

What is OHESI and who is involved?

OHESI is the Ontario HIV Epidemiology and Surveillance Initiative. Established in 2014 and led by the Applied Epidemiology Unit of the Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN), the initiative is a provincial collaboration between agencies involved in HIV epidemiology and surveillance in Ontario. These agencies include the Ontario AIDS Bureau, Public Health Ontario, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), and the OHTN.

What does OHESI do?

The overall purpose of the initiative is to contribute to achieving the vision, mission and goals of the new provincial HIV/AIDS strategy (Box 1).

The objectives of OHESI are to understand, monitor and translate the epidemiology of HIV in the province of Ontario, in order to:

Understand...



...the challenges along the prevention, engagement and care cascade.

Inform...



...local and provincial policies and programs such that services can adjust to meet changing needs

Provide...



...the information needed to develop, implement and evaluate strategies and interventions, and integrate evidence into practice.

Monitor...



...the provincial progress in achieving the goals of the strategy.

Ontario's HIV/AIDS Strategy to 2025



Vision

By 2025, new HIV infections will be rare in Ontario and people with HIV will lead long health lives, free from stigma and discrimination.



Mission

To reduce the harm caused by HIV for individuals and communities and its impact on the health care system by ensuring timely access to an integrated system of compassionate, effective, evidence-based sexual health and HIV prevention, care and support services.



Goals

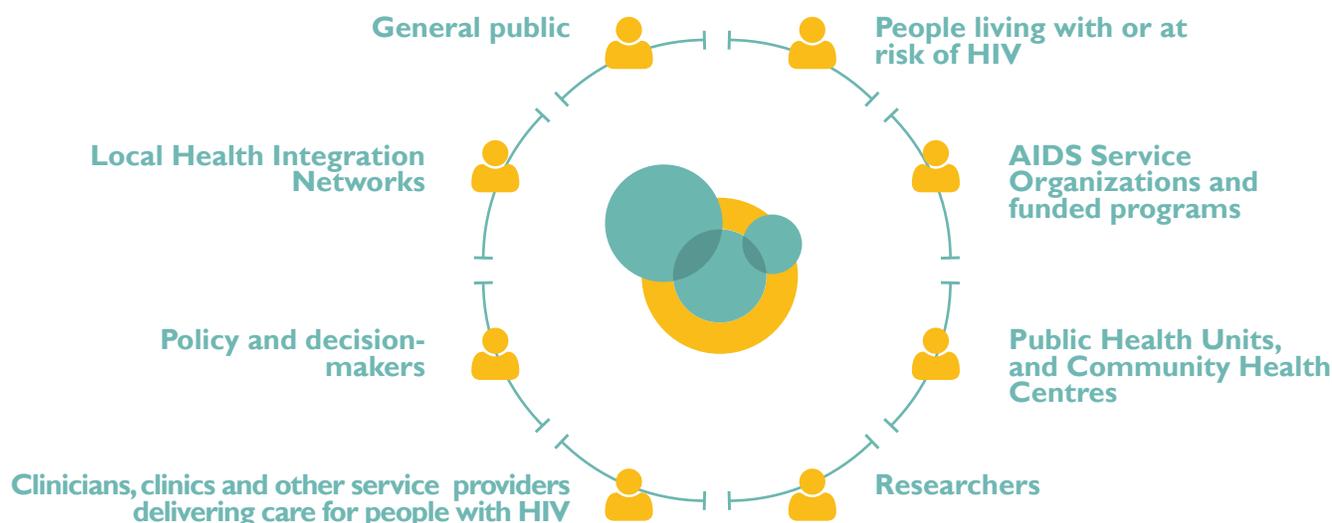
1. Improve the health and well-being of populations most affected
2. Promote sexual health, prevent new HIV, STI and hep C infections
3. Diagnose HIV infections early and engage people in timely care
4. Improve health, longevity, quality of life for people living with HIV
5. Ensure the quality, consistency and effectiveness of all provincially funded HIV programs and services.

Why was OHESI created?

By working together, the agencies involved in OHESI are aiming to achieve better access to timely, relevant, and comprehensive information about the epidemiology of HIV in Ontario, and to disseminate this information more widely to the different groups of stakeholders who need to know it, including:

- ➔ People living with or at risk of HIV
- ➔ AIDS Service Organizations and funded programs
- ➔ Public Health Units, and Community Health Centres

OHESI Stakeholders



- ➔ Researchers
- ➔ Clinicians, clinics and other service providers delivering care for people with HIV
- ➔ Policy and decision-makers
- ➔ Local Health Integration Networks
- ➔ General public

How will OHESI do this?

OHESI's activities will reflect the conceptual frameworks of the provincial strategy, namely syndemic theory and the integrated HIV prevention, engagement and care cascade. Using HIV epidemiology and surveillance data related to these frameworks, the primary emphasis of OHESI will be on the priority populations most affected by HIV/AIDS in Ontario (Box 2). OHESI will draw upon several sources of information to understand and monitor the epidemiology of HIV among these populations. Data sources include:

1. Provincial-level health systems, such as provincial laboratory and surveillance (e.g. testing, diagnosis, viral load) and administrative (e.g. hospitalization, doctor billing, vital statistics) databases.
2. Research studies and enhanced surveillance systems, such as the OHTN Cohort study and the different PHAC Track Studies, in order to better understand behaviors and social determinants.
3. Mathematical modeling, in order to estimate the incidence and prevalence of HIV.

Priority Populations

- ➔ People living with HIV/AIDS
- ➔ Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men, including Trans men
- ➔ African, Caribbean and Black communities, including people from HIV-endemic countries
- ➔ Indigenous men and women
- ➔ Men and women who use drugs
- ➔ At-risk women, including Trans women

How can I find out more about OHESI or request information?

Please visit our website www.OHESI.ca or email Dr. Abigail Kroch, Director of the Applied Epidemiology Unit at the OHTN, at akroch@ohntn.on.ca.