

# Transgender Adolescents of Color and HIV: Unique Challenges in Preventing New Infections

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## BACKGROUND

- HIV estimated prevalence 9.2% for all transgender persons nationally with a significantly higher prevalence for transgender women at 14.1%.<sup>1</sup> A paucity of published data exists defining the risk of HIV in transgender or non-binary (TGNB) youth of color.
- TGNB youth of color have numerous risk factors for HIV infection, including unstable housing, under or uninsured, unemployment, and substance use disorder.
- Recent CDC data reported the urgent need for more HIV prevention and treatment services in this population.<sup>2</sup>
- We assessed key social determinants of health (SDOH) in TGNB youth of color and the impact on their ability to prioritize and access HIV prevention

## METHODS

- In 2021-22 we conducted an assessment of 101 sexually active TGNB youth 14-27 years to evaluate potential barriers to HIV prevention by querying the 4 U's: 1) Unemployed, 2) Uninsured/Underinsured, 3) Unstable housing, and 4) substance Use disorder.
- Patients were interviewed by the MAYS clinic PrEP Specialist
- The assessment also questioned medical gender affirmation and HIV/STI prevention. Information obtained was used to assess knowledge gaps that affect their understanding of HIV risk.
- Based on results, a research tool, ARTISTA (Assess Risk for Transmitted Infections in Sexually active Transgender Adolescents) was implemented to improve gaps in understanding HIV/STI risk in TGNB youth.

## PRIMARY ENDPOINT

- Assess key SDOH in TGNB youth of color and the impact on their ability to prioritize and access HIV prevention

## STUDY PARTICIPANTS

- Sexually active transgender and non-binary youth of color ages 14-27 years who receive gender affirming care and PrEP or STI testing at the MAYS clinic in the Bronx, New York.

## STATISTICS

- Odds ratio (of receiving gender affirming care and STI testing)

## PATIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1: Demographics of TGNB youth of color attending the MAYS clinic, Bronx, NY

	Sexually active TGNB youth of color assessed for PrEP awareness (N=101)
Transgender female, n (50%)	51 (50.4%)
Mean Age (years)	20 ± 2.7 years
TGNB Youth of Color	66%
PrEP initiation and adherence	24% (10/41)

## RESULTS / FIGURES

Figure 1: TGNB Youth assessed for HIV Risk and initiated Pre Exposure Prophylaxis

