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# Project PrEP: A PrEP Education Initiative in South Georgia

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# **Project PrEP: A Community Healthy Initiative**

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**GEORGIA SOUTHERN**  
UNIVERSITY



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## Disclosure Information

I **do not** have any conflicts of interest to disclose and I **do not** intend to discuss off label use of any drug or treatment during this discussion.



# Presentation Objectives

- Background & Demographics
- Implementation & Programming
- Methods & Building Relationships with Community Stakeholders
- Results & Findings
- Lessons Learned & Next Steps
- Question & Answer

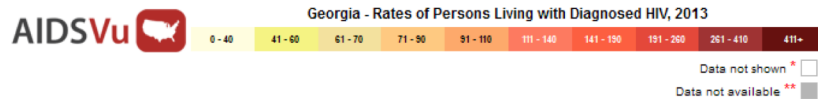
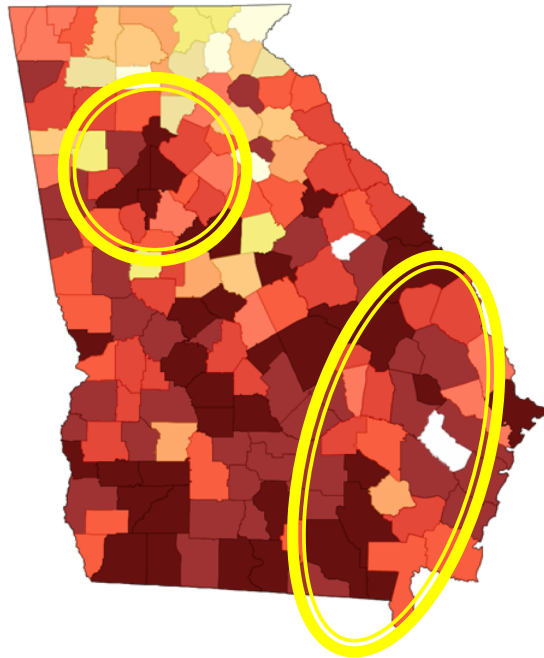


# Background & Demographics

Project PrEP and South Georgia



# HIV in South Georgia



Rates displayed are the number of cases per 100,000 people.  
\*Data not shown to protect privacy because of a small number of cases and/or a small population.  
\*\*State health department, per its HIV data re-release agreement with CDC, requested not to release data to AIDS Vu. See Data Methods for more information.  
NOTE: There are no county-level maps for Alaska, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico because there are no counties in these states.

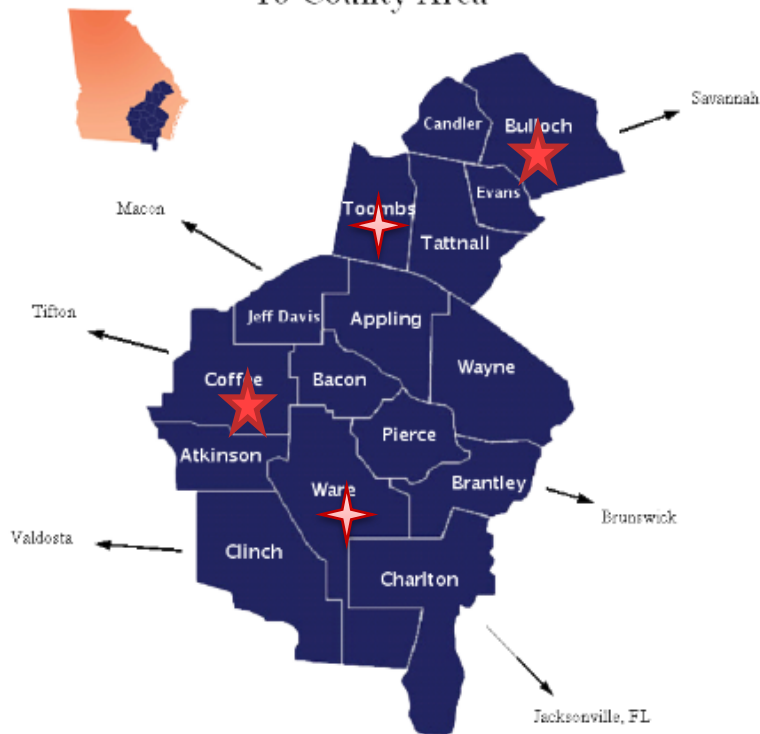
- HIV rates in rural Deep South significantly higher than in any other region (Reif et al., 2014)
- In Georgia, HIV is prevalent both in and outside the Atlanta metro area
  - Colleges and universities in more rural areas
  - Few HIV prevention resources
- Combination of social determinants of health and environmental factors (Southern AIDS Coalition, 2012)
  - Poverty
  - Lack of education, health care access
  - Stigma
  - Racism and homophobia
  - Substance abuse and mental health



