

# National Progress Card

**Advance** is a pan-Canadian collaboration to improve the accessibility and uptake of health services among gay, bisexual, queer, and other men who have sex with men (cis and trans), and Two-Spirit people (GBT2Q) in Canada. This Progress Card presents statistics compiled from CBRC's 2018 Sex Now Survey, a nation-wide survey of GBT2Q guys collected at Pride events across the country. They provide a snapshot of key indicators related to access and uptake of HIV & STBBI combination prevention services for service providers, policy makers, and community members.

## Participant Demographics<sup>1</sup>

**3524**

Total number of survey participants in the National Sample

**234**

HIV+ participants

**25%**

were born outside of Canada

**32%**

were not white

**9%**

were trans

### Age breakdown

16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66-75	76-85
24.49%	36.25%	15.72%	12.47%	8.26%	2.52%	0.29%

## Primary Health Care

**26%**



**6%**

26% of HIV- participants do not have a regular family doctor or nurse practitioner compared to 6% of HIV+ participants



2 in 10 are either not out or unsure if their doctor knows about their sexual orientation

## Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infection (STBBI) Testing

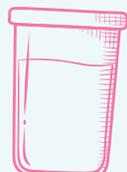
8% of participants had never been tested for STBBIs. We asked the 92% of participants who had been tested when their most recent STBBI testing was:

**48%** Within the last 6 months

**18%** 6 months to 1 year ago

**34%** More than 1 year ago

94% had a blood test  
85% had a urine test



44% had **no** throat swab  
57% had **no** rectal swab

A recent Canadian study found that 88% of Chlamydia and 94% of Gonorrhoea infections are missed when only urine is tested, and no swabs are done<sup>2</sup>



Most common reasons for delaying or avoiding testing:

1. Too busy to get tested.
2. There are limited testing hours.
3. Too stressed about test results.
4. Long wait times at sexual health centres.
5. Live too far from testing services.

<sup>1</sup> The figures in this Progress Card depict information collected at eleven 2018 Pride festivals, including Vancouver, Kelowna & Nelson, Calgary, Winnipeg, Edmonton, London, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax.

<sup>2</sup> Harvey-Lavoie, S., Labbé, A., Apelian, H., Cox, J., Messier-Peet, M., Moodie, E., & Lambert, G. (2019, April 4). Chlamydia trachomatis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae Infections Among Gay, Bisexual, and Other Men Who Have Sex With Men: Extragenital Infections are More Prevalent than Urogenital Infections. Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada. AMMI Canada Annual Conference, Ottawa, Canada.

# The 'PrEP Gap'

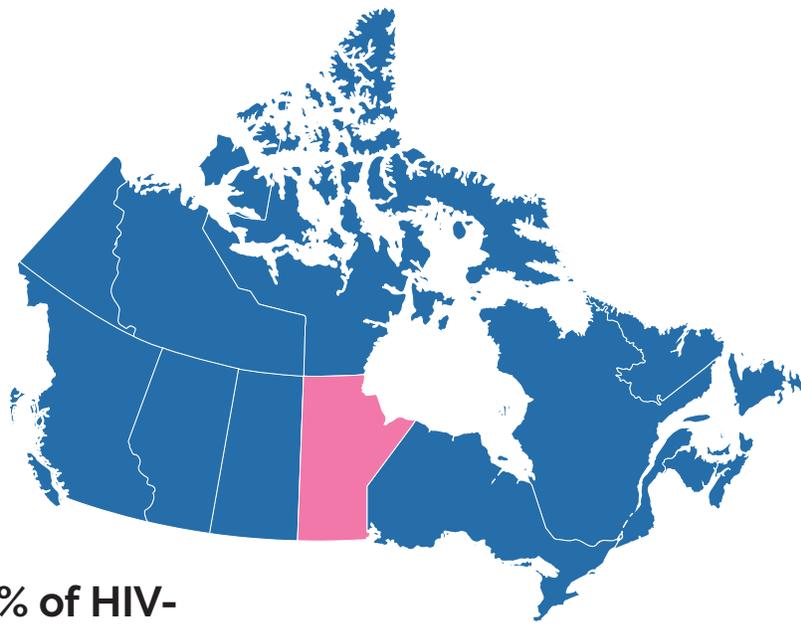
Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is medication taken daily to prevent HIV. PrEP has been shown to be up to 99% effective as an HIV prevention method<sup>3</sup>.

## 9 Provinces and all Territories

✓ have PrEP-specific access programs

### Manitoba

✗ does not have PrEP-specific access programs



**13%** of HIV- participants were actively taking PrEP

**3%** reported taking PrEP in the past, but not currently

## Of the 84% of HIV- participants not using PrEP...

**68%** meet the 'high risk' threshold for PrEP eligibility, but

**93%** of these participants perceived their risk of getting HIV to be low

The Canadian PrEP guidelines<sup>4</sup> suggest that HIV negative guys with a HIV Incidence Risk Index (HIRI) score of 11 or more are eligible for PrEP.

Nationally, commonly reasons for not taking PrEP:

1. High Cost: PrEP can cost as much as \$500 to \$1000 per month without coverage.
2. Other barriers to taking PrEP (side effects, taking pills, frequent testing and clinic visits).

Indigenous participants were half as likely to be on PrEP than their white counterparts, even though pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is available to status First Nations people who are deemed to be at high risk of HIV infection at no cost via the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program<sup>5</sup>.

