A6/END HIV OREGON

Communications Campaign Final Report

Results from an HIV/STI Awareness Campaign Focused on Black & African American Adults in Portland, Oregon

Executive Summary

Portland-based nonprofit the African American AIDS Awareness Action Alliance (A6) led a community awareness campaign focused on increasing HIV/STI awareness, decreasing stigma, and increasing HIV testing among Black and African American adults in Portland. The locally developed, multi-modal campaign ran from November 2023-February 2024. The campaign was highly visible in Portland, with messages seen or heard almost 40 million times. Billboards, posters, digital advertising, and social media directed community members to a campaign-specific webpage on EndHIVOregon.org, where they could receive more information, as well as access testing, prevention, and treatment resources. Almost 24,000 users visited www.endhivoregon/A6 during the campaign, five to six times more than the average daily traffic to the End HIV Oregon site.

Community engagement was a strong component of the A6 campaign, including training and education sessions at CBOs and churches, and integration of campaign messaging into A6's usual interactions with community members and clients. An HIV testing event for National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, held in partnership with Cascade AIDS Project, provided community education and access to testing for local community members, and orders for Take Me Home mail-order HIV and STI test kits increased in campaign ZIP codes during the campaign.

Background: HIV/STI Inequities Among Black and African Americans in Oregon

Black and African American Oregonians experience social and structural barriers that may make them vulnerable to HIV infection. Oregon surveillance data show significant HIV/STI inequities among Black and African American Oregonians. Specifically, Oregonians who are Black and African American:

- are less likely to use HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV,
- are less likely to be virally suppressed once diagnosed with HIV,
- report less HIV awareness and higher levels of misinformation,
- report higher levels of HIV-related stigma, and
- have higher rates of new HIV and STI diagnoses compared to other racial and ethnic groups, and overall diagnoses increased in 2023.

Oregonians who are Black and African American also have many community strengths on which to build. These include:

- the highest HIV testing rate of any racial/ethnic group in Oregon,
- a willingness and interest in learning more about HIV and sexual health, and
- strong community connections and collective consciousness.

The Response: A Community-Led Awareness Campaign

Portland-based community organization and long-time HIV advocates, the African American AIDS Awareness Action Alliance (A6), co-developed a media campaign with End HIV/STI Oregon.

A6 applied for and received an Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Public Health Directors' Office Community Based Organization (CBO) Equity grant in 2022. They used the funding to conduct formative research with Black and African American community members, in preparation for this media campaign. OHA's HIV, STD, TB Section supported implementation of this campaign in the Portland metropolitan area, and collaborated with A6 on campaign design, logistics, and evaluation. The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness, encourage more HIV/STI testing, and reduce stigma – needs community members identified in the formative research.

Campaign Planning & Development

Community Listening Sessions, Phase 1:

In Winter 2022-2023, A6 conducted four community listening sessions hosted by 3 CBOs and one church; 51 Black/African Adults participated (19 identified as male, 32 as female; 6 identified as LGBTQI+). Participants were recruited through the following sponsoring organizations:

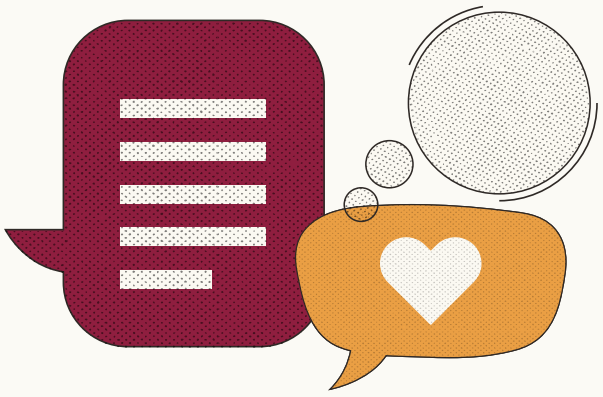
- Multnomah County Health Department Healthy Birth Initiatives (HBI) (n=14),
- Miracles Club (n=18),
- St. John's All Nations Church of God in Christ (n=16), and
- Self-Enhancement, Inc (n=3 post-high school young adults).

A trained facilitator from A6 provided basic education on HIV and used an unstructured, informal facilitation style to engage participants about what they had heard, their baseline knowledge of HIV, and where they currently get and would like to get information about HIV and sexual health. These conversations, plus a follow-up survey, yielded the following information:

- The 4 organizations and the community members affiliated with them were enthusiastic about participating in sessions about HIV.
- Participants felt they and "people in their communities" too often rely on rumor and myth about HIV and sexual decision making and, therefore, need more basic HIV information.
- Homophobia and medical mistrust play a part in HIV stigma and misinformation about sexual health.
- There was support for a communications campaign – billboards, social media, other media, and information "at the places we go" (including the agencies that were involved with recruitment and hosting of the groups).
- The agencies and participants said they would welcome being engaged again on this topic.

