CENTRAL FLORIDA HIV PLANNING COUNCIL • NOVEMBER 17, 2026

STRONGER TOGETHER

Beyond HIV: Whole-Person Health, Wellness & Community Partnership

Presented by Melissa Sandel

Outreach Specialist & HIV Testing Counselor | PreventionX (Orlando / Statewide)

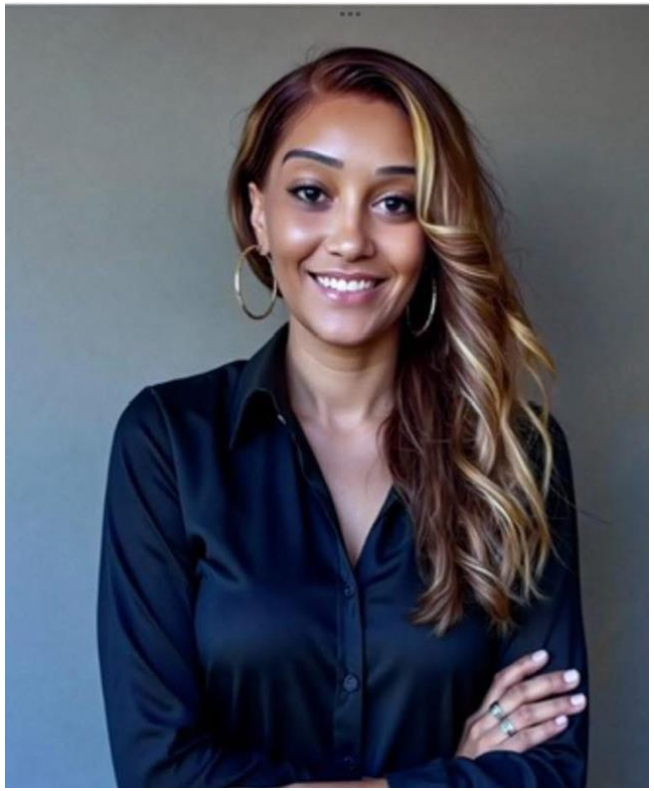
Advocate, Woman of Transgender Experience & Person Living with HIV

PREVENTIONX

PREVENTION • EDUCATION
TESTING • TREATMENT
WHOLE-PERSON SUPPORT

Meet Melissa Sandel: Why This Work Is Personal

Outreach Specialist & HIV Testing Counselor | Woman of Transgender Experience Living with HIV



Melissa Sandel

"Prevention starts with a conversation."

MY STORY: FROM DIAGNOSIS AT 17 TO THRIVING ADVOCATE

- **Diagnosed at Age 17:** I acquired HIV as a teenager without access to affirming education, prevention tools, or supportive guidance to make informed choices.
- **Navigating Care as a Woman of Transgender Experience:** I know firsthand how stigma, misgendering, and fragmented healthcare push trans women away from life-saving medical care.
- **Living Proof of Whole-Person Wellness:** Today, thriving with HIV, I bring empathy—not judgment—into every room so community members feel seen, respected, and empowered.

MY WORK AT PREVENTIONX: TURNING LIVED EXPERIENCE INTO ACTION

- **Low-Barrier HIV & STI Testing:** Creating safe, confidential spaces where testing feels like self-care rather than fear or shame.
- **Peer-Led Prevention Education:** Breaking down PrEP, PEP, Doxy-PEP, and U=U in plain language that resonates with youth, LGBTQ+ folks, and communities of color.
- **Warm Handoffs & Care Navigation:** Walking alongside clients from their very first question to clinical appointments, hormone-informed care, and nonprofit support.

Our Mission & Story: Ending HIV and HIV Stigma

From a grassroots South Florida movement in 2017 to a statewide sexual health & wellness partner

OUR MISSION

PreventionX works to end the dual epidemics of HIV and HIV stigma by expanding access to safe, affirming, and non-judgmental prevention and care for everyone.

From Prevention 305 to PreventionX

- **2017 Grassroots Launch:** Began as Prevention 305 in South Florida with a community-first focus on HIV prevention, PrEP access, and street-level education.
- **Statewide Expansion:** Grew into PreventionX—serving Miami, Orlando, Tampa, St. Petersburg, and every Florida county via telehealth.
- **Five Core Pillars:** Prevention • Education • Testing • Treatment • Ongoing Support.
- **Built on Dignity:** Accessible, inclusive, compassionate healthcare that meets people where they are—without red tape or judgment.



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Patrick Whiteside

Chief Executive Officer, PreventionX

"When you're experimenting with something, don't be afraid to fail."

