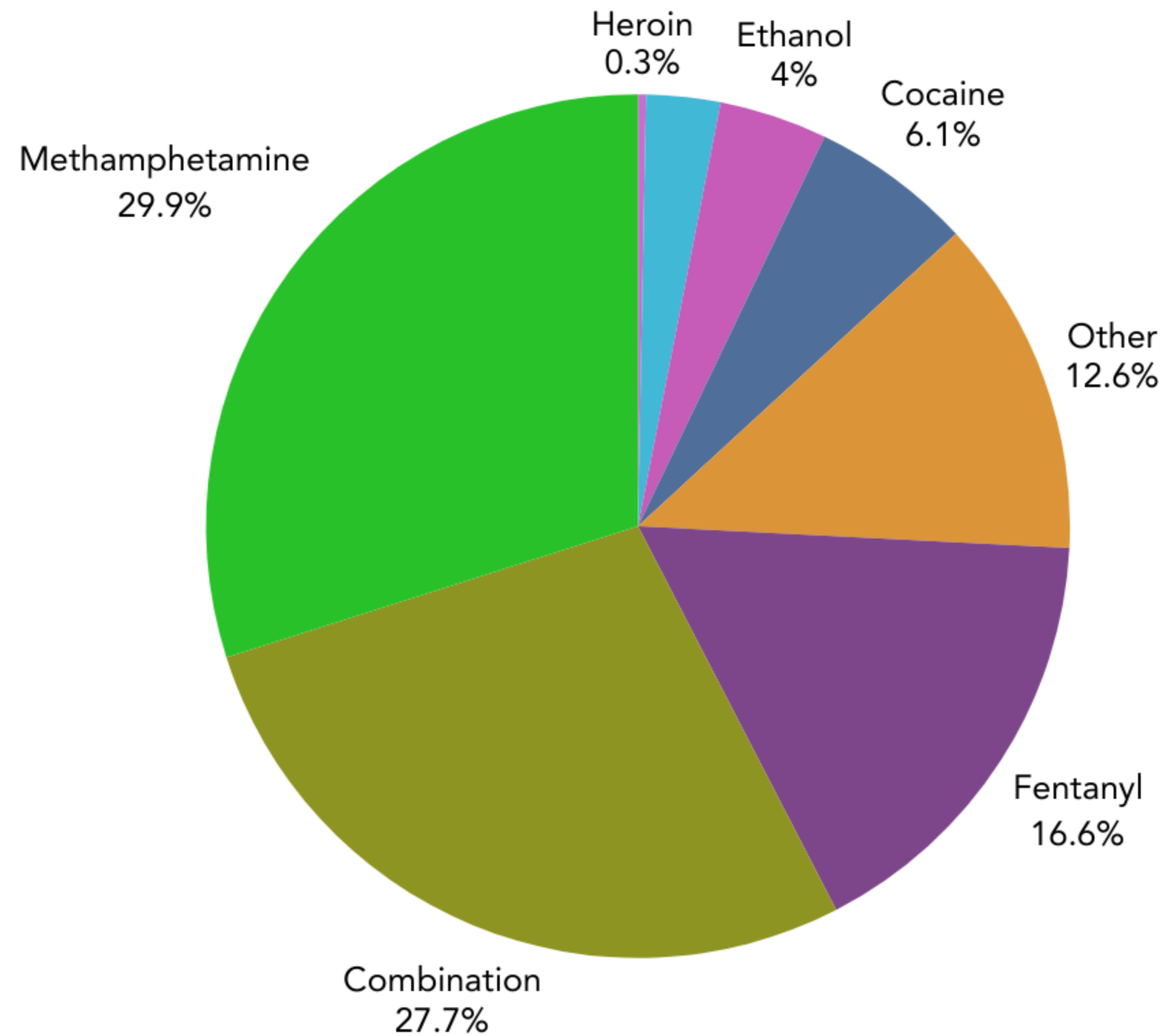
Opioid-Related Deaths by Age, Sacramento County, 2023⁵

Any Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths - Sacramento County by Age Groups, 2023
Crude Rate per 100,000 Residents