National campaigns and campaign materials have been developed for Black and African American communities and specific subpopulations within the larger community. These campaigns were considered, but A6 strongly recommended developing a campaign with a local feel.

A6 and OHA engaged communications firm Coates Kokes (CK), which works with OHA on End HIV/STI Oregon, to assist with campaign development. In 2021-2022, Coates Kokes worked with OHA and community partners to develop and launch an HIV testing and awareness media campaign by and for rural Oregonians. The campaign was highly visible and received a significant amount of attention in Eastern Oregon. A6 members reviewed the rural Oregon campaign. Many themes from the formative assessment that informed it – specifically, the need to increase awareness and to normalize conversations about HIV, STI, and sexual health to decrease stigma – resonated with A6 members.



Community Listening Sessions, Phase 2:

Three online listening sessions were held in September 2023 to test the draft messages and concepts developed by A6 and Coates Kokes. A6 recruited for the groups; Coates Kokes staff facilitated them. The groups included Black and African American community members recruited by A6 for the following three groups, into which participants self-selected (Group A – Black/African American, cisgender heterosexual men, Group B – Black/African American, cisgender heterosexual women, and Group C – Black/African American, LGBTQIA+ people).

Each listening session began with polling of the 13 ads CK was testing. Participants were asked to give their gut reaction to the ads by rating them 1-7 for how positive they found the message and the image, 1 meaning they found the ad "very positive" or favorable, and 7 meaning they found the ad "very negative" or unfavorable.

In addition to ad polling, each listening session included a group discussion with participants about what they liked or disliked about the ads they were shown. At the end of each session, participants were then asked to review all 13 ads as a group and share their Top 3 ads, as well as their Bottom 3 ads.

In general, participants across all three groups responded positively to all 13 ads that were tested. Participants were open to receiving information and messages about HIV, and expressed the importance of addressing this topic with Black and African American people in Oregon due to the rate of new infections for this population (4x higher than the state average overall). Several participants shared that it's important to get tested for HIV to protect themselves, as well as to protect their sex partners and loved ones.

A key driving factor for many participants, elicited through the ads, was love and respect for their sex partners, as well as the need to address stigma to benefit the whole community. Recommendations based on the combined feedback from all three groups:

- Messaging that frames the conversation around love, protection, respect and freedom is important.
- Participants responded better to more positive imagery with people who are laughing, smiling or displaying love.
- Messages that resonated with participants included:
  - HIV affects us all. Get tested, help our community.
  - HIV. When we test, we protect.
  - When we test, we respect.
  - Real talk: We all have an HIV status. What's yours?
  - HIV doesn't wait. Neither should you. Get tested.
  - Free from fear. Get tested for HIV.

Campaign Implementation

The A6 campaign launched on November 25, 2023, and ran through February 25, 2024. Some billboards were left up through March 2023, yielding added value beyond the paid elements of the campaign. However, all statistics provided in this report reflect data collected during the originally scheduled 13-week campaign period only.

The November - February timing had several advantages:

- It leveraged the momentum already in the marketplace around World AIDS Day (Dec. 1).
- The campaign continued to pick up speed heading into the New Year (2024), when people are traditionally focused on health, wellness, and behavior change resolutions.
- February is Black History Month. February 7 is also National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

Target Market:

The campaign was implemented in Portland, Oregon. It focused on Black and African American adults, ages 21-55.

Specific targeted ZIP codes included:

- 97230 – NE Portland/Gresham, east of I-205/122nd Ave.
- 97211 – NE Portland, Concordia, and Vernon
- 97233 – SE Portland, east of 122nd Ave.
- 97236 – SE Portland, east of 122nd Ave.
- 97220 – NE Portland, Maywood Park/Woodland Park/Parkrose/ Parkrose Heights
- 97217 – N Portland, Overlook, Arbor Lodge, Kenton, Piedmont, Humboldt

A small amount of additional out-of-home messaging targeted areas around strategically chosen bars and clubs in downtown Portland.

Campaign Methods:

The campaign used a variety of traditional and social media resources, including billboards, radio, audio streaming, out-of-home advertising (e.g., posters, bus shelters, and fliers), and social media ads. Digital advertising and social media allowed Coates Kokes to use geofencing to focus messages by demographics and psychographics. Terrestrial radio included KBMS-AM, The Numberz, Jam'n 107.5 FM, WE FM, and Live 95.5. We also placed a small number of ads on Grindr to reach African American men who are gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men (MSM).