Under Patrick's leadership, PreventionX has scaled innovative care models—combining brick-and-mortar clinics, TelePrEP, and community partnerships to eliminate barriers to care across Florida.

Meet Our Medical Director: Dr. Kurtis Mohr, MD

Dedicated HIV Medicine & Sexual Health leadership right here in Orlando, FL



DIRECT CLINICAL & REFERRAL LINE

833-733-7407

Orlando Clinic: 17 N. Summerlin Ave.
PreventionX.org | Telehealth Statewide

Medical Training & HIV/Sexual Health Specialization

- **Orlando-Based Medical Director:** Leads clinical protocols, provider training, and patient care across PreventionX.
- **HIV Medicine Fellowship (2022):** Completed specialized HIV Fellowship at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland/San Francisco.
- **Family Medicine Residency (2010):** Trained at Grant Medical Center following his MD from the University of South Florida (2007).
- **Core Clinical Focus:** Comprehensive HIV treatment, rapid ART start, PrEP, PEP, Doxy-PEP, and affirming STI care.

How Council Partners & Agencies Can Connect Clients Directly

- **Direct Warm Handoffs:** Call 833-733-7407 or connect through Melissa Sandel for same-week in-person or Telehealth intake.
- **Zero-Judgment Clinical Space:** Affirming care for LGBTQ+ clients, transgender and gender-diverse patients, and uninsured individuals.
- **Collaborative Care:** We coordinate seamlessly with Ryan White case managers, CBOs, and local support agencies.

Local Care. Statewide Reach.

Four community-rooted Florida clinics backed by statewide Telehealth & TelePrEP



17 N. Summerlin Ave.
Orlando, FL

PREVENTION 407

ORLANDO, FL



The Prevention Lounge
Miami Beach, FL

PREVENTION 305

MIAMI BEACH, FL



2506 W. Virginia Ave.
Tampa, FL

PREVENTION 813

TAMPA, FL



3000 1st Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL

PREVENTION 727

ST. PETERSBURG, FL

TELEHEALTH & TELEPREP ACROSS ALL OF FLORIDA

You don't always have to come into the office.

- ✓ Overcomes transportation, distance, and rural access barriers across Central Florida
- ✓ Fits busy work, caregiving, and shift schedules with convenient virtual follow-ups
- ✓ Supports privacy for clients who prefer connecting confidentially from home

Why Our Work Matters: Florida HIV & STI Burden

2024 surveillance data underscores the urgent need for low-barrier, integrated prevention and care

FLORIDA HIV DATA (2024)

4,463
New HIV Diagnoses

132,444
People Living with HIV

19.4
HIV Diagnosis Rate per 100,000

569
HIV-Related Deaths

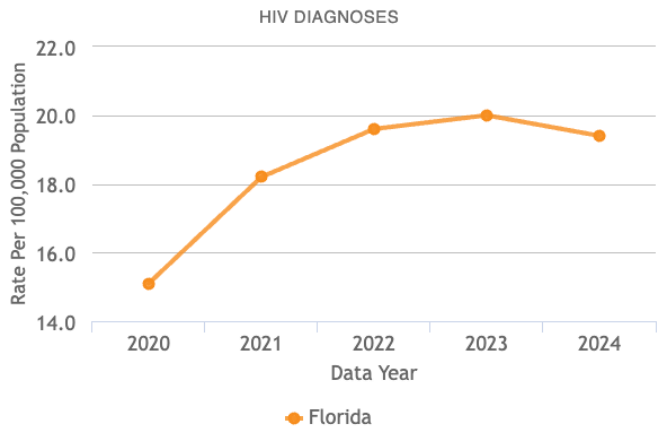
FLORIDA STI DATA (2024)

