



+ LOVE

Improving Health Outcomes of Black Men
Who Have Sex With Men Living with HIV
in the Deep South

-Kavin Keller

-Narquis Barak



What was the motivation behind the design and implementation of this program?

- In 2017, BMSM accounted for 41% of Louisiana's new HIV diagnoses.
- Among those in HIV medical care, 88% young WMSM were virally suppressed compared to only 75% of YBMSM.
- New Orleans ranks 6th nationally for new HIV infections.
- BMSM living with HIV face high levels of stigma and a chronic lack of access to basic needs, in comparison to their White counterparts.
- These factors impinge on viral suppression and adherence to treatment regimens.



In New Orleans, additionally...

- Systemic racism in health care
- Distrust in the health care system and in health care providers
- Homelessness and housing insecurity
- Cultural stigma surrounding behavioral health therapy



+Love is a 5-pronged intervention for Black Men Who Have Sex with Men (BMSM) involving a dedicated case manager, behavioral health therapist, peer support, free ride service, and text-based alert program that tracks clients' basic needs, mood, and provides medication reminders.

Funded by Ryan White
Part F, Special Projects of
National Significance



One Stop Shop





National HIV Behavioral Surveillance

Gay Men's Wellness Clinic

PrEP and PEP Navigation

Rapid Start and Rapid Reentry Program

The Movement

New Orleans Syringe Access Program

Prevention Department

What do we do to evaluate the success of this program?

- Baseline national survey, conducted at 6 and 12 months after enrollment
- Local evaluation survey, conducted at 4, 8, and 12 months after enrollment
- Track numbers and types of service encounters
- Record HIV care appointments and viral loads quarterly

Black, Gay or Bisexual Men, living with HIV

+Love

+Love

+Love

+Love

+Love

- earn up to \$350
- free rides to all of your appointments
- free therapy and case management
- Convenient text-message whole health check-ins

Enroll in +LOVE

504-496-1045

Or email +LOVE Coordinator

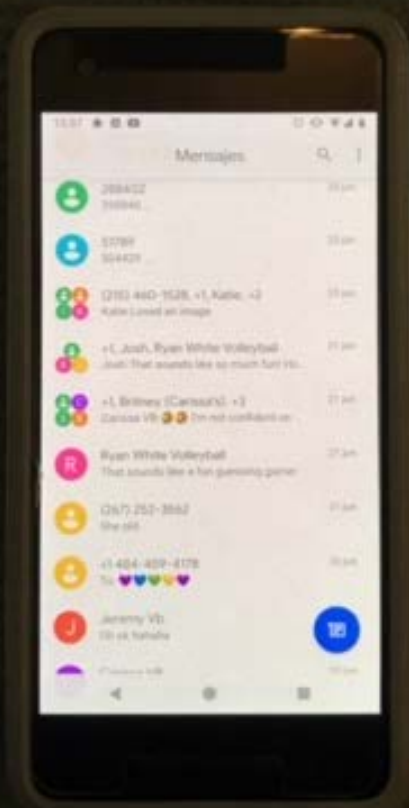
Kavin.keller@crescentcare.org

∞ This program is for ALL black men living with HIV. It doesn't matter if you have health insurance, how old you are, when you were diagnosed, or if you are already a CrescentCare client.

Evaluation study for which participants receive up to \$350

The Interventions

CareSignal Text-Message Monitoring



- Text-based mobile triage, in which alerts are sent to program staff, when clients respond particular ways to the tracking questions
- Depression and Anxiety Tracking
- Medication reminders
- Basic Needs Tracking

Check-in

How are you doing today? Reply 1 if better than usual, 2 if same as usual, or 3 if worse than usual.

Housing

You once mentioned concerns about housing. Do you think you'll have trouble with any upcoming bills? Please reply yes or no.

Food

You once mentioned concerns about meals. In the past month, how often have you been unable to get enough food for you and your family? Please reply with a number, like 2.

