



Revisiting the Invisible Latino HIV Crisis: Examining Progress and Identifying Remaining Gaps in the National Response

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Latino HIV Disparities in the Last Decade: The Invisible HIV Crisis Among Latinos in the U.S.



The Invisible US Hispanic/Latino HIV Crisis: Addressing Gaps in the National Response

The federal government has proposed an end to HIV transmission in the United States by 2030. Although the United States has made substantial overall progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS, data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have raised concerns about widening, yet largely unrecognized, HIV infection disparities among Hispanic and Latino populations.

This commentary identifies underlying drivers of increasing new HIV infections among Hispanics/Latinos, discusses existing national efforts to fight HIV in Hispanic/Latino communities, and points to gaps in the federal response. Consideration of the underlying drivers of increased HIV incidence among Hispanics/Latinos is warranted to achieve the administration's 2030 HIV/AIDS goals.

Specifically, the proposed reinforcement of national efforts to end the US HIV epidemic must include focused investment in four priority areas: (1) HIV stigma reduction in Hispanic/Latino communities, (2) the availability and accessibility of HIV treatment of HIV-positive Hispanics/Latinos, (3) the development of behavioral interventions tailored to Hispanic/Latino populations, and (4) the engagement of Hispanic/Latino community leaders. (*Am J Public Health* 2020;110:27–31. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2019.305309)

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See also Kapadia and Landers, p. 15; and the *AJPH* Ending the HIV Epidemic section, pp. 22–68.

In his February 5, 2019, State of the Union Address, President Trump promised to reinforce national efforts to end the US HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030. However, the national public health agenda has neglected the accelerating HIV/AIDS crisis in Hispanic/Latino communities. Progress in the fight against HIV is reflected in aggregate data for the United States, but data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) raise alarming concerns about widening, yet largely unrecognized, HIV infection disparities among Hispanics/Latinos.^{1–3}

THE INVISIBLE HIV CRISIS AMONG HISPANICS/LATINOS

Although progress in reducing HIV incidence and new diagnoses has been achieved for specific Hispanic/Latino subpopulations, increases among key transmission and age groups reflect a largely unrecognized Hispanic/Latino HIV crisis.^{1–3} CDC estimates of HIV incidence suggest that the number of new HIV infections in Hispanic/Latino communities is escalating.⁴ Although estimated HIV incidence in the United States has declined overall by 6% since 2010, it has increased among Hispanic/Latino populations by 14% or more.¹ Similarly, surveillance data show that the annual number of Hispanics/Latinos newly diagnosed with HIV has

increased by 7% between 2012 and 2016, in contrast to overall annual new HIV diagnoses in the United States, which have decreased by 4% (Figure 1).² The increase in estimated HIV incidence and new diagnoses among Hispanics/Latinos is best elucidated by considering the specific Hispanic/Latino populations most heavily affected by HIV/AIDS—namely, men who have sex with men (MSM); in particular, young Hispanic/Latino MSM, transgender Latina females, and recent Hispanic/Latino immigrants.

MSM represent the largest affected population in the current Hispanic/Latino HIV crisis, accounting for approximately 80% of estimated HIV incidence among Hispanics/Latinos.¹ Alarmingly, since 2010, the estimated number of new annual HIV infections has increased by 30% for Hispanic/Latino MSM and, notably, by 68% for Hispanic/Latino MSM aged 25 to 34 years (Figure 2).¹ Similarly, since 2012, annual new HIV diagnoses for young Hispanics/Latinos aged 13 to 24 years have remained constant, whereas overall new diagnoses for youths aged 13 to 24

years declined by 10% over the same period.² Pronounced HIV disparity among transgender Latinos was reported in a recent systematic review and meta-analysis.⁵ It is estimated that roughly one in four transgender Latinos is HIV positive, with estimates of HIV prevalence in the included studies ranging from 8% to 60%.⁶ In addition, individuals born outside the continental United States accounted for at least one in three new HIV diagnoses for Hispanics/Latinos in 2017,² representing a frequently overlooked key population affected by the Hispanic/Latino HIV epidemic. Importantly, it has been suggested that the majority of foreign-born Hispanics/Latinos living with HIV acquired the infection in the United States.⁵ Recent Hispanic/Latino immigrants face several challenges related to language barriers, immigration status, differences between host culture and that of their country of origin, and distinct social norms regarding health care seeking and utilization, exacerbating their vulnerability to HIV infection and limiting their access to prevention and treatment services.