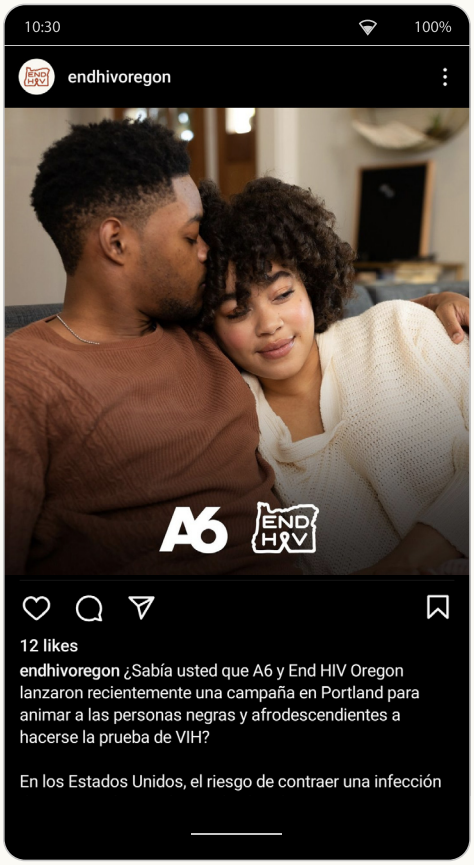
Out-of-home advertising included purchased poster space at 14 bars, nightclubs or sex clubs in the campaign area and an unlimited number of fliers and posters that the A6 team could distribute to business owners, social service agencies, and churches via community engagement strategies.

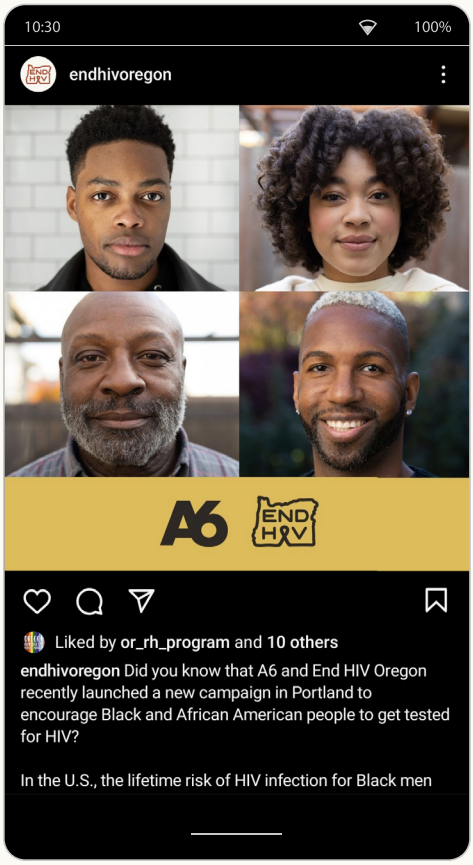
A specific campaign page on the End HIV Oregon website (www.endhivoregon/A6) was developed and launched to provide easy access to educational, testing, and prevention resources for community members who saw the campaign, including mail-order services like condoms, lube, and HIV self-testing kits. All campaign materials were cobranded with the End HIV Oregon and A6 logos, and included the web address and/or a QR code guiding them to the campaign webpage.

Campaign Snapshots

Coates Kokes finalized the creative designs based on feedback given at the community listening sessions, focusing on messaging that frames the conversation around love, protection, respect and freedom, and used positive imagery with people who are mostly laughing, smiling or displaying love. Here is some of the imagery used for social media posts:

Message:	Message:	Message:
When We Test, We Protect	**HIV Affects Us All**	**It Sure Feels Good: To Know Your HIV Status**





Campaign Results

Because formative research indicates that many Black and African American adults in the Portland area may be in an early stage of behavior change related to HIV/STI (e.g., precontemplation, contemplation), the primary aim of the campaign was increasing awareness and decreasing stigma; a secondary aim was increasing HIV testing.

Campaign Reach: Increasing Awareness

The campaign was highly visible in Portland, with a total of almost **40 million impressions** (e.g., how many times messages were seen or heard):

- Outdoor boards yielded **about 26 million** impressions.
- Out-of-home advertising yielded **2.5 million** impressions, including 1 million views of restroom posters at 14 bars, nightclubs, and sex clubs with high patronage by Black and African American people and **1.5 million** views of posters at bus shelters in 4 locations in ZIP codes 97211, 97217, and 97220.
- Total combined viewing for Instagram, Facebook, and digital advertising/display ads was **over 8.6 million**. Of these, there were **21,952 clicks** on the ads, a **.25% click-through rate**, and **19 conversions** (e.g., outbound visits to resources for HIV testing, free condoms, PrEP, and HIV service organizations).
- The campaign reached **132,178 unique listeners an average of 7.63 times** through audio streaming.

For the 13 weeks of the campaign, **EndHIVOregon.org visitor traffic was among the highest the website has ever seen**. Paid media efforts drove 23,853 users to the End HIV Oregon A6 webpage (an average of 262 people/day). This compares to a daily count of about 40-50 visitors per day since the website launched in 2016.