Employment

You once mentioned concerns about being able to keep working. In the past month, have you had any trouble with work, such as child-care, feeling sick, or transportation? Please reply yes or no.

Education

You once mentioned wanting to go back to school. Are you currently enrolled in any classes? Please reply yes or no.

Health Insurance

Having medical insurance is very important to providing support in times of need. Have you enrolled in or do you have health insurance? Please reply yes or no.

Case Manager

- Screening for basic needs
- Referral to resources
- Assistance with insurance and housing
- Liaison with medical case manager and with health care providers
- Helping clients through rough times



Behavioral Health Therapist

- Trauma informed, anti-racist, radical social justice lens amplified with tools from EMDR and attachment focused EMDR work
- Sex positive with a focus on building self-esteem
- Trained to work with clients who are not in traditional monogamous relationships and with different kinds of kink
- Queer friendly
- Mindfulness based stress reduction
- Guided meditation

Free Lyft Rides

- Coordinator, case manager, and therapist arrange free Lyft rides for clients to all of their HIV and HIV related appointments, including therapy



the **M**ovement

Peer Support

**In person,
online and
group meetings
for LGBTQ POC
w/HIV**

**Peer Navigation
services**

Who Are We Serving and How Thus Far?



59 unique clients

57 clients enrolled in CareSignal (text message program)