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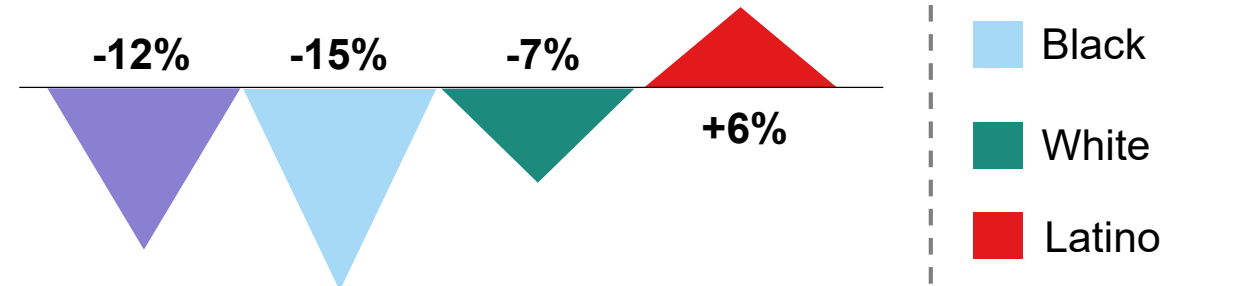
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CDC HIV Data 2010–2019

Change in Annual New HIV Diagnoses



Change in Estimated Annual New HIV Infections



Latino men who have sex with men (MSM)

Overall

Black

White

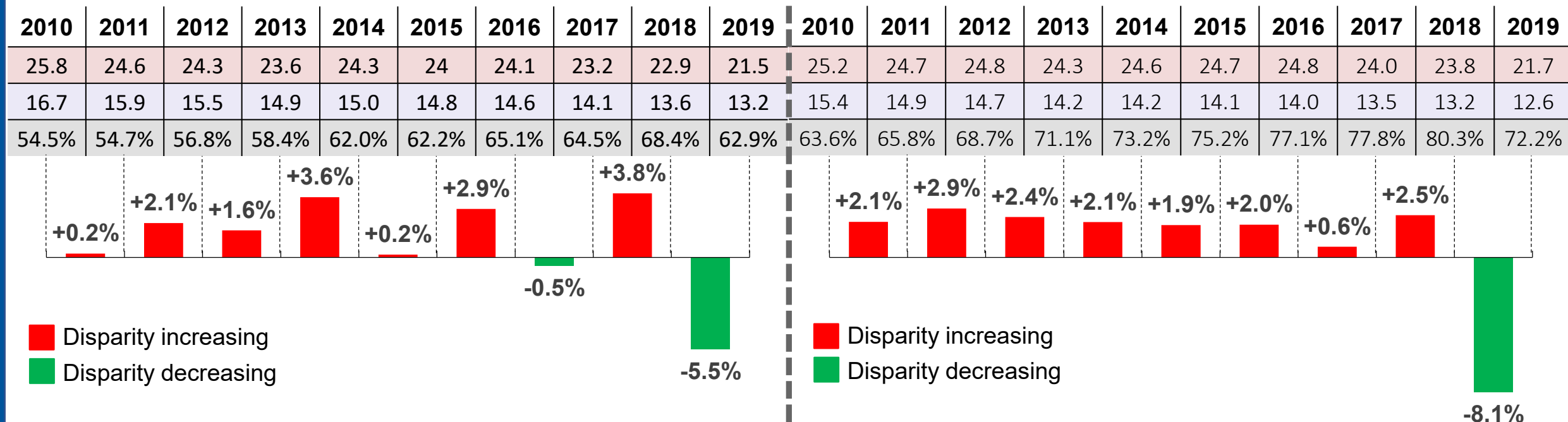
Latino

Latinos Continue to Experience HIV Disparities Despite Progress Reflected in Data for 2019