<https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/ODdash/?tab=CTY>

Opioid-Related Deaths by Cause, Sacramento County, 2023 ⁶



The State of STIs in CA

2024 STI / 2023 HIV Data

CHLAMYDIA

- CA: 191,527 chlamydia cases in 2023 ⁷
 - 2024: 5,977 cases in Sacramento County ¹³
- Sacramento County: 461.8 per 100,000 incidence rate-lower than state (489.7) ⁴
- Sacramento County ranked 19th in the state ⁷

GONORRHEA

- 74,188 gonorrhea cases in 2023 in CA ⁷
 - 2024: 2,217 cases in Sacramento County ¹³
- Sacramento County: 199.1 per 100,000 incidence rate-higher than state (189.7) ⁴
- Sacramento County ranked 7th in the state ⁷

CONGENITAL SYPHILIS

- 514 congenital syphilis cases in 2023 in CA ⁷
 - 2024:18 congenital syphilis cases in Sacramento County ¹³
- Sacramento County: 132.5 per 100,000 live births incidence rate-higher than state (128.9) ⁴
 - In 2014, IR was 5 per 100,000
- Sacramento County ranked 22nd in the state ⁷

SYPHILIS

- 32,006 syphilis cases in 2023 in CA ⁷
 - 2024: 1,278 cases in Sacramento County ¹³
- Sacramento County: 19.2 per 100,000 incidence rate-higher than state (16.3) ⁴
- Sacramento County ranked 13th in the state (primary and secondary) ⁷

HIV

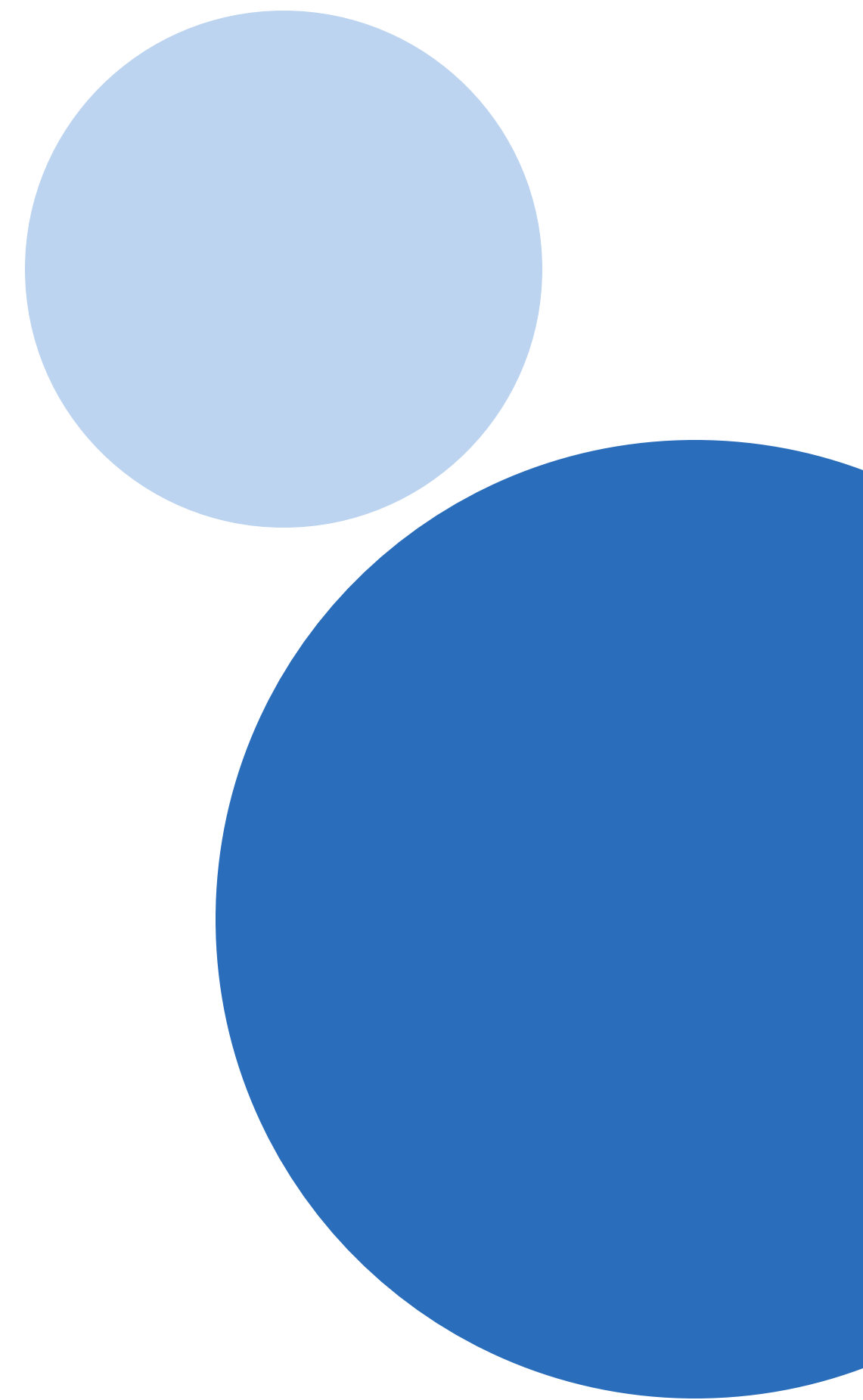
- From 2018-2022, the number of new diagnoses increased by 0.4% (4,863-4,882) in CA ⁸
- 215 people newly diagnosed with HIV in 2023 in Sacramento County ¹³
- Sacramento County: 13.7 per 100,000 incidence rate-higher than state (12.3) ¹³