275 live encounters



67% face-to-face encounters



33% remote encounters

50 clients receiving case management

34 clients receiving behavioral health therapy

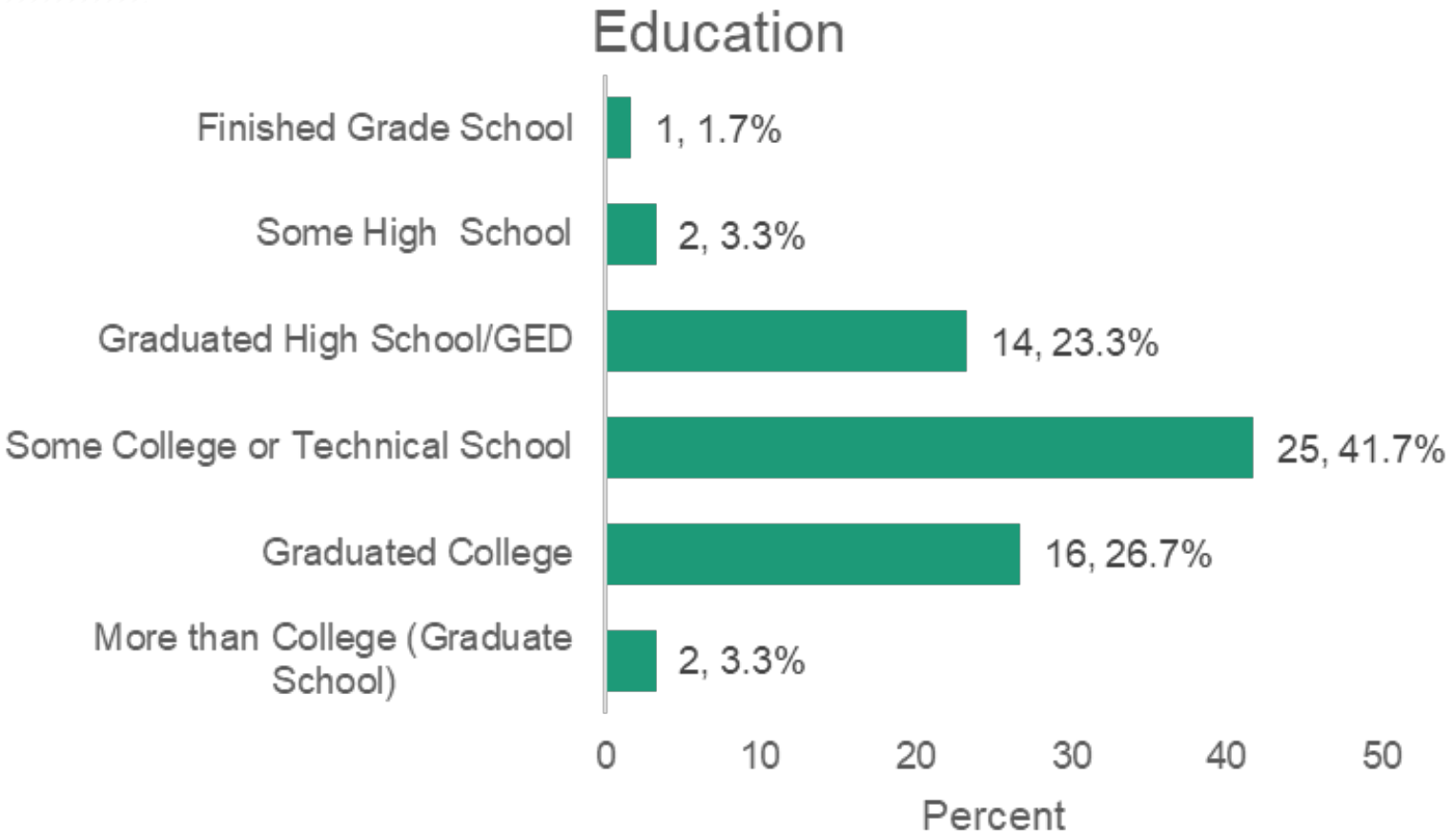
16 clients regularly receive Lyft rides

12 clients are involved in the Movement activities

Client Demographics

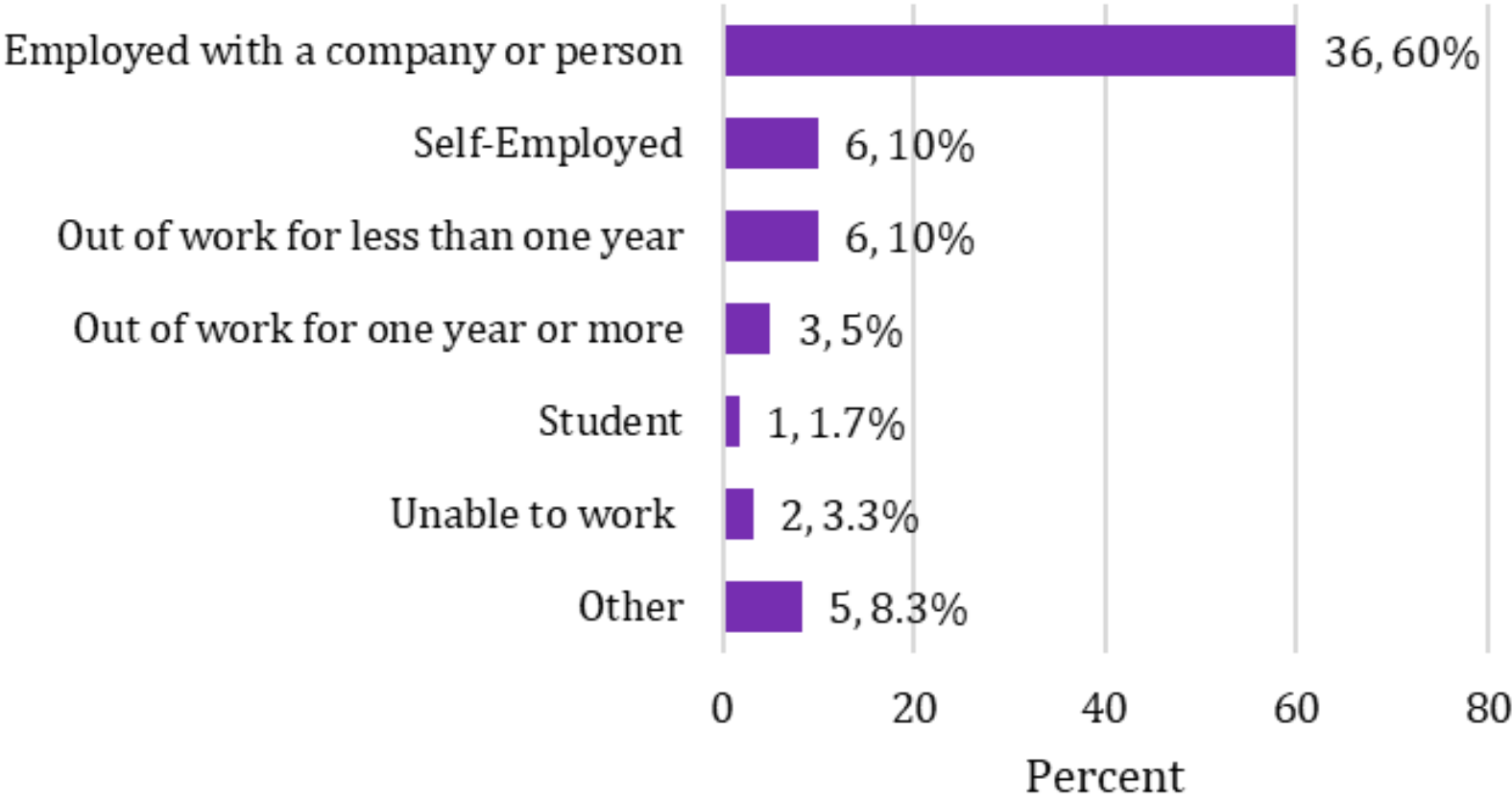


30 average age of clients, with a range of 20-52

