

15th International Conference on  
**HIV TREATMENT AND  
PREVENTION ADHERENCE**

*Moderator: Faith Kiruthi, Nairobi City County Health Servicers*

# Exploring Challenges and Opportunities for Delivering PrEp in Women

*Panelists: K. Rivet Amico, PhD, University of Michigan*

*Mercy Kamau, Kenya Urban reproductive Health Initiative (KURHI)*



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# Exploring Challenges and Opportunities for Delivering PrEp in Women

*BRIEF RESPONSES FROM K. Rivet Amico*

*NO CONFLICTS TO DISCLOSE*



# HIV in cis-gender women in the US

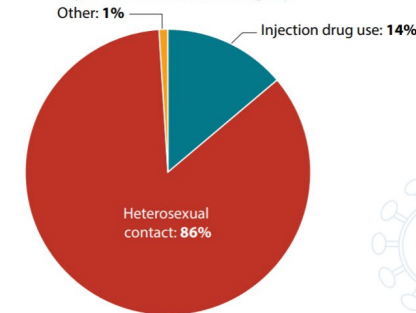


- Cis-gender women in the US
  - 23% of the 1.1M people living with HIV in the US (258,000)
  - Rates of new infections declined 23% since 2010
  - In 2018, women accounted for 1 in 5 new HIV diagnoses (~7,000)
  - 85% reported heterosexual sex as route of acquisition
  - 15% related to injection drug use
  - Black/African American (13% of US population) accounted for 60% of new cases in 2017

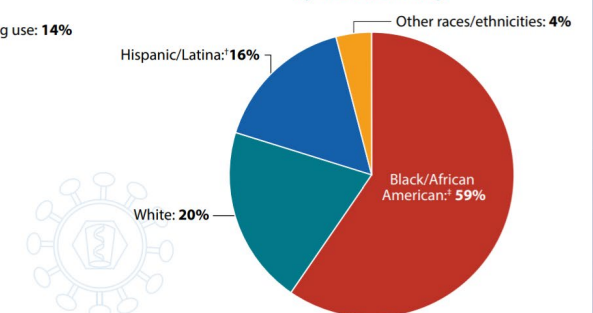
OF THE 38,739 NEW HIV DIAGNOSES IN THE US AND DEPENDENT AREAS\* IN 2017,  
**7,401 (19%) WERE AMONG WOMEN.**

## New HIV Diagnoses Among Women in the US and Dependent Areas in 2017

By Transmission Category



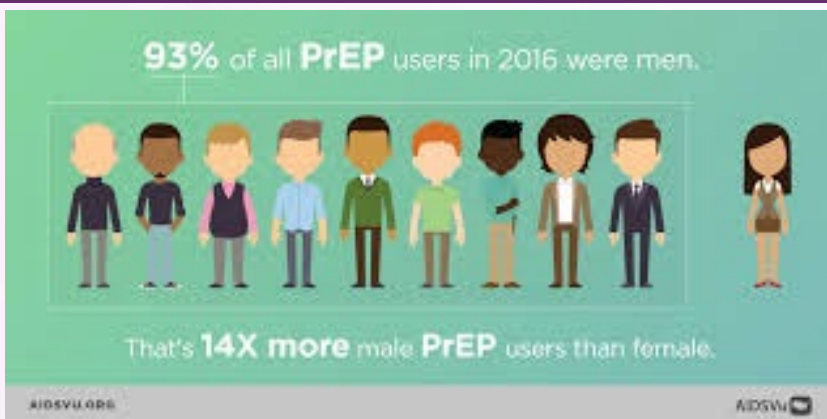
By Race/Ethnicity



<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/group/gender/women/cdc-hiv-women.pdf>

How has it been implementing PrEP in your country for women?

# Slow start Low uptake



- In 2012, PrEP uptake was low among cis-gender women (8.5 per 100,000)
- In 2017, up 12 fold among women (102 per 100,000)
- BUT 93% of PrEP users in 2016 were men
- PrEP Starts and Use continue to be dominated by White males in NORTH EASTERN STATES
- Women → 19% of new infections, 7% of PrEP users

How has it been implementing PrEP in your country for women?

# Low uptake



28,000 Women Have Started PrEP  
Estimated 2% of all women with indications

*Inclusion of cis-gender women has lagged behind other groups*

Recent survey data has suggested that only 3% of trans people reported taking PrEP

Sevelius JM et al. *HIV Testing and PrEP Use in a National Probability Sample of Sexually Active Transgender People in the United States*. Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes, 84: 437-442, 2020 (open access).

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6741a3.htm>

How has it been implementing PrEP in your country for women?