Sexual Health and Substance Use

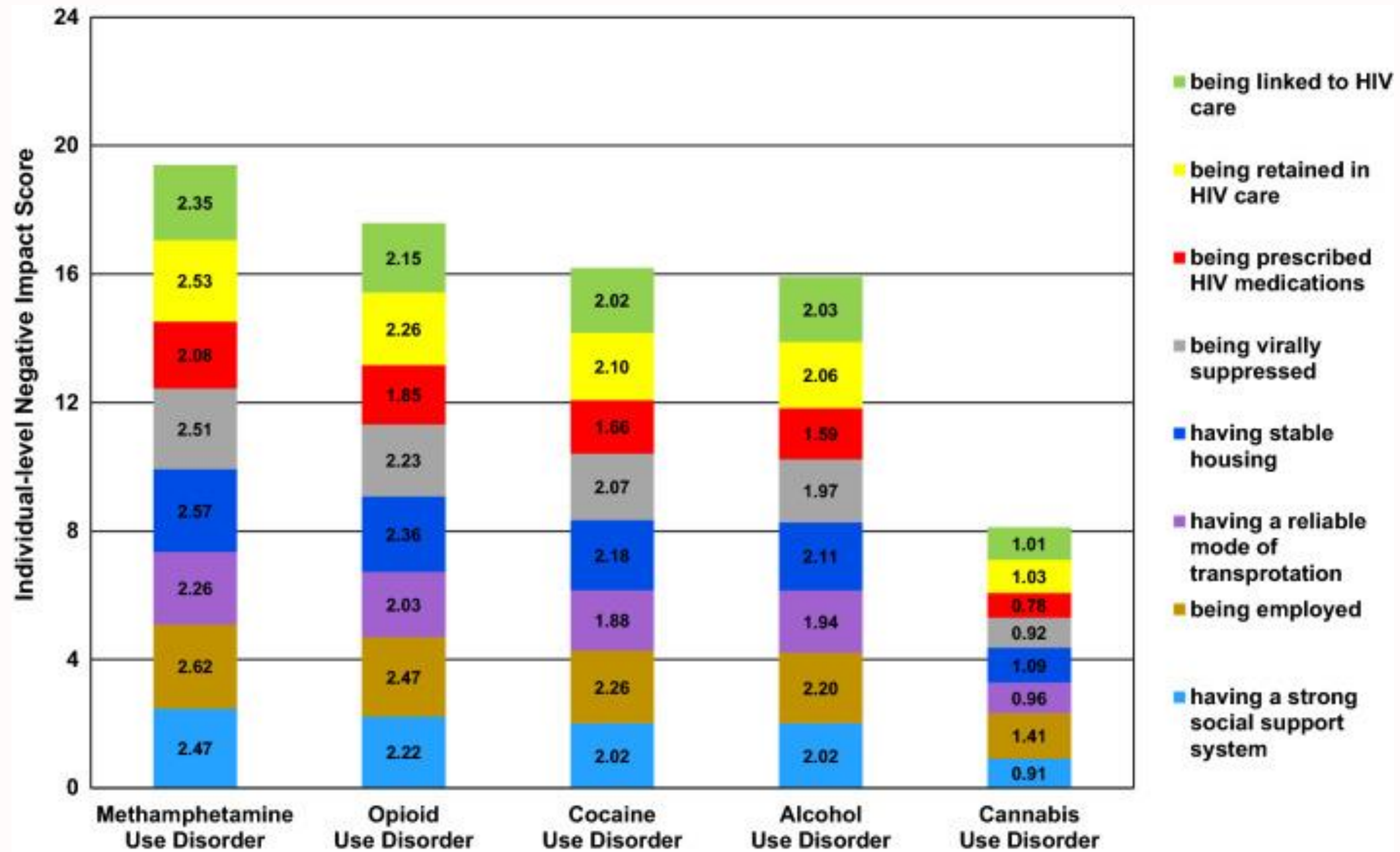
- Opioids tend to dampen interest and desire for sex ^{9,10}
- Sex workers with OUD more likely to have condomless sex in exchange for money or drugs ⁹
- May also engage in polypharmacy (ex. using stimulants and opioids) ⁹
 - Chemsex: use of substances during sexual intercourse
 - Largely associated with condomless anal intercourse for men who have sex with men (MSM)