Year-to-Year Change in Disparity,
Latino vs. Overall HIV Diagnosis Rate

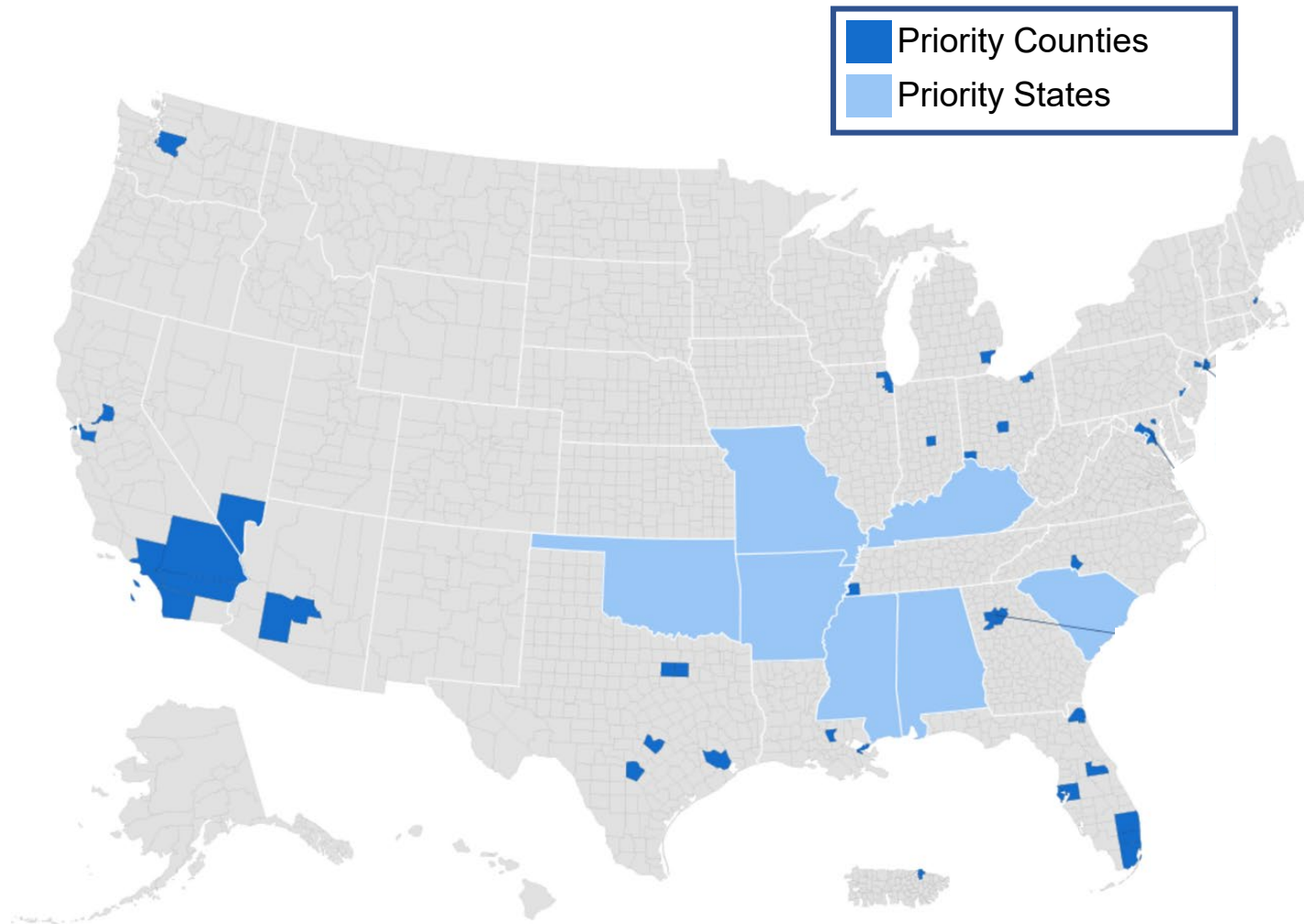
Year-to-Year Change in Disparity,
Latino vs. Overall Estimated HIV Incidence Rate

Latino rate per 100,000 population
 Overall rate per 100,000 population
 Latino vs. Overall disparity



