

GBHHSPC: May 17, 2016 Presenters Q & A

Responses from Nargis Hussaini, Baltimore City Health Department

1. Does a person's socioeconomic background affect viral load suppression (i.e. those who fall below the federal poverty line)?

78.3% of PLWHA who received Ryan White Part A Services in the EMA are 100% below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Socioeconomic status is often measured as a combination of income, education, and occupation. A person's socioeconomic background may affect viral load suppression due to the lack of health literacy. Those with fewer resources are often left with limited treatment options.

2. Has the Affordable Care Act had an influence on viral load suppression in our EMA?

We have not done a research specifically in our EMA about ACA's influence on viral load suppression. However, researchers found that enrolling low-income and under-insured people with HIV in an ACA health plan improves the likelihood of having sustained antiretroviral treatment and achieving undetectable HIV viral load according to a presentation at IDweek 2015 in San Diego.

In a study, Kathleen McManus from the University of Virginia School of Medicine and colleagues looked at outcomes for ADAP clients in Virginia who switched to ACA plans. Their analysis included 3,933 HIV-positive adults enrolled in Virginia's ADAP who were eligible for ACA insurance. The study period ran from July 2013 (one year before ACA implementation) through December 2014 (one year after implementation). They have found that that 86% of people who enrolled in ACA plans achieved undetectable viral load compared with 79% of those who continued to receive HIV medications directly through ADAP. Each additional month enrolled in an ACA plan was associated with about a 6% greater likelihood of viral suppression, with people enrolled for a full year being over 60% more likely to have undetectable HIV. They also found that patients did better under ACA health plans, possibly due to a broader access to medical care and medications beyond those that target HIV (IDWeek, 2015).

References:

IDWeek. Affordable Care Act Helps Virginia Improve HIV Outcomes While Providing Care for More for at-Risk Patients, Study Shows. [Press release](#). October 8, 2015.