106,871
Chlamydia Cases

42,100
Gonorrhea Cases

9,051
Early Syphilis Cases

39.3
Early Syphilis Rate per 100,000

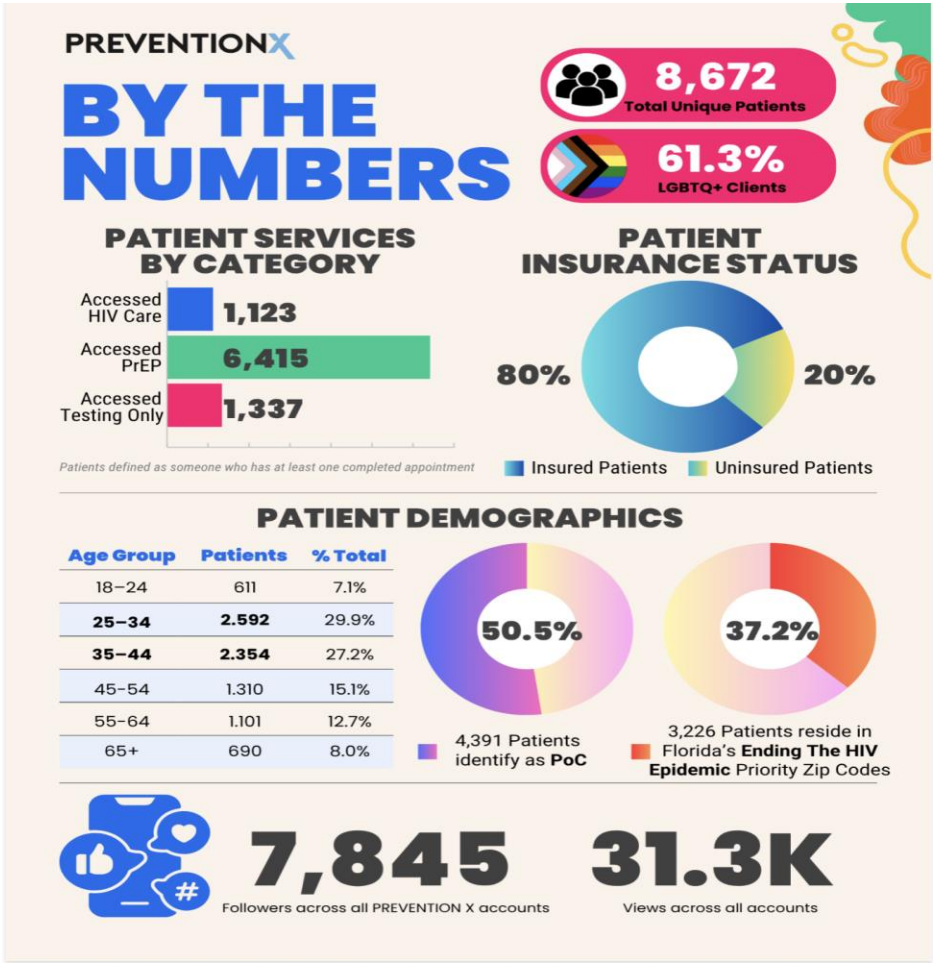


What These Numbers Mean:

- HIV and bacterial STIs intersect—untreated STIs increase HIV vulnerability.
- Every statistic is a neighbor who deserves fast, stigma-free testing and care.
- Source: FL Dept. of Health, Florida Health CHARTS (2024).

Our Impact Goes Beyond the Numbers

Reaching priority populations, LGBTQ+ communities, People of Color, and uninsured Floridians



Reaching the Communities Most Impacted

- **8,672 Unique Patients Served:** 6,415 accessed PrEP, 1,123 accessed HIV care, and 1,337 accessed testing services.
- **61.3% LGBTQ+ Clients:** Reflecting deep trust within queer, trans, and gender-diverse communities.
- **50.5% People of Color (4,391 Patients):** Culturally affirming outreach that narrows racial health disparities.
- **37.2% in EHE Priority Zip Codes:** 3,226 patients reside in Florida's Ending the HIV Epidemic priority areas.
- **20% Uninsured Patients Served:** Navigating assistance programs so ability to pay never blocks prevention or treatment.

EVERY NUMBER IS A HUMAN LIFE

"At PreventionX, every number represents a person, a conversation, and an opportunity to connect someone with prevention and care. Our impact is measured not only by how many people we serve, but by the lives we touch."

Comprehensive Prevention, Testing & Care Services

One welcoming front door for biomedical prevention, confidential screening, and ongoing treatment

1. Prevention & Education

- **PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis):** Daily oral pills and long-acting injectable options to prevent HIV before exposure.
- **PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis):** Urgent 28-day medication started within 72 hours of a possible HIV exposure.
- **Doxy-PEP:** Targeted post-exposure doxycycline to reduce syphilis, chlamydia, and bacterial STIs.
- **Peer Risk-Reduction Counseling:** Judgment-free conversations tailored to each person's relationships and goals.

2. Confidential Testing

- **Rapid & Lab HIV Testing:** Fast, confidential screening with compassionate counseling—never a dead-end result.
- **Full-Site STI Testing:** Blood, urine, throat, and rectal swabs based on anatomy and real-life exposure.
- **Hepatitis C Testing:** Early detection and linkage to curative Hepatitis C therapy.
- **Hepatitis B Screening:** Screening plus guidance on protective Hepatitis B vaccination.