Source: CDC Atlas, cdc.gov/nchhstp/atlas/index.htm

Alignment of EHE Priority Jurisdictions and the Latino HIV Epidemic



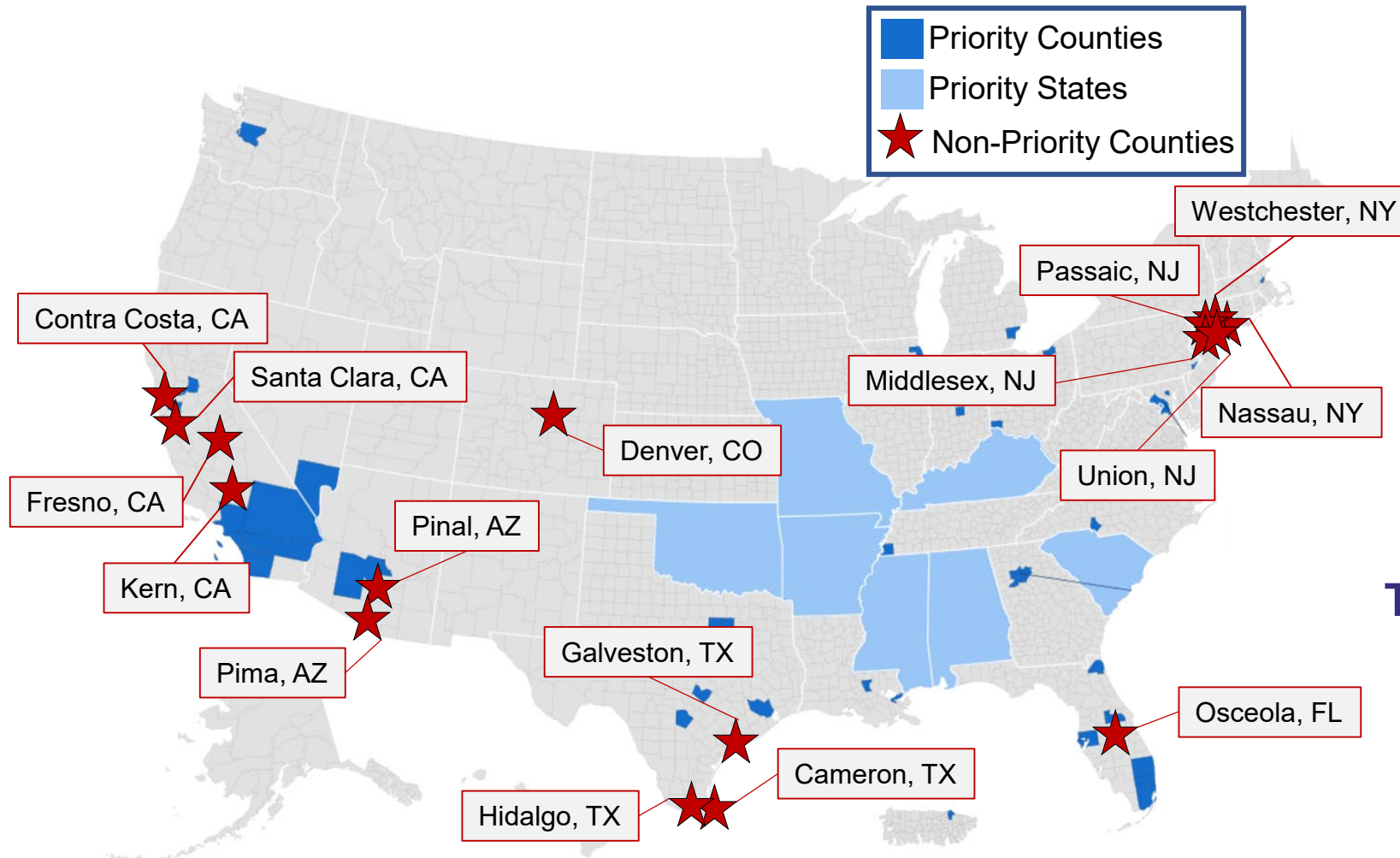
EHE priority jurisdictions
account for

61%

of new HIV diagnoses
among Latinos in the U.S.
in 2019*

* Priority counties and states;
Latino case data was unavailable in
2 jurisdictions

