



**Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences**

**Massachusetts HIV/AIDS Epidemiologic Profile:
Data as of 1/1/2020
Population Report: Transgender Individuals**

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<https://www.mass.gov/lists/hivaids-epidemiologic-profiles>

TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth do not align based on traditional expectations. Transgender can also describe people whose gender identities do not exist within a gender binary structure; e.g., people who are non-binary or gender fluid, though not all of these individuals identify as transgender. Transgender woman describes a person assigned male at birth who currently identifies as a woman. Transgender man describes a person assigned female at birth who currently identifies as a man.

While questions about gender identity are often missing from national population assessments such as the US Census, Massachusetts has been a leader in adding these questions to local surveys. The Massachusetts Youth Violence Prevention Programs began collecting transgender-inclusive gender identity in 2005, as did the Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Office of HIV/AIDS in 2007. The MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program began collecting transgender-inclusive gender identity in 2009. In 2013, the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS), Youth Health Survey (YHS), and MDPH Bureau of Substance Addiction Services also began collecting transgender-inclusive gender identity.

These surveys, surveillance systems, and programmatic data systems provide important opportunities to monitor population health and the specific impacts of policies (e.g., marriage equality, universal health care access, anti-bullying legislation, extension of nondiscrimination protections to transgender individuals) and other macro-level changes and interventions on population health and health inequities.

N=19* new HIV diagnoses from 2016–2018 were among transgender individuals

N=121* transgender individuals were living with HIV infection in MA as of 12/31/2018

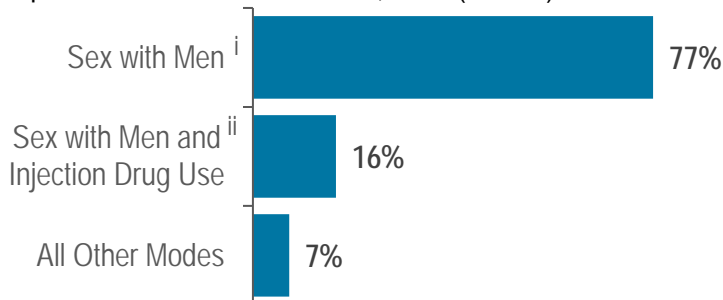
* Reported numbers among transgender individuals are likely to be underestimates due to underreporting of current gender.

Transgender individuals comprised **1%** of all new HIV diagnoses from 2016 to 2018 and **1%** of all persons living with HIV infection in Massachusetts as of December 31, 2018.

The following data presentations include transgender women only, due to small numbers among transgender men.

EXPOSURE MODE

FIGURE 1. Transgender women living with HIV infection by exposure mode: Massachusetts, 2018 (N=115)



- Sex with menⁱ was the exposure mode for the majority (77%) of transgender women reported to be living with HIV infection. By comparison, male-to-male sex was the leading exposure mode for all persons living with HIV infection at 39%.

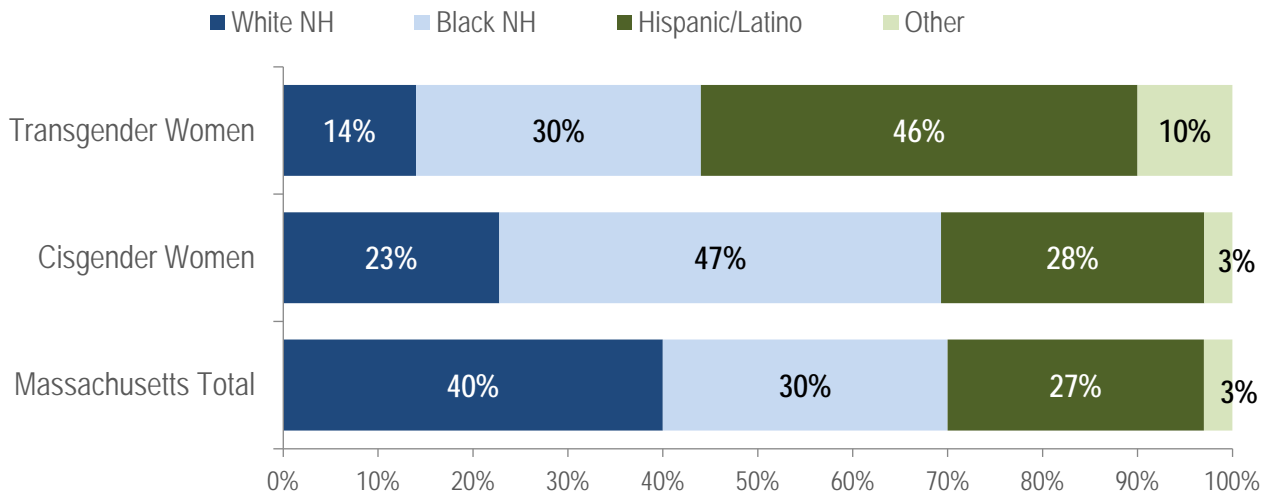
ⁱ Note: For the purposes of categorizing sexual risk in transgender women reporting sex with men only, this exposure mode category is reported on this fact sheet as “sex with men”. For the purposes of official reporting in the MA HIV/AIDS Surveillance System and to CDC, exposure mode for transgender women is based on sex assigned at birth, and therefore would be reported as male-to-male sex.