3. Treatment & Ongoing Care

- **HIV Treatment & Medication Support:** Rapid antiretroviral therapy (ART), viral load monitoring, and adherence support.
- **Same-Visit STI Treatment:** Prompt treatment and recommended follow-up retesting.
- **Hepatitis C Management:** End-to-end clinical treatment and cure verification.
- **Case Management & Navigation:** Insurance/ADAP navigation, copay assistance, and ongoing wellness check-ins.

Health & Wellness Is Bigger Than HIV

You cannot separate viral suppression or prevention from mental health, identity, and daily survival

Physical & Sexual Health

- Routine preventive primary care, vaccinations (Hep A/B, HPV, Mpox), and cardiometabolic health as people age with HIV.
- Comprehensive STI, Hepatitis, and sexual-health counseling free of shame or assumptions.
- Medication access, side-effect check-ins, and flexible pill or injectable regimens.

Mental & Behavioral Health

- Addressing HIV stigma, medical trauma, depression, anxiety, and isolation—especially among youth and trans folks.
- Trauma-informed peer support groups and warm referrals to affirming behavioral-health clinicians.
- Substance-use harm reduction and recovery support without punitive barriers.

Gender-Affirming & Identity Care

- Coordinating HIV treatment or PrEP alongside gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) with knowledgeable providers.
- Consistent use of chosen names, pronouns, and respectful intake forms.
- Creating physically and emotionally safe clinic environments where trans women feel celebrated.

Social Determinants of Health

- Housing stability, food security, transportation, and safe employment—because stability drives adherence.
- Health insurance enrollment, ADAP, Ryan White eligibility, and manufacturer patient assistance.
- Digital access and health literacy so patients can use Telehealth confidently.

How Nonprofits & Community Partners Can Help

Practical, high-impact ways Central Florida organizations can strengthen the continuum of care

1. Replace Cold Referrals with Warm Handoffs

- Don't just hand out a phone number—call 833-733-7407 together with the client or introduce them directly to Melissa.
- Use closed-loop referral tracking so we confirm the client actually made it to care.
- Co-locate testing and navigation inside trusted community spaces.

2. Host Pop-Up Testing & Wellness Events

- Partner with PreventionX for mobile testing at Pride events, Ballroom/House events, faith spaces, campuses, and shelters.
- Pair HIV/STI testing with food pantries, hygiene kits, or housing intake to normalize wellness.
- Bring peer educators who reflect the community.

3. Bridge Insurance, ADAP & Basic Needs

- Collaborate on Ryan White, ADAP, Medicaid, and Marketplace navigation so clients never face surprise bills.
- Pool bus passes, rideshare vouchers, and Telehealth kiosks for clients lacking transportation.
- Share multilingual, trans-inclusive educational materials.

4. INVEST IN PEER LEADERS & PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Hire, mentor, and compensate people living with HIV and women of transgender experience in decision-making and outreach roles—not just as tokens. When community members see leaders who share their lived reality, fear drops, retention rises, and stigma loses its power.

PrEP: Different Options for Different Routines

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis is highly effective when tailored to each person's body, routine, and preferences

What is PrEP? Medication for HIV-negative people to prevent HIV before exposure. Requires baseline & routine HIV testing and clinical follow-up—available in clinic or via TelePrEP.

Daily Oral F/TDF

Truvada® or Generic

- Approved for sexual and injection-related HIV prevention across all populations.
- Familiar daily pill routine with widespread generic insurance coverage.

Daily Oral F/TAF

Descovy®

- Small daily oral tablet with strong renal and bone safety profile.
- Clinical note: Not approved for receptive vaginal-sex exposure.

Long-Acting Cabotegravir

Apretude® (Every 2 Months)

- Intramuscular injection administered every 2 months after initial loading doses.
- Eliminates daily pill fatigue and enhances privacy.

Long-Acting Lenacapavir

Yeztugo® (Every 6 Months)

- Twice-yearly subcutaneous injection (every 6 months) after initiation doses.
- Breakthrough convenience for busy schedules or travel.

PEP & Doxy-PEP: Rapid Protection After Exposure

Time-sensitive HIV emergency prevention and CDC-guided bacterial STI prevention

PEP: Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (HIV)

Act quickly after a possible HIV exposure—every hour counts

START WITHIN 72 HOURS (IDEALLY WITHIN 24 HOURS)

- **Emergency HIV Prevention:** Medication taken after potential sexual, occupational, or needle-sharing exposure.
- **28-Day Full Course:** Must be taken consistently for 28 days with follow-up HIV testing.
- **Do Not Wait:** Contact PreventionX (833-733-7407) or an urgent medical provider immediately for rapid evaluation.
- **Bridge to PrEP:** After completing PEP, clients can transition smoothly onto PrEP for ongoing peace of mind.