# Southeast Health District

## SOUTHEAST HEALTH DISTRICT

16-County Area



- Primarily rural district (~6,000 sq. mi.)
- Largest city: Statesboro (pop. 31,379)  
(U.S. Census, 2017)
- In 2016 (GDPH, 2016):
  - 43 diagnoses of HIV infection
  - 1,206 people living with HIV
- Limited HIV Infrastructure
  - Two full-time Ryan White clinics
  - One community-based organization



# Challenges for MSM in Rural Areas

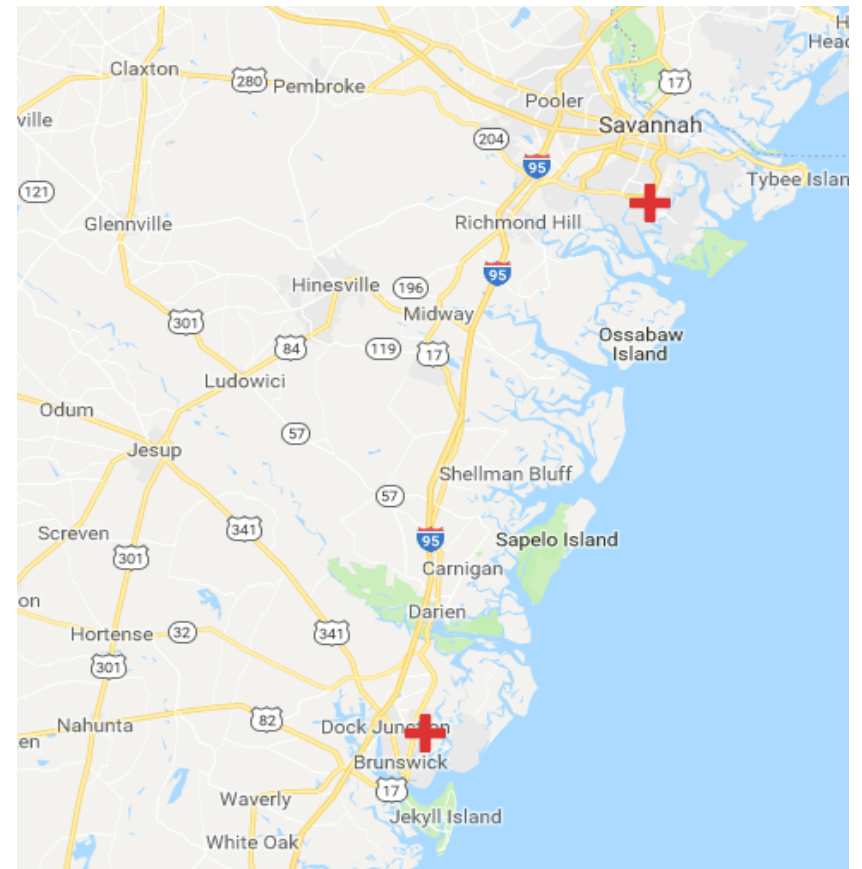
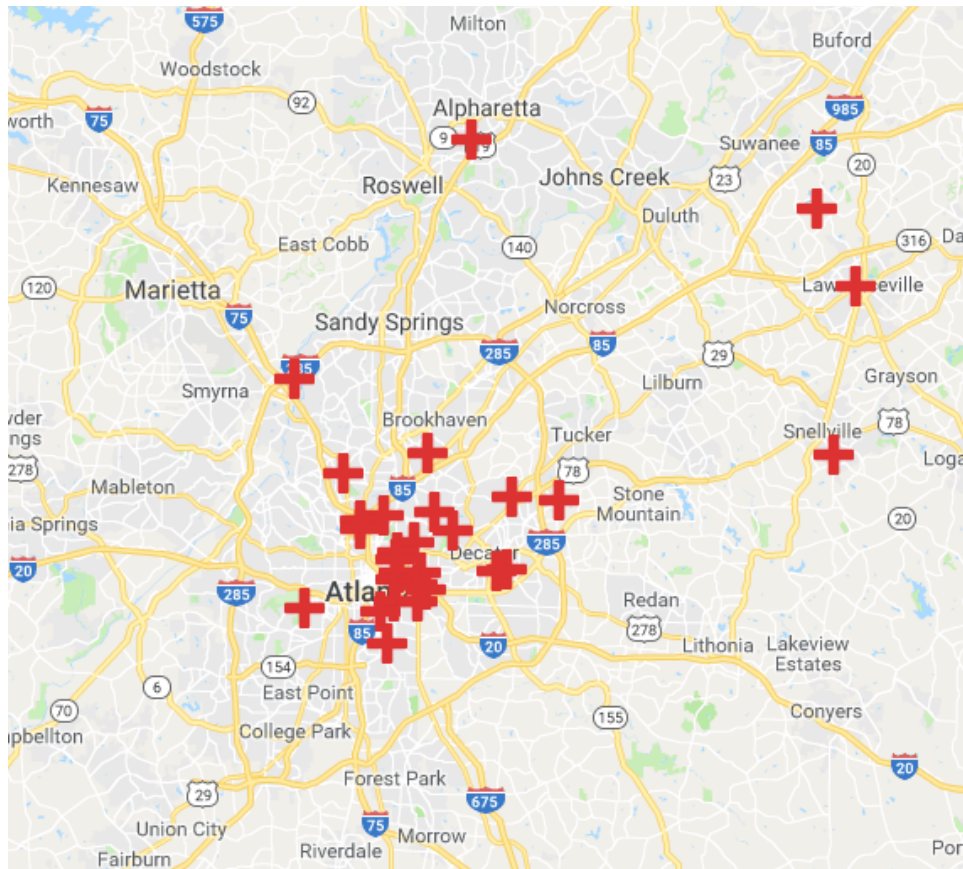
**Risk factors** (Bowen et al., 2007; Hubach et al., 2015; Metheny & Stephenson, 2016; Rhodes et al., 2010)