Hotspots in the Latino HIV Epidemic Outside of EHE Priority Jurisdictions, 2019

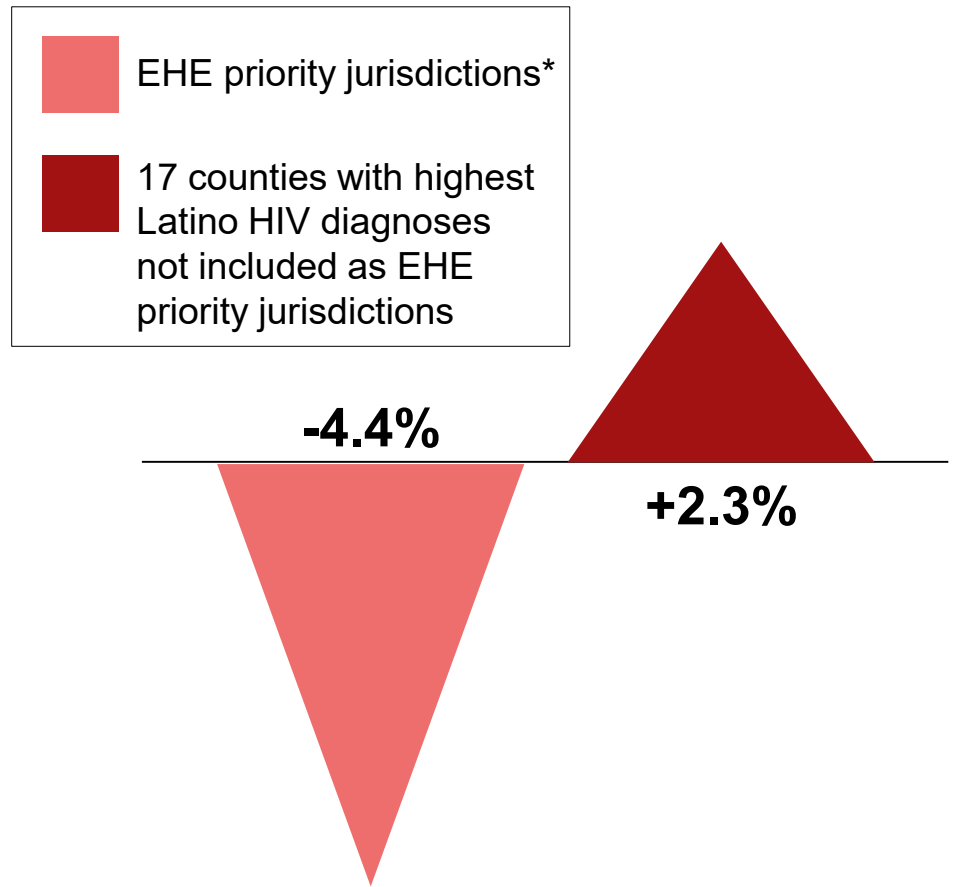


17 of 50
local jurisdictions with
most new HIV diagnoses
among Latinos are not
designated EHE priority
jurisdictions.

They account roughly **1 of 10**
new Latino HIV diagnoses
nationally.

