



WOMEN'S HEALTH
IN WOMEN'S HANDS
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE
INCREASE • INNOVATE • IGNITE

Background

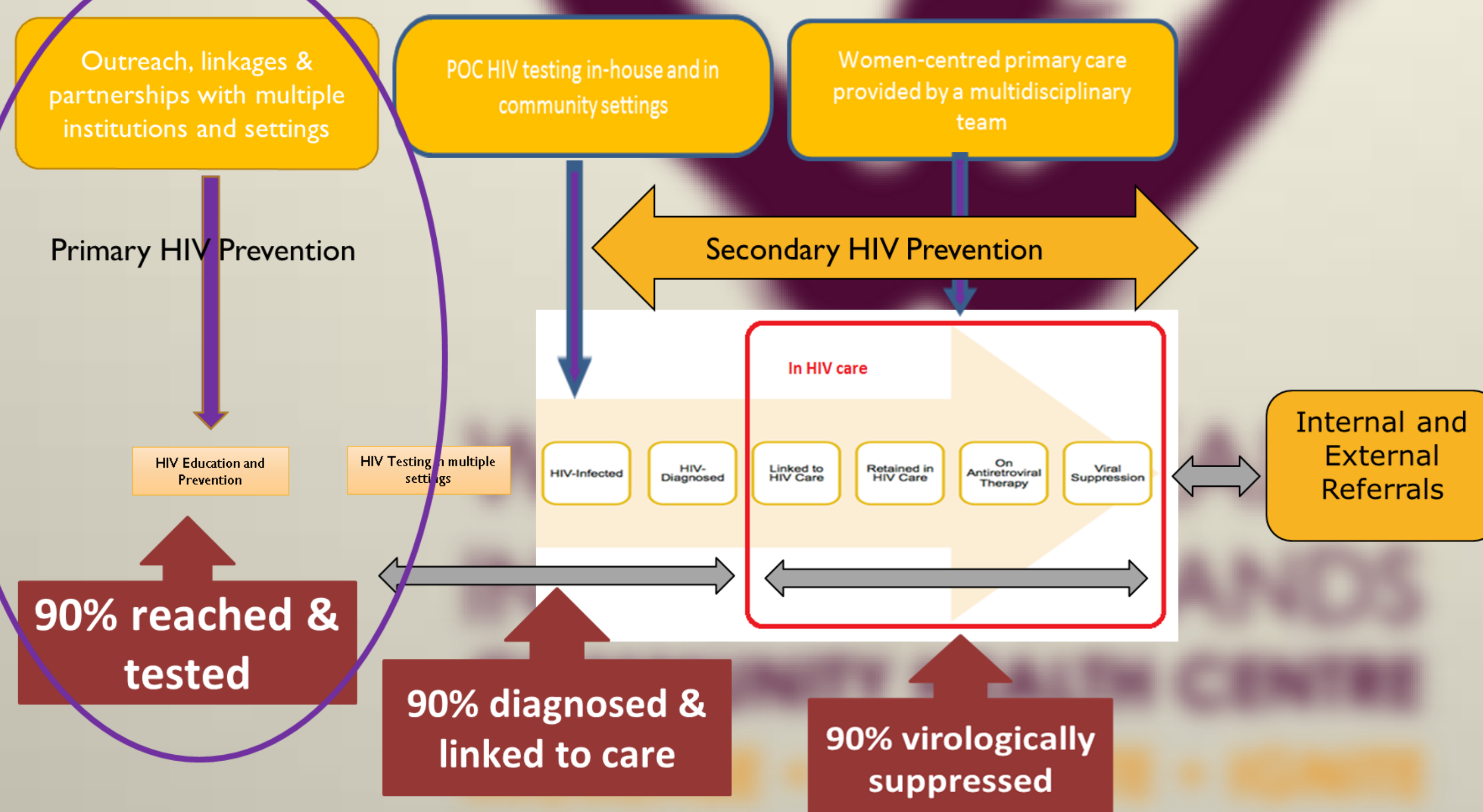
Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre (WHIWH CHC) has been delivering HIV services primarily for women from countries with generalized epidemics since 1999. HIV continues to disproportionately affect African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) women in Toronto. In 2014 - 2015, 51% of all new HIV infections in Ontario occurred among ACB women (OHTN, 2016) in 2016-2017 that number rose to 54.3% (OHESI, 2017). The "African, Caribbean and Black Women Taking Control over HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health" initiative, is a three year project that is part of a larger HIV Program running at WHIWH CHC which focuses primarily on treatment, support and care for women living with HIV (WLWH).

This project targets ACB women over 16 years of age in Toronto and aims to enhance the existing "Care Cascade" by including HIV education, testing, diagnosis and linkage to primary healthcare as part of a holistic "Care Cascade" continuum. We foster community-based driven networks in ACB communities, and build skills and leadership (through workshop training) with ACB community women leaders and service providers to affect change that will reduce risk factors for HIV/AIDS infection among ACB women.

African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) Women Taking Control over HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health: A sustainable model for culturally responsive and evidenced based HIV prevention

The project would fall under this section of the care cascade

WHIWH CHC HIV Care Cascade



Project Objective

The objectives of the project are to:

- To increase knowledge and awareness of sexual behaviors that put people at risk of HIV
- To increase awareness of and access to HIV testing for ACB women at risk and to reduce HIV transmission
- To facilitate access to care, treatment and support for ACB women diagnosed with HIV

Results

Preliminary results from 2017 to date are as follows; we have conducted 89 HIV prevention workshops, 70 capacity building workshops for service providers and community members, and 120 outreach activities reaching 11, 987 ACB women.

We were also able to test 552 ACB women, who have received their status through our HIV anonymous POC testing initiatives.

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Methods

Applying an evidence-based approach and an established train-the-trainer model, WHIWH has trained 20 Community Health Ambassadors (CHAs) to engage ACB women living in Toronto. The promotion of safer sex and healthy relationships is the foundation of 180 workshops being conducted in ACB communities. The program partners with 30 community organizations in order to deliver HIV prevention workshops to front-line and support staff and a critical component of the program is the provision of anonymous point-of-care (POC) testing and linkage to care for those diagnosed with HIV.

Limitations/Successes

Some limitations to the project have been request denials from gatekeepers, CHAs discontinuing due to career growth, and penetrating faith-based communities.

The successes of the project support our ability to hold ongoing recruitment of new CHAs, who continue to foster new partnerships, with increased presence in the community, and support with the promotion of HIV testing in community settings, which has increased HIV testing numbers not only in community, but at the centre as well.

The project has also supported the implementation of various projects at the centre, that aim to reduce the rates of new HIV infections amongst ACB populations, and facilitate access to care for those who test positive.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure: I have no conflicts of interest
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Ontario's Community
Health Centres

Every One Matters.

Outreach



Conclusion

The CHA program is a culturally responsive population-based intervention that is working to decrease the disproportionate rates of HIV transmission among ACB women living in Toronto. It is an example of a comprehensive approach to the "Care Cascade" which includes HIV education, testing, diagnosis and linkage to primary healthcare as part of a holistic continuum. This program is one of many at WHIWH CHC supporting progress towards 90-90-90 and empowering communities to lead the way.