Doxy-PEP: Bacterial STI Prevention

Evidence-based post-exposure antibiotic strategy to curb syphilis & chlamydia

DOSE: 200 MG WITHIN 72 HRS AFTER SEX (MAX 200 MG / 24 HRS)

- **CDC Clinical Guidance:** Recommended to discuss with gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, and transgender women, with a bacterial STI in the past 12 months.
- **Strong STI Reduction:** Significantly reduces syphilis and chlamydia risk; gonorrhea effectiveness varies.
- **Shared Decision-Making:** Not universal—clinicians review potential side effects, sun sensitivity, and antimicrobial stewardship.
- **Routine Screening Continues:** Paired with regular STI testing every 3–6 months.

HIV Treatment, U=U & Routine STI / Hepatitis Wellness

Modern HIV care empowers long, healthy lives—and regular screening protects whole-body health

U = U (UNDETECTABLE = UNTRANSMITTABLE)

Maintaining an undetectable viral load means ZERO risk of sexual HIV transmission.

- **Modern Antiretroviral Therapy (ART):** Highly effective treatment suppresses HIV to undetectable levels and protects immune health.
- **Flexible Treatment Options:** Many people take a single daily pill, while eligible patients can choose long-acting injectable ART.
- **Ending Internalized Stigma:** As a woman living with HIV, U=U is freedom—it transforms fear into confidence in love, intimacy, and community.
- **Consistent Monitoring:** Ongoing lab work and supportive provider relationships keep viral suppression strong.

STI & Hepatitis Screening Is Routine Wellness

- **Most STIs Have Zero Symptoms:** Waiting for symptoms misses infections—routine screening protects both personal and partner health.
- **Anatomy- & Exposure-Based Testing:** Comprehensive blood, urine, throat, and rectal swabs tailored to how people actually have sex.
- **Complete Treatment & Retest:** Finishing prescribed antibiotics and returning for recommended test-of-cure or retesting.
- **Hepatitis B & C Care:** Screening for Hepatitis B and C, preventive Hep B vaccination, and curative Hepatitis C treatment.

Inclusive, Gender-Affirming Care: One Size Does Not Fit All

The best prevention or treatment option is always the one that works for the individual patient

Standards for Gender-Affirming Wellness

- **Respect Name & Pronouns Every Time:** From the front desk to the exam room, affirming identity builds immediate trust.
- **No Assumptions About Anatomy or Partners:** Ask open, respectful questions so screening and prevention match the patient's real life.
- **Coordinate HIV/PrEP with Hormone Care:** Discuss hormone-related needs and potential interactions with knowledgeable clinicians.
- **Safe Spaces to Ask Anything:** Transgender and gender-diverse people deserve clinics where they never have to educate their own doctor.

One Size Does Not Fit All

- **Honor Patient Preferences:** Some prefer a daily routine; others want long-acting injections without daily reminders.
- **Address Real-World Barriers:** Acknowledge needle anxiety, side-effect worries, privacy at home, transportation, and insurance.
- **Inform—Never Pressure:** Clearly explain benefits, risks, eligibility, and follow-up schedules so patients lead their own decisions.
- **Co-Create Sustainable Care Plans:** When patients feel heard, they stay engaged in care for the long haul.

CENTRAL FLORIDA HIV PLANNING COUNCIL • STRONGER TOGETHER

Thank You & Let's Talk About Your Health

Stronger together, we can end HIV stigma and make whole-person prevention and care accessible across Central Florida.

Questions, Partnerships & Discussion

- **HIV Prevention:** PrEP (oral & injectable) • Emergency PEP • Doxy-PEP
- **Confidential Testing:** HIV • Multi-Site STI • Hepatitis B & C Screening
- **Treatment & Support:** HIV Care & U=U • STI/Hep C Treatment • Case Management
- **Telehealth Access:** Virtual Visits & TelePrEP across all of Florida
- **Nonprofit Collaboration:** Warm Handoffs • Pop-Up Events • Peer Education

PREVENTIONX

SCAN ME

Melissa Sandel — Outreach & Testing Counselor

Dr. Kurtis Mohr, MD — Medical Director (Orlando)

Phone / Direct Referral Line: 833-733-7407

Orlando Clinic: 17 N. Summerlin Ave., Orlando, FL
Website: PreventionX.org (Scan QR Code)

Sources: PreventionX Partner & Community Templates; FL Dept. of Health Florida Health CHARTS (2024); CDC Clinical Guidelines (PrEP, PEP, Doxy-PEP, STI); NIH ClinicalInfo.