- Lower knowledge, perceived susceptibility
- Geographic isolation
  - Limited health services
  - Reliance on Internet/mobile apps
- Religious, conservative climates
- Multiple stigmas lead to concealment, disenfranchisement
  - MSM
  - HIV
- Substance use and high-risk sexual behaviors





# PrEP Access in Metro Atlanta v South Georgia



Source: PrEPlocator.org

# Project PrEP

Community-based health education pilot project

Primary objectives:

- To increase knowledge and awareness about PrEP among individuals who are at high risk of HIV infection, with a primary focus on MSM, in south Georgia
- To identify factors related to knowledge of PrEP and willingness to take PrEP among MSM in south Georgia



# Project PrEP

- Empower individuals to understand they have the right to know about PrEP and ask their providers about PrEP



# Implementation & Programming



# Implementation Design



## Content Development

- From February-April 2016, Project PrEP staff worked to develop educational material to increase participants' knowledge on PrEP including:
  - 30-45 minute interactive presentation on PrEP
  - Brochures on PrEP & PrEP access



# Educational Sessions

The educational sessions were broken down into three sections:

- **Section 1** Basic facts about HIV/AIDS, including definitions of key terms and acronyms, modes of transmission, and current epidemiological data on HIV diagnosis rates.
- **Section 2** Basic information about PrEP. This section also engaged participants through activities such as PrEP trivia and scenarios.
- **Section 3** Information about how to access and pay for PrEP, including medication assistance programs



**Methods &  
Building  
Relationships with  
Community  
Stakeholders**





# Community Partnerships

- Established relationships with diverse groups and organizations
  - AIDS service organizations
  - Federally-qualified health centers
  - Georgia Department of Public Health
  - University organizations
    - Student Health Services
    - Gay-straight alliances
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Pride organizations



# Recruitment

- Social Network Strategy
- Social Media



**MEN'S EMPOWERMENT SESSION**  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2016 AT 6:30PM  
TASTE AND SEE COFFEE SHOP AND GALLERY  
546 POPLAR ST, MADON, GA 31201



31ANN-PINC HSU COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
PHONE: 912-478-2040

- EMPOWER YOURSELF  
- GAIN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT  
HIV AND PREP

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK: [FACEBOOK.COM/PrepGSU](https://www.facebook.com/PrepGSU)  
FOLLOW US ON TWITTER: @PROJECTPREP  
ADD US ON INSTAGRAM: @PROJECTPREP

# Recruitment

- Pre & Post tests were given to participants who attended the educational session.
- Measures
  - Knowledge of PrEP
  - Willingness to take PrEP
  - Psychosocial factors
  - Internalized homophobia
  - Condom self efficacy
  - Geosocial mobile application usage
  - Propensity to trust
  - PrEP self efficacy
  - Sexual sensation seeking



# Project PrEP in Action



## Data Analysis & Evaluation: MSM

- Pre/post-test evaluation design
- Primary outcome variables
  - PrEP knowledge
  - Willingness to take PrEP
  - Willingness to use condoms while using (or partner using) PrEP
  - Sexual behaviors
- Psychosocial variables
  - PrEP use self-efficacy
  - Condom use self-efficacy
  - Internalized homonegativity
  - Propensity to trust
  - Sexual sensation-seeking



## Data Analysis & Evaluation: Public Events

- Contact card following engagement with Project PrEP
  - Demographics
  - Awareness of PrEP prior to Project PrEP
  - Willingness to share PrEP information with others