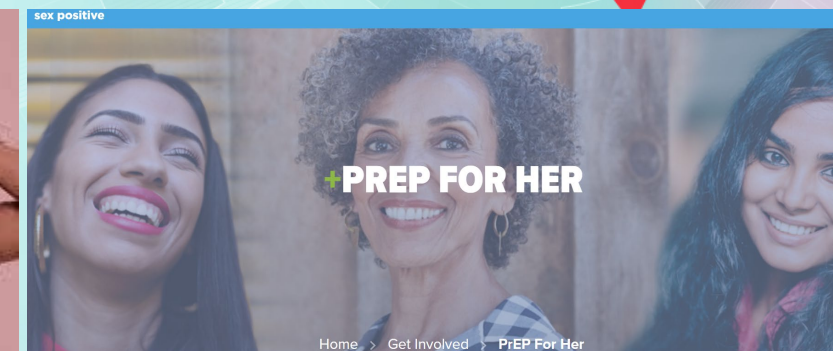
# Getting better



- Last several years has seen massive push towards inclusion

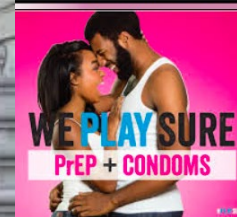
## BUT

Absent from Descovy trials  
Poorly represented in literature  
Still a lot of ground to cover



### ::Hangouts with HIVE:: PrEP Awareness Campaigns: Including Women

- Surveys and focus groups conducted with women demonstrate:
- Few women know about PrEP as an effective HIV prevention method
  - Women are interested in learning more about PrEP as a potential option for themselves



How has it been implementing PrEp in your country for women?

**CHALLENGING**  
**SUBSTANTIAL** progress  
**LONG** way to go



# What are the key lessons learned?



- Once informed, women are interested
  - Factors influencing women: Cost, social norms, provider support, and ease of accessing services, perceived risk embedded in high exposure risk environments

Aaron, Blum, Seidman, Hoyt, Simone, Sullivan, Smith (2018) Optimizing delivery of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis for women in the US. [AIDS Patient Care and STDs Vol. 32, No. 1](#) Clinical and Epidemiologic Research

- Watch for continuity with PrEP and prepare for it
  - Some estimates show continuity at ~60% at 3 months and 38% at 6 months

Blackstock OJ, Patel VV, Felsen U, et al. Pre-exposure prophylaxis prescribing and retention in care among heterosexual women at a community-based comprehensive sexual health clinic. *AIDS Care*. 2017;29:866-869.

AEGIS project → 18% with consistent drug detection over a 48 week project – Blumenthal CROI 2020

# What are the key lessons learned?



- LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION
  - Offer PrEP where women go.
  - Family planning clinics, existing programs

LOCATION *aware* ongoing projects

- Project SHE Drexel University, Roth
- PrEP communication intervention WHID (Needle Exchange) Temple U, Bass
- PrEP adherence Substance Using Women – JHU, Sherman
- Family planning- UNC, Filipowicz

# What are the key lessons learned?



- CONTEXT CONTEXT CONTEXT
  - Offer PrEP with sensitivity to context and inclusion of services that are of highest relevance
    - poverty
    - lack of access to health care
    - racial segregation
    - incarceration
    - food insecurity
    - unstable housing
    - intimate partner violence, trauma

Aaron, Blum, Seidman, Hoyt, Simone, Sullivan, Smith (2018) Optimizing delivery of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis for women in the US. [AIDS Patient Care and STDs Vol. 32, No. 1 Clinical and Epidemiologic Research](#)  
O'Malley, T.L., Hawk, M.E., Egan, J.E. *et al.* Intimate Partner Violence and Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP): A Rapid Review of Current Evidence for Women's HIV Prevention. *AIDS Behav* **24**, 1342–1357 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-019-02743-x>  
AIDSVU <https://aidsvu.org/>

EMPOWERING Justice involved women Yale University Meyer;  
PREP-LINK High risk detainees Arkansas Zellar

# What are the key lessons learned?



- Still learning
  - Many calls to pay attention, but limited data available
  - Recent literature review of PrEP adherence from open label, demonstration projects identified low representation of cis-gender women in findings (Abstract #20201105, Crawford)
- MORE TO COME...
  - 178 studies PrEP Women US on CT.gov → 70 not yet complete

What are the **challenges** that you have experienced during the implementation?