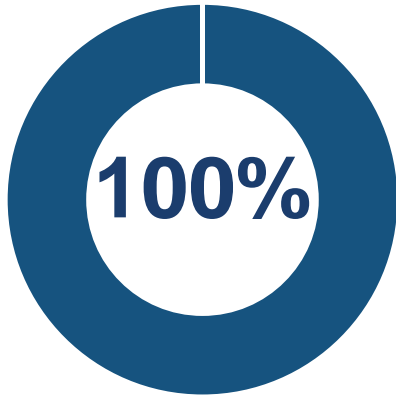


Client Demographics Cont'd

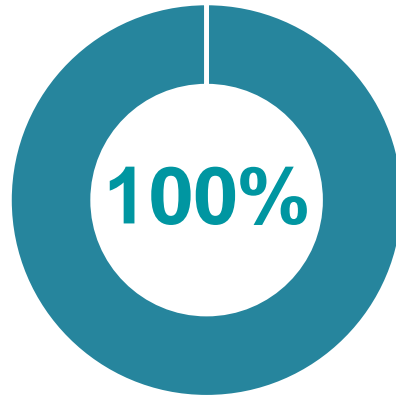
Employment Status



What has the impact been?



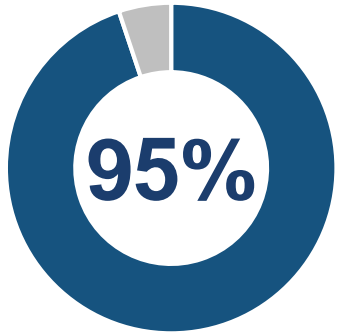
100% have consistently **adhered to their medication regimens**



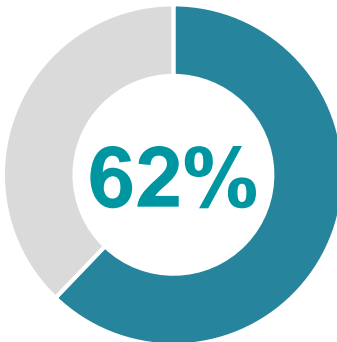
100% of those who had been virally-suppressed upon enrollment have **maintained viral suppression**

