



## Use Case: Utilization of Health Information Exchange to Support Re-Engagement in HIV Care

### *Overview*

Approximately 2,000 persons are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS in the state of West Virginia<sup>1</sup>. Many of these persons may have fallen out of and/or never accessed HIV medical care after their diagnosis or were otherwise lost to follow-up by disease investigators. Under mandate, it is the responsibility of the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health (BPH), local health officers, and their designees to investigate reported HIV cases as well as to conduct interventions to prevent further disease transmission. Linking/re-linking persons living with HIV (PLWH) to quality HIV care is one of the most effective methods to improve health outcomes and decrease transmission.

Under the scope of this use case, WVHIN will provide to BPH encounter information for out-of-care PLWH via the Encounter notification Service (ENS). Near real-time ENS encounter information will support BPH in fulfilling their mandated activities by initiating and informing re-engagement services.

### *Permitted Purpose Category*

For Public Health Reporting Purpose.

### *Technical Design*

BPH will securely provide an electronic dataset comprised of individuals diagnosed with HIV/AIDS for whom analysis of surveillance data indicates no recent engagement in HIV medical care. Through the Encounter Notification Service (ENS) WVHIN will notify BPH when a PLWH patient presents at a WVHIN participating organization.

### *Use Case Description*

West Virginia is currently experiencing an outbreak of HIV among persons who inject drugs (PWID). Homelessness, mental health issues, and other risk factors characteristic of this population often make it difficult to link and retain persons in medical care. Additionally, the transient nature of this population makes it difficult to locate someone for re-engagement

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<sup>1</sup> West Virginia HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report. West Virginia HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, Charleston, WV. 2018, pg.30.

services once they've fallen out of care. Engagement in HIV medical care and receipt of anti-retroviral therapy to suppress a patient's HIV viral load is one of the most effective strategies for preventing the transmission of HIV to uninfected individuals. Therefore, current HIV disease control and prevention activities emphasize the importance of identifying PLWH who are not fully engaged in HIV medical care and conducting public health follow-up to link these individuals to HIV medical care and support services.

An ENS notification of these encounters will be delivered to the designated HIV/STD program staff who will review the information and initiate re-engagement services in a timely manner if they are still needed. BPH staff can use the updated patient information to initiate re-engagement. This data will allow BPH to 1) avoid "missed opportunities" for clinical and public health intervention to engage hard-to-reach persons 2) better understand how not-in-care PLWH utilize health care services and 3) identify settings and partners for expanded HIV care re-engagement activities.

### *Opt-Out Applicability*

Individuals who have chosen to opt-out of WVHIN services will not be accessible by BPH.

### *Eligible Participants*

West Virginia Bureau for Public Health (BPH), local health officers, and their designees.

### *Approval*

This Use Case Policy has been approved by the WVHIN Clinical and Data Use Committee during the meeting held on January 17, 2020 and approved by the Board of Directors during the meeting held February 7, 2020.