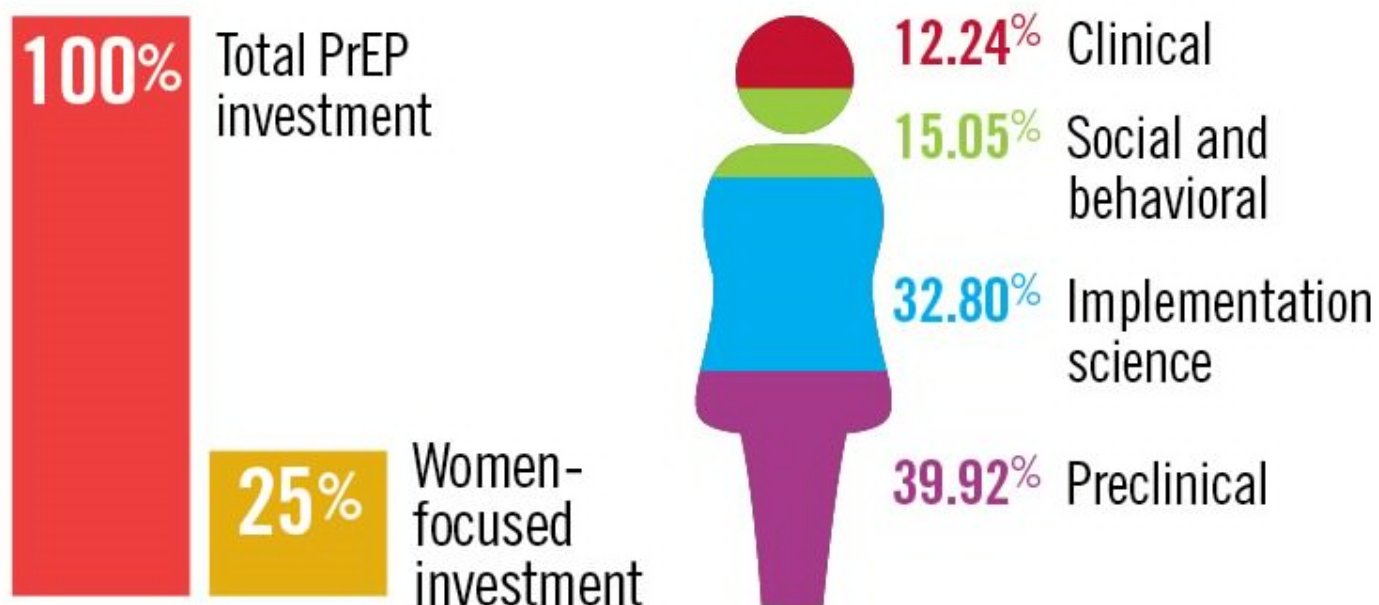


- Woman lag behind on awareness and uptake
- Non-inclusivity has created challenges
  - Have had to catch up and revise attitudes and beliefs
  - Need community driven approaches
  - One size will not fit all
- Social-structural factors **ARE PREVENTION ISSUES**
- Continuity of use is an issue across all groups
- **NEED** investment in **WOMEN**

What are the **challenges** that you have experienced during the implementation?



## Investment in Women-Focused PrEP R&D, 2017



**Two-thirds** of preclinical research was focused on PrEP implant studies, while **16%** was dedicated to exploring long-acting PrEP formulations

Almost **30%** of the research was dedicated to improving PrEP adherence and uptake in high-risk women, including those with drug or substance abuse. Delivering PrEP to pregnant and breastfeeding women made up **15%** of the women-focused implementation science budget.

*HIV Prevention Research & Development Investments, 2017:  
Investing to End the Epidemic  
[www.hivresourcetracking.org](http://www.hivresourcetracking.org)*

<https://www.avac.org/infographic/investment-women-focused-prep-rd-2017>

## What are the opportunities for PrEP delivery among women?



- Inclusion
  - in discovery efforts
  - in demonstration/implementation efforts
  - in “Marketing”
  - in generating programs and solutions
- Location for service delivery and comprehensive services
- Map and mitigate structural factors limiting women’s growth opportunities



Thank you!



## Women and Girls' Health and the HIV AIDS Epidemic

### Maureen M. Goodenow

<sup>1</sup> hiv.gov. Updated February 2019. "U.S. Statistics, Fast Facts." Available at <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics>

<sup>2</sup> Office of Women's Health. Updated March 2019. "About National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day." Available at <https://www.womenshealth.gov/nwghaad>

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention . Updated November 2018. "HIV Surveillance report." Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/reports/surveillance/cdc-hiv-surveillance-report-2017-vol-29.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> hiv.gov. Updated February 2019. "Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America – Counties, Territories, and States." Available at <https://files.hiv.gov/s3fs-public/Ending-the-HIV-Epidemic-Counties-and-Territories.pdf>