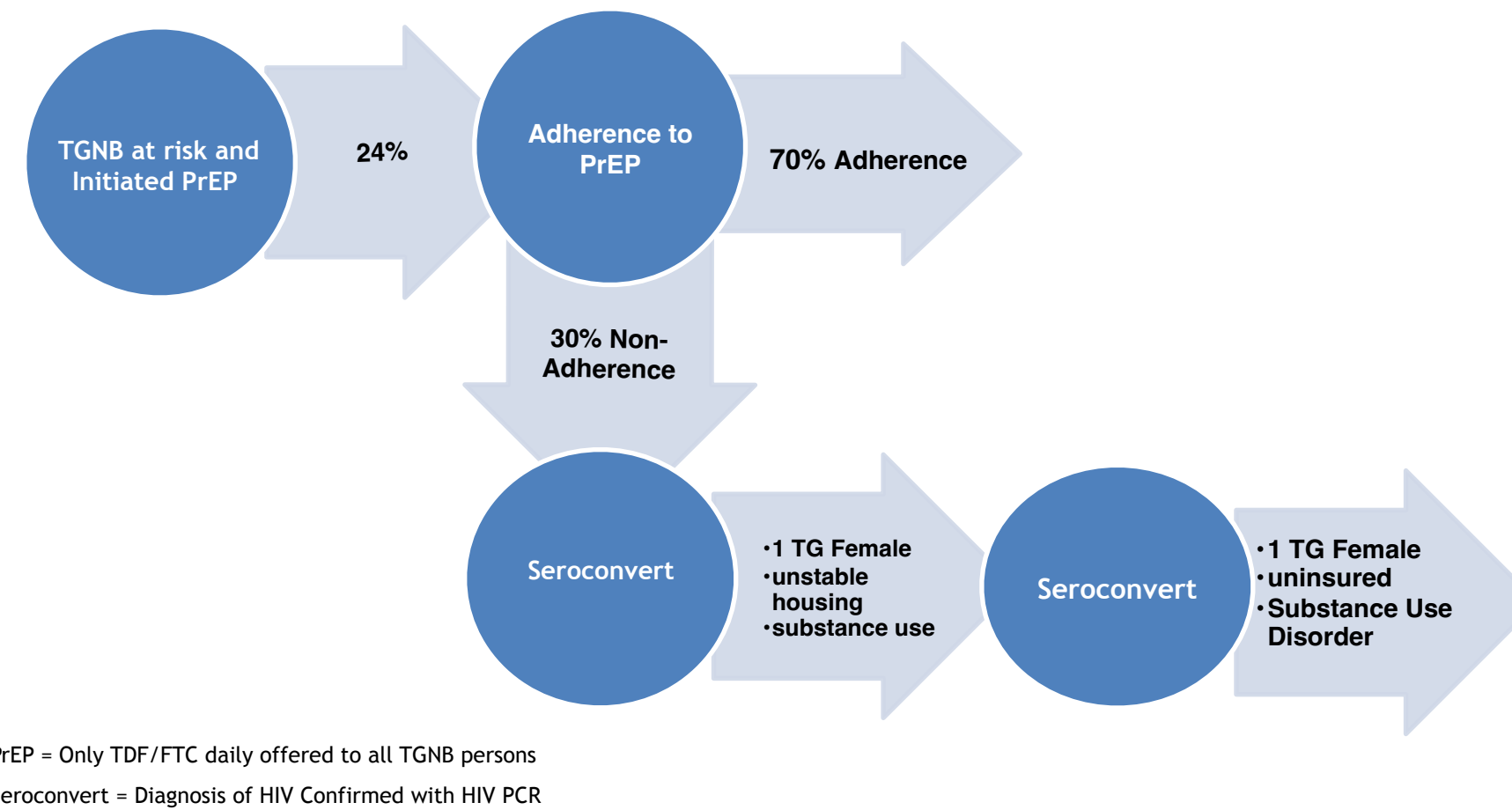


Figure 2: Assessment of Key SDOH in TGNB Youth of Color in the Bronx : 4 U's

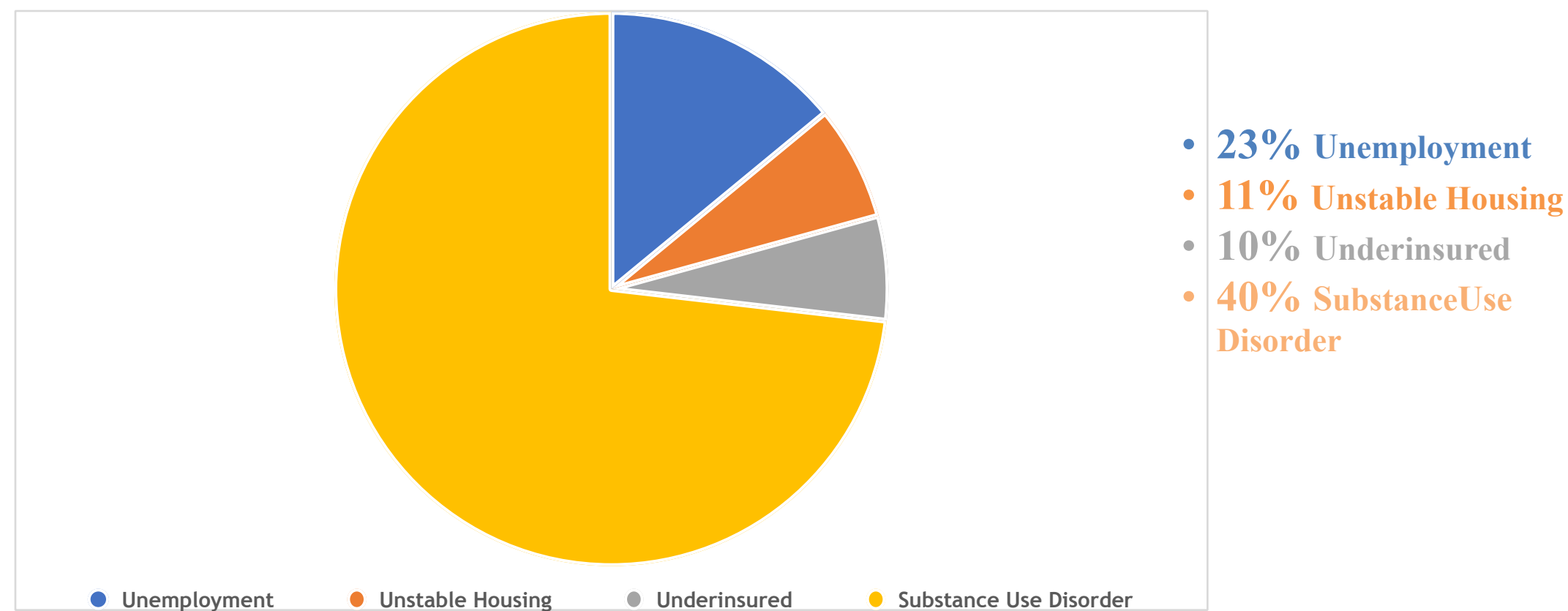


Table 2: Primary Endpoint

	SDOH	Initiated PrEP
Total Sexually Active TGNB Assessed	101	24% (24)
Unemployed	23%	5
Unstable Housing	11%	3
Uninsured or Underinsured	10%	3
Substance Use Disorder	40%	10
More than one of the above SDOH	66%	3

## DISCUSSION

- HIV estimated prevalence is 9.2% for all transgender persons nationally with a significantly higher prevalence for transgender women at 14.1%
- Receipt of gender affirming care was associated with increased odds of STI testing (adj odds ratio = 1.90, 95% CI 1.33-2.73) with no relation to gender identity
- Our data from the Bronx MAYS TGNB youth of color cohort suggests despite awareness, PrEP initiation and adherence among trans females was disappointing.
- The 4 U's: Unemployment, Unstable housing, Under or Uninsured and substance Use Disorder are significant barriers specifically in TGNB youth of color. (Figure 2)
- ARTISTA assessment reveals that there are significant social/structural barriers to PrEP access, uptake and persistence.
- ARTISTA data should be used to influence HIV prevention policies; SDOH must be addressed in this population- and others similarly affected- if we are to end the HIV epidemic.

## CONCLUSION

- Gender affirming care is associated with access and willingness for STI testing
- SDOH, specifically the 4 U's negatively impact TGNB youth of color in the Bronx and are prioritized over HIV prevention
- Further studies are needed to understand the impact of ARTISTA assessment on improved PrEP uptake in TGNB youth of color

## LIMITATIONS

- Inconsistent follow up and contact information for MAYS clinic TGNB PrEP patients

## REFERENCES

- Poteat T, Reisner SL, Radix A. HIV epidemics among transgender women. *Curt Opin HIV AIDS*. 2014;9:168-173.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. April 15, 2021

## DISCLOSURES

The authors of this presentation NOTHING TO DISCLOSE concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation

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