



Reducing Stigma and Taking Action: Increasing PrEP Uptake Among Women of Color Using Groundbreaking Strategies

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About Us: Houston Health Department Bureau of HIV/STI and Viral Hepatitis Prevention

- **Marlene McNeese, MBA - Deputy Assistant Director**
- **DIS – Partner Services** team to conduct disease intervention and partner elicitation.
- **HIV/HCV Service Linkage Program-** to provide linkage to people newly diagnosed with HIV/HCV or who have fallen out of care.
- **PrEP Program-** to provide PrEP Navigation services and PrEP prescriptions, HIV/STI Testing, and treatment.



INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement:

PrEP is highly effective, yet uptake remains disproportionately low among women of color in Houston/Harris County.

Background:

The Houston Health Department was awarded an 8-month CDC's PS24 0047 PrEP Supplemental Grant. This grant focused on accelerating Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Uptake (PrEP) for the HIV Epidemic in the US among cisgender and transgender women of color.

Goal:

Share strategies implemented by the Houston Health Department to address stigma and promote PrEP access for cisgender and transgender women of color.



DESCRIPTION – PrEP SUMMIT

- **Summit Name:** *I AM WOMEN, I AM LIFE*
- **Attendance:** 100+ participants from 33 organizations
- **Highlights:**
 - Amplified women's voices
 - Used live polling and participant-driven sessions
 - Focused on stigma, mistrust, and access



AGENDA –

PrEP/PEP Summit 2025
"I Am Woman; I Am Life"
Celebrating the Inclusion of Women's Voices in the Future of PrEP

Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025
Time: 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Location: Emancipation Park Cultural Community Center
Focus: Advancing PrEP/PEP strategies among Black and Hispanic Women.

Summit Agenda

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM
 Registration + Breakfast

Summit Host: Yvonne Guidry, "Spoiled Latina" Social Media Personality

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM
 Welcome & Icebreaker

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM
 Keynote Address
Speaker: Dr. Charlene Flash, President & CEO, Avenue 360 Health and Wellness

10:15 AM – 10:30 AM
 Interactive Break

10:30 AM – 11:15 AM
The Hackathon Session

11:15 AM – 11:30 AM
 Live Performance

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Fireside Chat - Dr. Oni Blackstock - Founder and Executive Director of Health Justice

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM
Networking Lunch + ViiV Healthcare Presentation by Albert "Daniel" Ramos

Afternoon Session: Reimagining Prevention

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM
 Panel Discussion - "What's Not Working & What Needs to Change" -

2:00 PM – 2:30 PM
The Community Lab - "Designing for Inclusion" Gilbreath Communications

2:30 PM – 2:40 PM
 Break

2:40 PM – 3:10 PM
Movement Break: The Power of Joy

3:10 PM – 3:40 PM
Panel: Uplifting Black & Hispanic Women

3:40 PM – 3:50 PM
 Closing & Call to Action

3:50 PM – 4:30 PM
 Ask the Experts & Community + Resource Tabling.

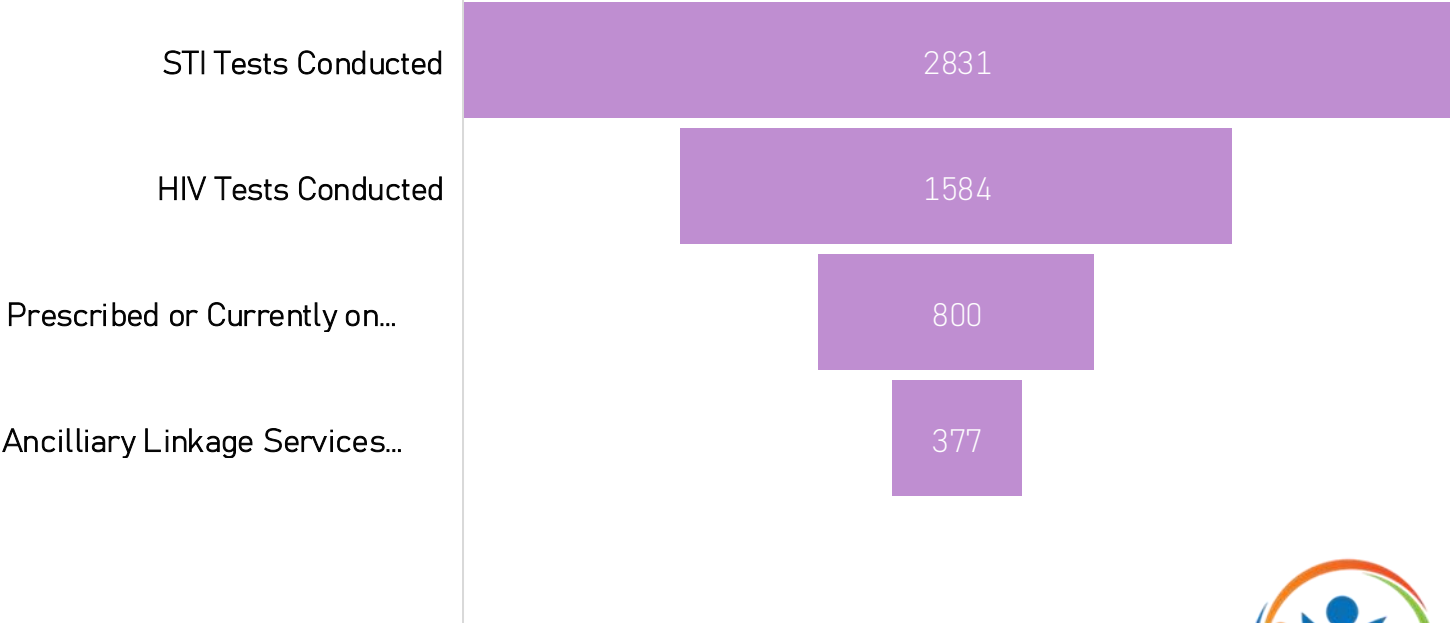
A space created for Black and Hispanic women to connect, share, and advance health outcomes.

- **Overview:**
 - Theatrical performance by FLAS Inc.
 - Performed 19 times, reaching 2,000 people
 - Culturally resonant, emotionally engaging education
- [L@CURA DE AMOR](#)



Community-Driven Program Outcomes

Activities – Increasing Awareness and Access



LESSONS LEARNED

- **Identified Barriers:**
 - Financial assistance gaps
 - Transportation issues
 - Inflexible work schedules
- Partner Responses
 - In-house driver for transportation
 - Extended office hours to accommodate client availability and same-day PrEP
 - Same-day PrEP Starter kits



RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic Priorities:

- Targeted education and storytelling
- Tailored outreach approaches
- Improved access to services
- Trauma-informed practices



Key Message:

Engage communities using real women's stories to reduce stigma and promote care.

TAKE-HOME POINTS

Key Insights:

- Creative, women-centered events, culturally grounded strategies increase PrEP uptake.
- Representation and Community engagement combat systemic barriers.



Implications:

- Influences future public health programming
- Highlights the importance of funding, access, and outreach

THANK YOU!



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