# HIV Prevention Knowledge

**1 in 3**

HIV- participants were unaware of PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) as an HIV prevention method

**1 in 7**

HIV- participants were unaware of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) as an HIV prevention method

**U=U**

is the concept that a person with an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV through sex

**30%**

of HIV- participants were unaware of this concept

**5%**

of HIV+ participants were unaware of this concept

3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019, December 3). PrEP. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html>

4 Tan, D. H. S., Hull, M. W., Yoong, D., Tremblay, C., O'Byrne, P., Thomas, R., Kille, J., Baril, J.-G., Cox, J., Giguere, P., Harris, M., Hughes, C., MacPherson, P., O'Donnell, S., Reimer, J., Singh, A., Barrett, L., Bogoch, I., Jollimore, J., ... Shafraan, S. (2017). Canadian guideline on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis and nonoccupational postexposure prophylaxis. CMAJ, 189(47), E1448–E1458. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.170494>

5 Evan Adams. (n.d.). Get the Facts on PrEP. First Nations Health Authority. Retrieved 27 July 2020, from <https://www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/get-the-facts-on-prep>

# Publicly Funded Vaccines

## HPV

The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine can protect against as many as 6 strains of HPV that cause:

- Anal, penile, genital, cervical, mouth, and throat cancers
- Genital warts
- Transmission of HPV to partners

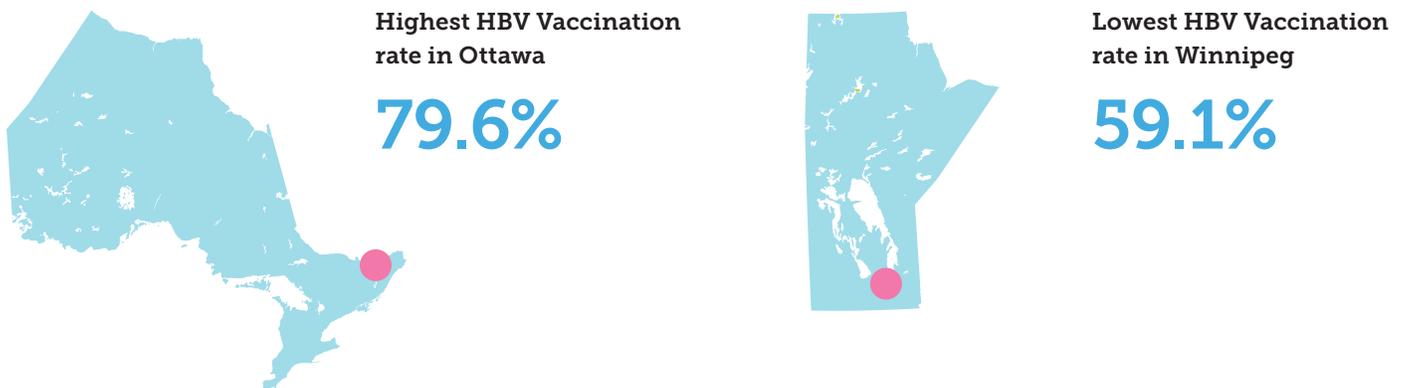
The vaccine is offered for free to GBT2Q guys 26 years old and under in all provinces:



## HBV

The Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) vaccine is free to all GBT2Q guys, regardless of age, in all provinces.

Nationally, 70.4% of participants indicated having been vaccinated for HBV



## HIV Primary Care

HIV positive participants reported strong connections to the healthcare system.

95%

have a regular family doctor or nurse practitioner

94%

reported having received HIV care in the past 6 months

93%

reported having an undetectable viral load, and therefore can't pass on HIV

HIV positive participants reported getting tested for STBBIs more frequently than their negative counterparts. In the past 6 months:

82% of HIV+ participants had gotten tested for STBBIs

43% of HIV- participants had gotten tested for STBBIs

# Mental Health

GBT2Q guys are

**2-3 times more likely**

to experience mental health concerns compared to their straight-identifying counterparts<sup>6</sup>. This makes access to mental health services an important part of a comprehensive GBT2Q health strategy.

**38%**

of participants experienced depressive symptoms (PHQ-2<sup>7</sup>) in the past 2 weeks

OF THESE

**1 in 2**

indicated wanting help with these feelings

**20%**

of participants experienced symptoms indicating generalized anxiety disorder (GAD-2<sup>8</sup>) in the past 2 weeks.

OF THESE

**7 in 10**

indicated wanting help with these feelings

**45%** of participants indicated they wanted help with their mental health relating to topics such as: *Depression, Eating disorders, Anxiety, Body image, Coming out, Relationship problems, Gender dysphoria/transition, and Suicidal thoughts*

# Substance use and Harm Reduction Services

Top reported substances used in the past 6 months:

Alcohol

**60.6%**



Cannabis

**43.4%**



Tobacco

**25.5%**



Poppers

**19.7%**



Cocaine

**12.7%**



Also commonly used were:

**11.9%** Ecstasy

**11.2%** Erection Drugs  
(e.g. Viagra/Cialis)

**5.6%** Crystal Meth

**7%** of all participants reported accessing any kind of harm reduction or addictions treatment services

6 Brennan, D. J., Ross, L. E., Dobinson, C., Veldhuizen, S., & Steele, L. S. (2010). Men's Sexual Orientation and Health in Canada. Canadian Journal of Public Health / Revue Canadienne de Santé Publique, 101(3), 255-258. JSTOR.

7 Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, Williams JB. The Patient Health Questionnaire-2: Validity of a Two-Item Depression Screener. Medical Care. 2003;41:1284-92.

8 Kroenke K, Spitzer RL, Williams JB, Monahan PO, Löwe B. Anxiety disorders in primary care: prevalence, impairment, comorbidity, and detection. Ann Intern Med. 2007;146:317-25.