# Results & Findings

# Sociodemographic Characteristics

Demographics	MSM (n=113)	Public Events (n=247)
<b>Age</b>		
<b>18-22</b>	32 (28.3%)	110 (44.5%)
<b>23-30</b>	25 (22.1%)	46 (18.6%)
<b>31-40</b>	15 (13.3%)	23 (9.3%)
<b>41-50</b>	13 (11.5%)	19 (7.7%)
<b>51 and up</b>	24 (21.2%)	25 (10.1%)
<b>Race*</b>		
<b>Black or African American</b>	70 (61.9%)	132 (52.6%)
<b>White</b>	31 (27.4%)	97 (38.7%)
<b>Asian</b>	--	9 (3.6%)
<b>American Indian/Alaska Native</b>	1 (0.9%)	9 (3.6%)
<b>Pacific Islander</b>	--	3 (1.2%)
<b>Multiracial</b>	4 (3.5%)	--
<b>Other</b>	3 (2.7%)	1 (0.3%)

\* Participants were able to select as many racial groups as were applicable for them; therefore, the sum of the percentages may be more than 100%.





# Sociodemographic Characteristics

Demographics	MSM (n=113)	Public Events (n=247)
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic/Latino(a)	5 (4.4%)	8 (3.25%)
Non-Hispanic/Latino(a)	86 (76.1%)	118 (47.8%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	--	167 (69.8%)
Male	93 (82.3%)	65 (27.2%)
Transgender	5 (4.4%)	2 (0.8%)
<b>State of Residence</b>		
Alabama	5 (4.4%)	1 (0.4%)
Florida	4 (3.5%)	3 (1.2%)
Georgia	98 (86.7%)	242 (98.0%)
Other	4 (3.6%)	1 (0.4%)

## PrEP Awareness at Public Events (n=247)

Questions	Yes	No
Had you heard about PrEP before talking with the Project PrEP team?	75 (31.4%)	164 (68.6%)
Are you willing to share the information you learned about PrEP with other individuals?	226 (94.6%)	10 (4.2%)



## Findings: MSM Educational Sessions

### *Awareness and use of PrEP among MSM education session participants*

Questions	Yes	No
Have you ever heard of PrEP?	84 (74.3%)	27 (23.9%)
Have you ever used PrEP?	7 (6.2%)	104 (92.0%)
Are you currently taking PrEP?	5 (4.4%)	105 (92.9%)

### *Descriptive statistics and t-test results for knowledge, willingness to use PrEP, and intent to use condoms with PrEP*

Outcome	Pretest		Posttest		t	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Knowledge	7.21	2.33	8.25	2.30	3.59	101	<.01
Willingness to take PrEP	4.03	1.09	4.13	1.11	0.69	66	.49
Willingness to use condoms with PrEP	4.15	1.14	4.31	1.03	1.52	92	.13

## Findings: MSM Educational Sessions

### *Descriptive Statistics of Psychosocial Factors*

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range</b>
<b>PrEP Self-Efficacy</b>	84	24.55	7.71	7-35
<b>Condom Use Self-Efficacy</b>	87	58.08	7.12	39-65
<b>Internalized Homophobia</b>	82	40.10	16.89	23-112
<b>Propensity to Trust</b>	87	25.48	6.32	13-45
<b>Sexual Sensation-Seeking</b>	85	21.55	5.17	9-34

## Findings: MSM Educational Sessions

- Inconsistent condom use as insertive (34%) or receptive (29%) in previous 3 months
- Alcohol use before/during sex: 36%
- Drug use before/during sex: 11%
- Internalized homonegativity correlated with lower condom use self-efficacy ( $r=-.31$ ), PrEP use self-efficacy ( $r=-.35$ )
- Number of sexual partners correlated with higher sexual sensation-seeking ( $r=.40$ ), mobile app use ( $r=.40$ )



# Lessons Learned and Next Steps

# Lessons Learned

- Recruitment
  - Community-level stigmas are a challenge
  - Social networks, gatekeepers, opinion leaders provide opportunities
  - Colleges and universities
  - Incentivizing recruitment among community stakeholders
- Implementation
  - Interaction and dialogue are key
  - Audience response systems
  - Identify accessible venues
- Social Media
  - Have a purposeful strategy for social media engagement



## Next Steps

- Expanding PrEP education to other populations
  - Women of Color
- Dual focus on community education and provider education
  - FQHCs, Student Health Services, other providers
  - Example: PrEP U
- Critically examine PrEP access in rural areas as a social justice issue





# Acknowledgments

Project PrEP participants

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Community partners

- CARE, Inc.
- Phoenix Project
- Savannah State University
- Chatham County Health Department
- Georgia Department of Public Health
- The Outlet Church
- Columbus Gay Pride
- Savannah Pride

Gilead Sciences



# Questions?



# Thank You!

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