Sexual Health and Substance Use

- For 18-25 year old's in the US, the odds of contracting STIs were more than 3 times higher among those who reported use of illicit drugs in the last year than those who didn't report drug use ⁹
- 2014-2018, rate of primary and secondary syphilis increased by 171.1% ⁹
 - The proportion of women with primary and secondary syphilis reporting injection drug use in the past 12 months increased from 6.1-11.4% ⁹
 - Rate of congenital syphilis increased by 185.3% ⁹
- Persons seeking treatment of STIs often have a substance use disorder (SUD) ⁹
 - Baltimore STD clinics: 57% had a SUD ⁹
 - Highlights the importance of substance use disorder treatment integrated with sexual health services



Negative Impact Scores Across Different SUDs



11. Garner et al., 2021

Hepatitis C and the Syndemic Approach

- Spread through blood to blood contact
 - Sharing needles and other drug injection equipment
 - Rough anal/vaginal sex that result in blood (though sexual transmission is low)
 - Use of unsterilized needles/tools for piercing or tattoos
- **The Syndemic Approach to HIV, HCV, and Overdose**
 - These diseases interact synergistically due to shared risk factors and social/behavioral drivers
 - Harm reduction at the forefront
 - Addressing social determinants of health (e.g. housing, transportation, health access, social acceptance, etc.)

Hepatitis C

- 2024: 408 cases of chronic Hepatitis C in Sacramento County ¹³
 - Previously 1,022 cases in 2023 ¹³
- Incidence Rate, Sacramento County: 25.8 per 100,000 population ¹³

HARM REDUCTION AND STI PREVENTION

PrEP / PEP

- **PrEP:** Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (daily medication)
- **PEP:** Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (within 72 hours after exposure)
- Both prevent HIV infection

Doxy-PEP

- Antibiotic taken no later than 72 hours after condomless oral or anal sex
- Shown to be effective for people assigned male at birth (AMAB)

"Chemsex" "Party and Play"

- Use of substances during sexual activity to enhance pleasure/sexual excitement, reduce inhibitions
 - Methamphetamine, GHB, cocaine, ketamine, mephedrone commonly used

Safe Injection Supplies

- Clean needles and works to prevent spread of bloodborne pathogens (e.g. HIV, Hepatitis C)
- Narcan for overdose prevention
- Be aware of drug interactions (meth/alcohol, meth/GHB, Viagra/"poppers")

Condoms / Lube

- Latex or non-latex (polyurethane, polyisoprene, nitrile)
- Avoid oil-based lube with condoms
- Come in various textures, flavors, colors for maximum pleasure

County Response



U=U


TAKE YOUR HIV MEDICATION DAILY SO YOU CAN'T PASS IT ON TO OTHERS.