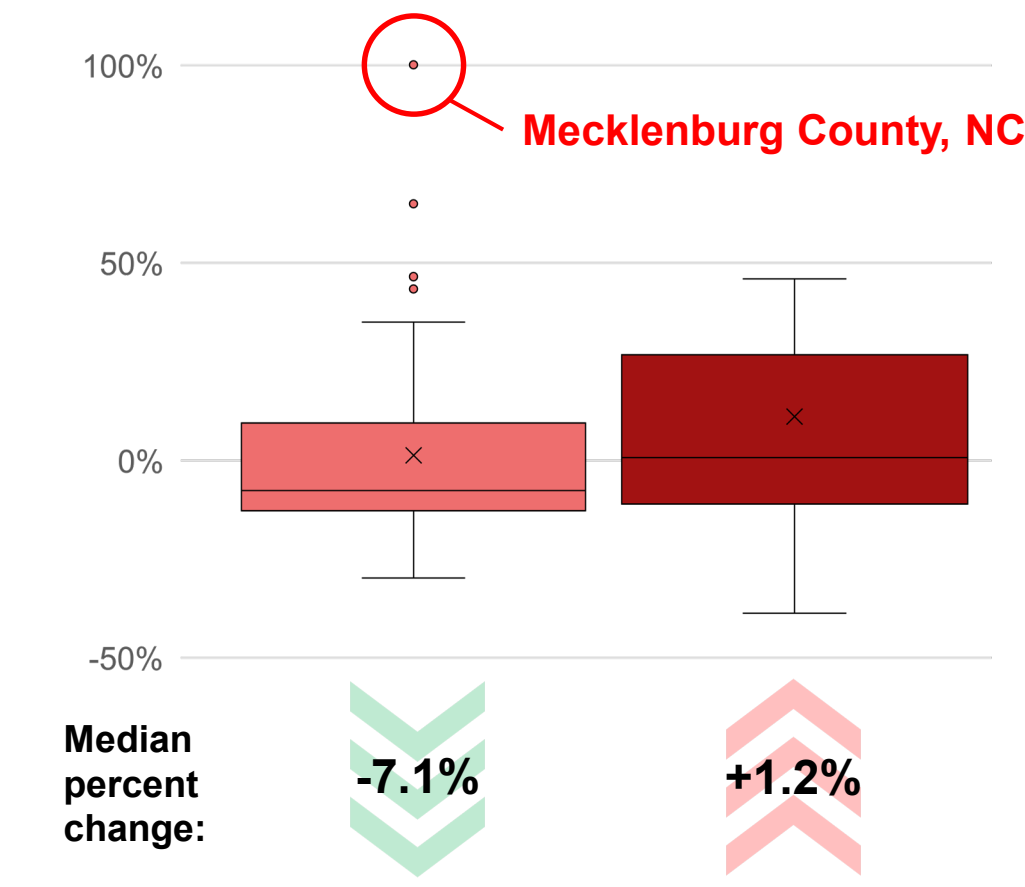
EHE Priority Jurisdictions vs. Non-EHE Latino Priority Geographies: Heterogeneity in 2018–19 Change of New HIV Diagnoses among Latinos