Campaign Impact: Increasing HIV Testing & Use of Prevention Resources

Based on the number of people who were exposed to End HIV/STI Oregon A6 campaign media, and took further steps to seek out information and resources, the campaign was successful in increasing awareness about HIV, STI, and sexual health.

Did it result in increased testing or other preventive actions?

HIV and STI testing are available in a wide variety of places, including at private medical offices, clinics, and through mail-order and other home testing and self-collection kits. We do not have access to these data, so it is difficult to assess the impact of this campaign on testing behaviors among community members. Two mail-order programs administered by OHA provide some indication of testing uptake. We examined usage of these programs among people living in campaign ZIP codes during the campaign, and compared these data to orders from the same period the year before.

The Take Me Home program, which provides at-home rapid HIV test kits and HIV/STI self-collection kits, saw an increase in orders from the ZIP codes where the campaign was running during the months of the campaign compared to the same period the previous year. HIV rapid test kit orders increased by 50% (from 10 to 15) and HIV/STI self-collection kit orders almost doubled (from 19 to 36). These data are not available by race or ethnicity.

Orders from the One at Home Program, which provides mail-order condoms and other sexual health supplies, remained stable in the campaign ZIP codes during the campaign. This was different from the experience in Eastern Oregon, where a similar HIV awareness campaign appeared to result in a large increase in mail-order supplies. However, proximity to brick and mortar resources like clinics and social service agencies may mean that mail-order options are not as urgently needed among populations in urban areas.

A testing event for National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, co-hosted by A6 and Cascade AIDS Project, provided community education and additional testing opportunities for people in the community.

Conclusions

A first-ever, multi-modal media campaign in Portland, Oregon, aimed at increasing HIV/STI awareness, increasing HIV testing, and decreasing HIV/STI stigma among Black and African American adults, was highly visible and reached a significant number of people in Portland. For the 13 weeks of the campaign, traffic to www.endhivoregon.org was among the highest since its launch in 2016, drawing in about 5-6 times more visitors than the average daily count.

Orders for HIV test kits and HIV/STI self-collection kits from the mail-order program Take Me Home, which is made available through the Oregon Health Authority and was a resource provided on the End HIV/STI Oregon/A6 website, increased during the campaign among people living in campaign ZIP codes, which may indicate increased actions resulting from exposure to campaign messaging.

Community engagement was a strong component of the A6 campaign, including training and education sessions at a variety of CBOs and churches, and integration of campaign messaging into A6's usual interactions with community members and clients. An HIV testing event for National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, held in partnership with Cascade AIDS Project, provided community education and access to testing for local community members, and A6 has continued to provide education and testing events after the close the campaign.

report date: 4/16/24

"This campaign has had a profound impact, reaching many of our community members through its visually captivating messages."

Linda Harris, A6 Executive Director

National Campaigns Focused on Black/African Americans

- Let's Stop HIV Together (National/CDC) – Current
  https://www.cdc.gov/stophivtogether/library/clinician-resources/banners/horizontal.html
- I am a Work of ART (National/U.S. Department of Health and Humans Services, including CDC and NIH) – Current
  https://www.hiv.gov/federal-response/campaigns/work-of-art/materials
- Life As We Know It social media campaign to encourage Black and Latinx men to get tested for HIV (Philadelphia/Brothers United, a project of AccessMatters)
  https://www.accessmatters.org/brothers-united-launches-15-day-campaign-to-increase-hiv-awareness-among-black-and-latinx-men-and-encourage-hiv-home-self-testing/
- We all have AIDS (Kenneth Cole, Viacom and Kaiser Family Foundation) – 2019
  https://www.psaresearch.com/kenneth-cole-creates-and-launches-we-all-have-aids-public-service-campaign-on-world-aids-day/
- Black Women and PrEP (Black AIDS Institute) – 2018
  https://blackaids.org/campaign/black-women-and-prep/
- Me. Him. His campaign (United Kingdom/LGBT HERO and GMFA) – 2018
  https://www.gaytimes.co.uk/life/new-campaign-aiming-increase-hiv-testing-black-gay-men/
- Give HIV the finger (LGBT Foundation/England) – 2017
  https://lgbt.foundation/news/lgbt-foundation-to-run-daily-hiv-clinics-as-part-of-national-hiv-testing-week-campaign/134
- Be HIV Sure (New York City Department of Health) – December 2014
  https://www.thebody.com/article/new-york-citys-new-hiv-awareness-campaign-shows-in
- Testing makes us stronger. (National/CDC) – December 2011 – September 2015
  https://www.hiv.gov/blog/stay-strong-and-informed-about-hiv
- Take Charge. Take the Test. (National/CDC) – Piloted in 2006-2007
  https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/docs/factsheets/archive/tctt-campaign-backgrounder-508.pdf