

## Project Summary

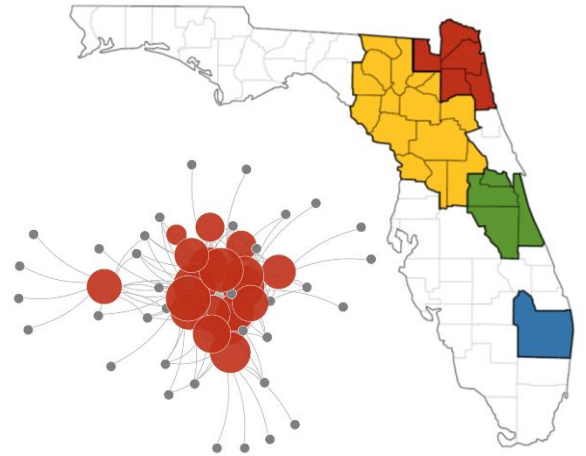
# Measuring Integration between Primary Care and Public Health to Improve HIV Early Detection and Control

## Executive Summary

The Integrating to Improve (i2i) study is examining how public health, primary care, and community organizations in four regional service areas of Florida work as collaborative systems to identify, link to care, and provide continuous care for persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). This study determines the extent to which characteristics of the organizations and systems influence levels of coordination and service integration that, ultimately, contribute to health outcomes. This research addresses issues associated with the lack of coordination that can contribute to:

- Late diagnosis of HIV
- Delayed entry of persons with HIV/AIDS into care
- Poor retention of persons with HIV/AIDS in care

Results will highlight the breadth of organizations that are involved in HIV systems of care, noting the importance of funding to support their work and the critical nature of relationships between organizations that can either facilitate or hinder a patient's movement along the spectrum of engagement in care.



## Background

In 2015, the White House introduced the National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States that identified a set of priorities and strategic action steps that were directly connected to outcomes. To help reduce disparities and new infections, the strategy set the goal of coordinated systems of care that would improve access to care and health outcomes. The lack of coordination among public health and community-based organizations that conduct HIV prevention and screening and the organizations that provide primary care has been identified as primary factor contributing to late diagnosis, delayed entry into care, and poor retention in care for significant numbers of PLWHA.

### More information

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## Methods

The project team is composed of investigators from RTI, University of Florida, and the Florida Department of Health (FDOH), in partnership with the Florida Public Health Practice Based Research Network and leadership of four (4) HIV service areas in Florida.

The i2i study applies a mixed methods approach that combines primary and secondary data for each area to identify organizations, services, and key factors in each system of care based on:

- **Key Informant Interviews.** The project team conducted interviews with key informants in each area, including Ryan White lead agencies, health department staff, HIV/AIDS Program Coordinators, and case management agencies.
- **Web-Based PARTNER Survey.** The project team used a web-based survey program, PARTNER, to collect data about each service provider in the participating areas, e.g., what services it provides, and how organizations work together.
- **Ryan White HIV/AIDS Services Reports.** The project team gathered additional organizational information on agencies funded by Ryan White from the *Ryan White HIV/AIDS Services Report*, which is completed on an annual basis by Ryan White providers. The project team worked with Co-Investigator Dr. Wilson (Evaluation Consultant to FDOH) to submit a report request to FDOH (which maintains the Ryan White CAREWare data system), as well as work with lead agencies and community partners to help fulfill report requests.
- **Area-Level Surveillance Data.** The project incorporates available area-level surveillance data into the analyses, as available from the FDOH.

## Impact

There is a very limited amount of information about best practices in linkage to care of HIV patients newly diagnosed or in early entry and retention in care. Despite limited evidence, multiple organizations have called for integration or collaborations to achieve these goals. Results of this project will provide insight into the critical mechanisms associated with the integration of services and the inter-organizational system of care for persons living with HIV/AIDS. More specifically, these findings will identify organizational and relational measures associated with early diagnosis, linkage to care, and continuous care for persons with HIV. At the end of the project, the i2i study will develop resources to optimize HIV systems of care and improve health outcomes for persons with HIV/AIDS.