Of the 4 clients who were not yet virally-suppressed, 3 are now **undetectable**

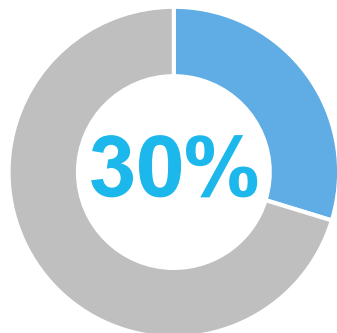
What has the impact been? (cont'd)



When asked, how has +LOVE changed your health care experience, 95% described positive changes

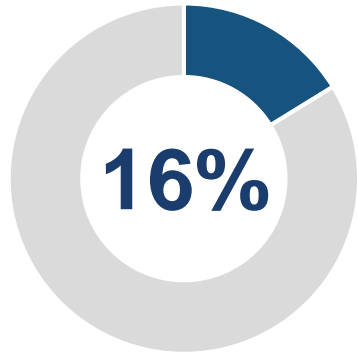


62% reported that they are taking their medication more regularly and on time

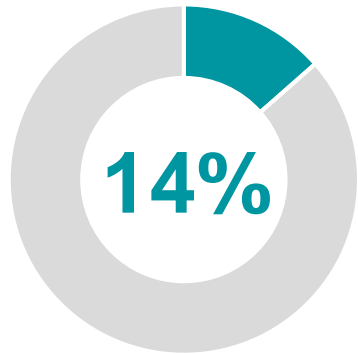


30% reported that they have a more positive attitude or outlook about living with HIV, using phrases such as, “more balance in my life,” “more aware of my feelings,” “inspiration to keep going,” and “moral support”

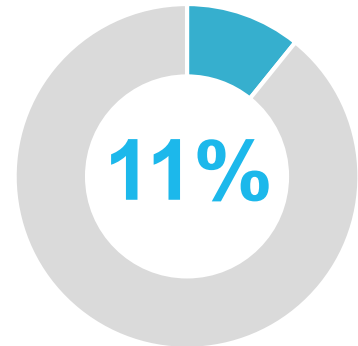
What has the impact been? (cont'd.)



16% reported that they can more easily get appointments, communicate with health care providers and access medical resources



14% reported that they know more about HIV and their own HIV care



11% reported that they are more open about living with HIV and comfortable with speaking about it

84% Respondents attribute the benefit of +LOVE, at least in part, to CareSignal Text Messaging Program

- “As soon as I put in something that something was off when answering the text messages they were quick to reach out to me to see what was going on. I didn’t have to hunt for someone to help me.”
- “As soon as I hit something that says something is off, it sends a message to the right people. I’m confident that someone is going to get in contact with me.”
- “The ones that ask me about how I’m doing and stuff, if I’m having a bad day, I know someone is listening and will reach out.”
- “It has helped in a way that helps to remind myself to take my pills, to check in with myself about how I’m feeling. Take more stock with myself.”

Effects of Pandemic



49% reported being unable to see a doctor



33% reported losing their job or having their hours reduced



18% reported being unable to get labs done



18% reported suffering from increased stress or anxiety



13% reported being unable to pay their rent or afford food

Unintended Effects

- Having regular contact with our +LOVE clients and direct knowledge about their experiences through check-ins from program staff and through the text messaging system, we are able to address the above effects
- What we have found is that having put these interventions in place long before the pandemic, in many ways, we were in a great position to mitigate the detrimental effects of the pandemic on our clients' health, mental well-being, and access to medication, food, and housing.

Ultimate Goals Beyond Improving BMSM HIV care

- To recruit at least 150 BMSM by the end of December 2020
- To recruit 50 of the enrollees into behavioral health therapy
- To evaluate the efficacy of the program
- To ensure that the program is sustainable beyond the Ryan White funding period