Undetectable = Untransmittable

www.SacSexualHealth.com

SACRAMENTO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
Promote • Prevent • Protect

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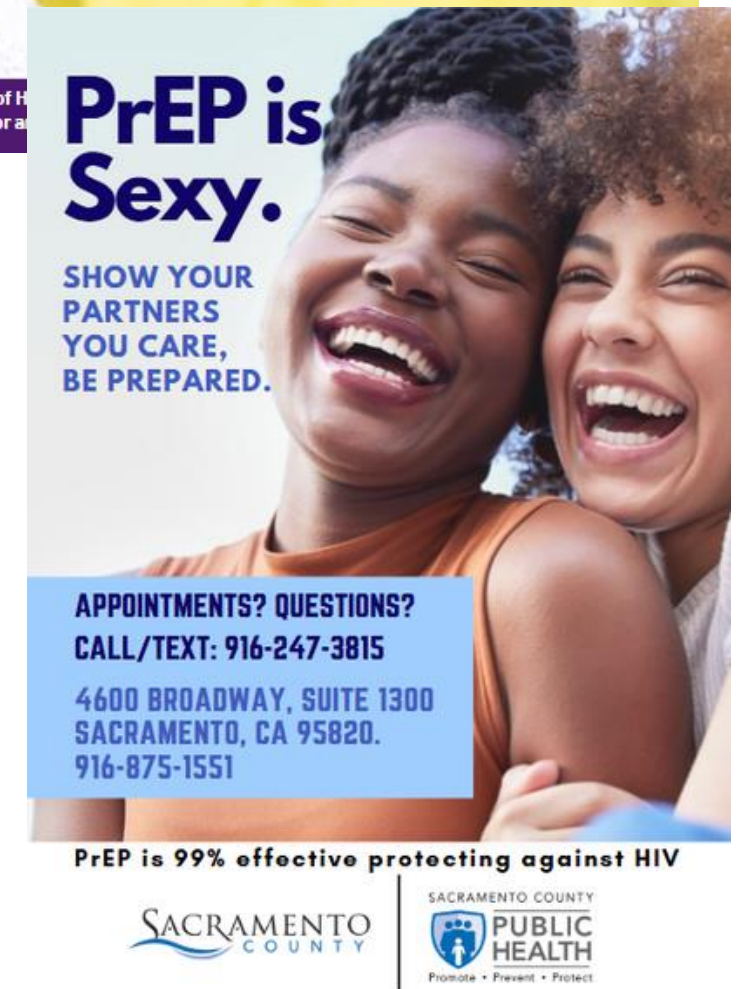
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PREP
prevents
HIV

CALL 916-875-1551

SACRAMENTO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
Promote • Prevent • Protect



PrEP is Sexy.

SHOW YOUR PARTNERS YOU CARE, BE PREPARED.

APPOINTMENTS? QUESTIONS?
CALL/TEXT: 916-247-3815

4600 BROADWAY, SUITE 1300
SACRAMENTO, CA 95820.
916-875-1551

PrEP is 99% effective protecting against HIV

SACRAMENTO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
Promote • Prevent • Protect

Sexual Health Clinic

Free testing and treatment



SEXUAL HEALTH CLINIC

.....

4600 Broadway, Suite 1400
Sacramento, CA 95820

CLINIC HOURS

Monday - Friday

8am - 5pm

Walk-ins Welcome

.....

**CALL TO MAKE YOUR
APPOINTMENT**

916-875-1551

SERVICES PROVIDED

Rapid HIV Testing,
Rapid Hepatitis C Testing,
PrEP, PEP, nPEP,
Pregnancy Testing (Urine),
Testing and Treatment for Sexually Transmitted
Infections,
Rx for Birth Control (Pill, Patch, Ring),
Referrals for Additional Services

**FREE HIV/STD
TESTING &
TREATMENT**



Sacramento County
Sexual Health Clinic
opened its doors in
May 2019

Wellness Without Walls (W3)

Mobile Medical Unit



**MEETING
YOU
WHERE
YOU
ARE**

W3
WELLNESS WITHOUT WALLS

W3 is a mobile unit delivering free services:

- Preventive Healthcare
- Assistance with Obtaining Health Care Coverage
- Mental Health & Substance Use Counseling Referrals
- STI Testing & Prevention Services
- HIV Treatment & Care



**SCAN FOR W3
LOCATIONS**

 **916-875-6022**



POPULATIONS SERVED BY SITE

UNHOUSED / UNSTABLY HOUSED
Howe River Access ; Township 9;
Northgate/Woodlake Area; 3900 Roseville
Road; Florin Road Safe Stay Shelter

PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS
Norwood BAART Program; Medmark
Program

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SEX WORK
Communities Against Sexual Harm
(CASH)

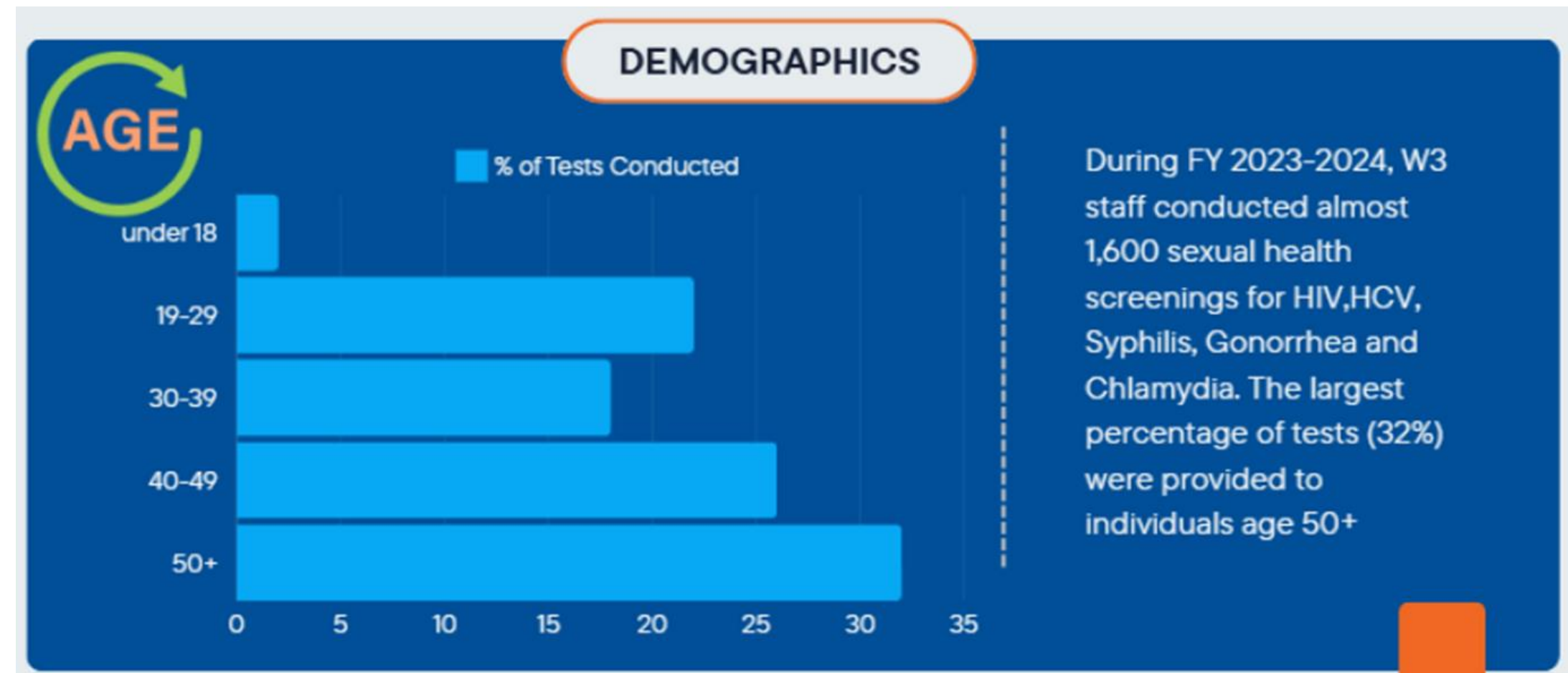
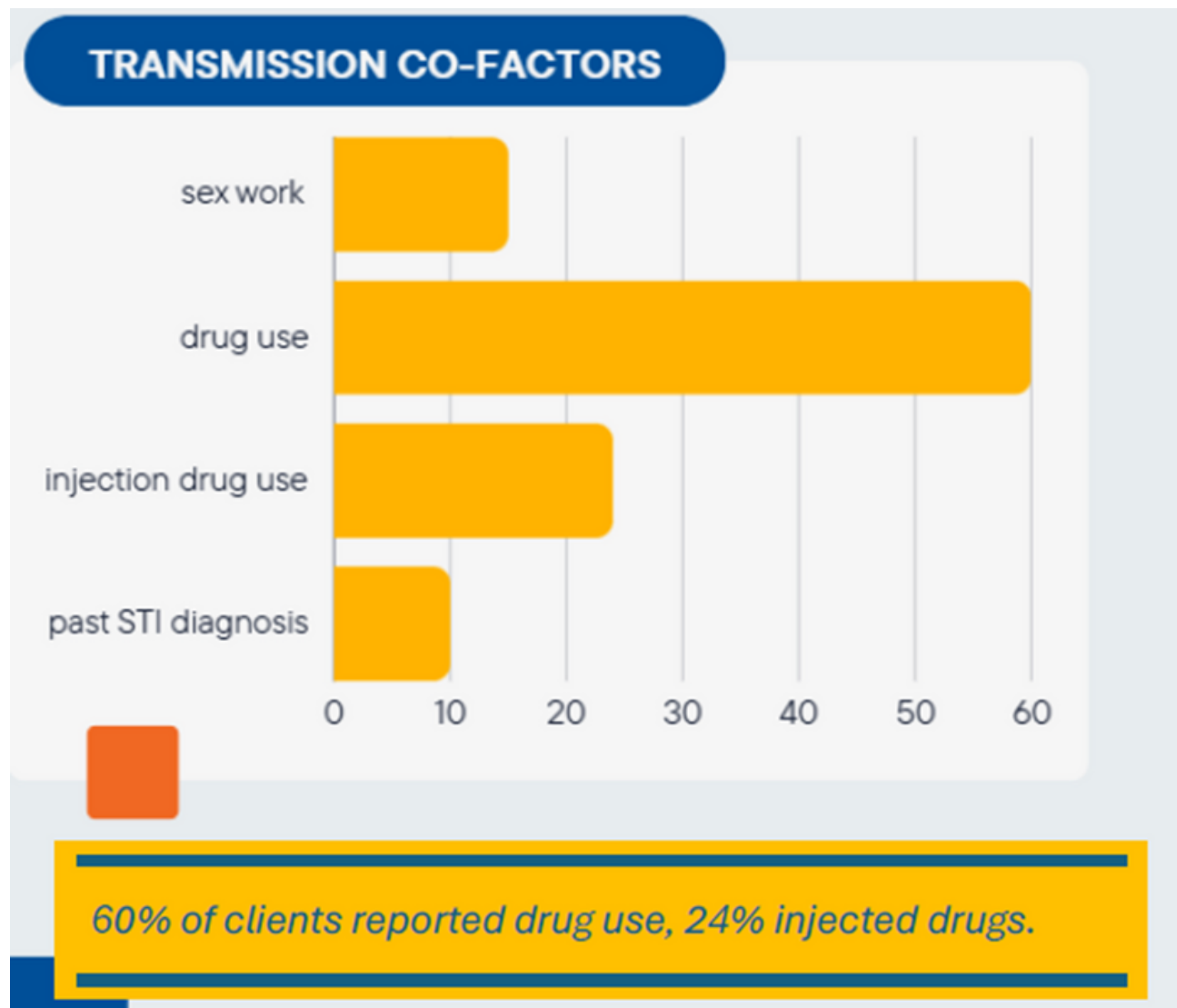
YOUTH
The Grove (unhoused youth); Hiram
Johnson High School



Wellness Without Walls (W3) Reach

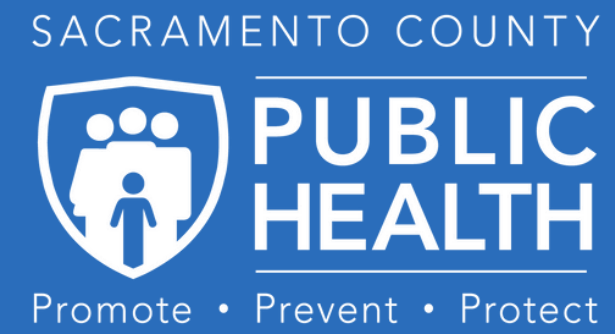
1,595 tests conducted in FY 2023-24

- 91 reactive/positive tests



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Thank You!