Change in Aggregate New HIV Diagnoses among Latinos, 2018–2019



Source: CDC Atlas, cdc.gov/nchstp/atlas/index.htm

Change in New HIV Diagnoses among Latinos by Geography, 2018–2019

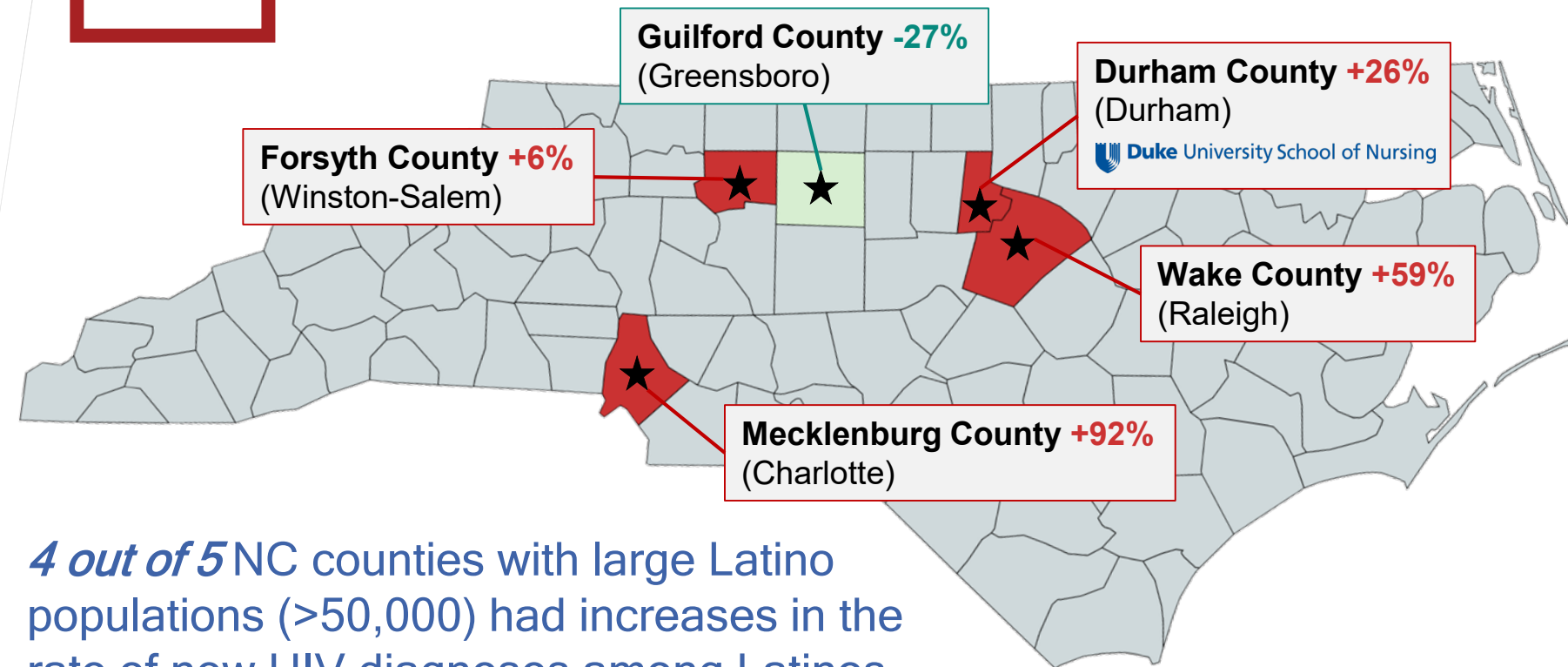


* Calculations for EHE priority jurisdictions based on 47 EHE counties and 7 priority states due to missing or suppressed data for Latino populations.

HIV among Latinos in North Carolina, 2018-19

+19%

Among Latinos in NC, the rate of new HIV diagnoses per 100,000 population increased by **19%** between 2018-19



The Latino population in NC grew by

40%

between 2010 and 2020, compared to

23%

growth nationwide.

4 out of 5 NC counties with large Latino populations (>50,000) had increases in the rate of new HIV diagnoses among Latinos between 2018-19.

A Call to Action

1

Reduce the invisibility of decade-long HIV disparities in Latino communities, with particular attention to increasing awareness among the healthcare and public health workforce.

2

Increase understanding of the drivers of recent reductions in HIV diagnoses among Latinos and of persisting geographic disparities.

3

Support development of a diverse clinical HIV workforce with expertise in Latino health, including among nurses, and cultivate Latino leaders in HIV care, advocacy, and programming.

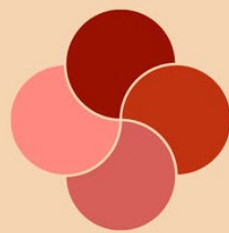
Launching New HIV-Focused Projects at DUSON



Duke University School of Nursing

Center for Latino Adolescent and Family Health

*The Center for Latino Adolescent and Family Health (CLAFH) at Duke University School of Nursing (DUSON) is launching two new projects to address HIV in Latino communities and among youth living with HIV, with the support of **ViiV Healthcare**.*



**Instituto
DILES**

DILES (TELL THEM) INSTITUTE

Instituto Latinx de
*Desarrollo Integral de Lideres
Empoderados contra el SIDA*

NO FEARS



*Nurturing Ourselves:
Family Education and Activities
to Reduce Stigma*

CLAFH Project #1: *The DILES Institute* – Latino Leadership Development in HIV



Instituto Latinx de
Desarrollo Integral de Lideres
Empoderados contra el *SIDA*

The Instituto DILES is a 12-month program that builds leadership skills among fellows in order to drive meaningful change in their communities toward ending the HIV epidemic for Latinx men.

Curriculum for DILES fellows consists of several components:

- Webinars with expert speakers on HIV topics and areas of leadership
- Individualized mentoring sessions
- Leadership resources
- Real-world applied leadership projects

Fellows' applied leadership projects will focus on *prevention/treatment*, *research*, or *advocacy* projects in their local communities.

Applications are Open Now!

At: <https://clafh.nursing.duke.edu/>



Prevention &
Treatment

Targeted HIV
Research

Community
Engagement

in Latino Communities





Look out for the release of all segments of the *NO FEARS* workbook and video series and at:

<https://clafh.nursing.duke.edu/>