ⁱⁱ Note: For the purposes of categorizing sexual risk in transgender women reporting both sex with men and injection drug use, this exposure mode category is reported on this fact sheet as “sex with men and injection drug use”. For the purposes of official reporting in the MA HIV/AIDS Surveillance System and to CDC, exposure mode for transgender women is based on sex assigned at birth, and therefore would be reported as male-to-male sex/injection drug use.

TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

RACE/ETHNICITY

FIGURE 2. Persons living with HIV infection on December 31, 2018 by race/ethnicity: transgender women (N=115), cisgender women (N=6,623), and Massachusetts total (N=23,073)

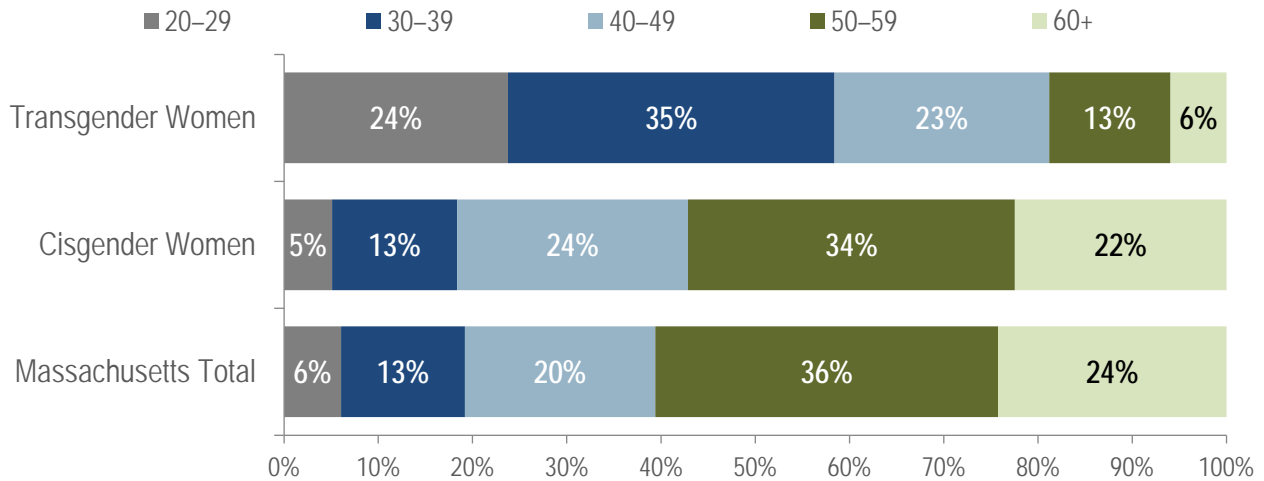


KEY FACT

- Forty-six percent of transgender women living with HIV infection were Hispanic/Latina, compared to 28% of cisgender women and 27% of all persons living with HIV infection.

AGE

FIGURE 3. Persons living with HIV infection on December 31, 2018 by age (years): transgender women (N=115), cisgender women (N=6,623), and Massachusetts total (N=23,073)



Ages 0-19 not shown due to small numbers.

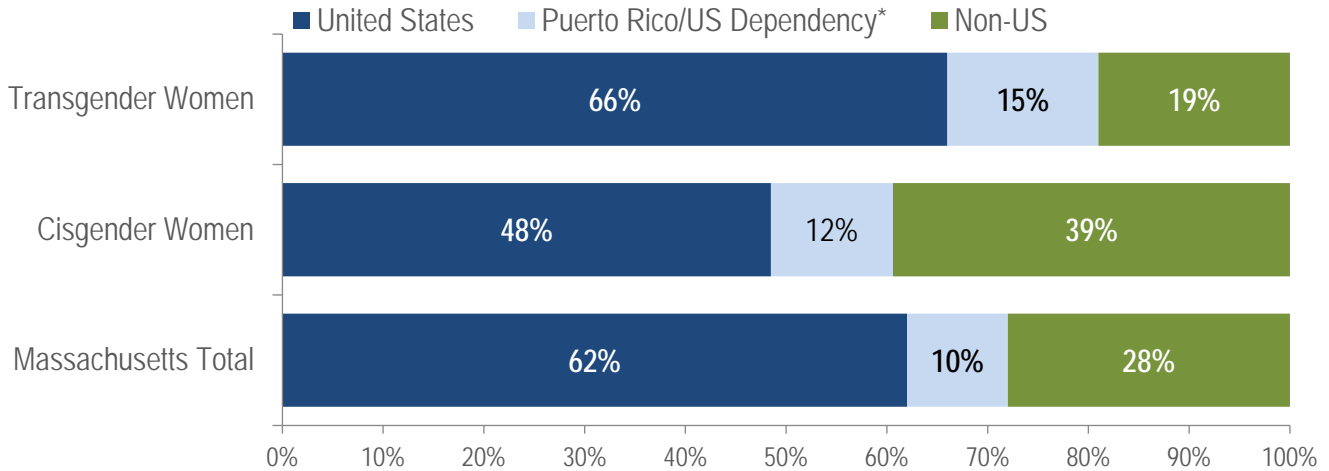
KEY FACT

- The majority of transgender women living with HIV infection in Massachusetts were under 40 years old. A total of 59% of transgender women were ages 20–39 years old as of December 31, 2018, compared to 18% of cisgender women and 19% of all persons living with HIV infection in Massachusetts.

TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

PLACE OF BIRTH

FIGURE 4. Persons living with HIV infection on December 31, 2018 by place of birth: transgender women (N=115), cisgender women (N=6,623), and Massachusetts total (N=23,073)

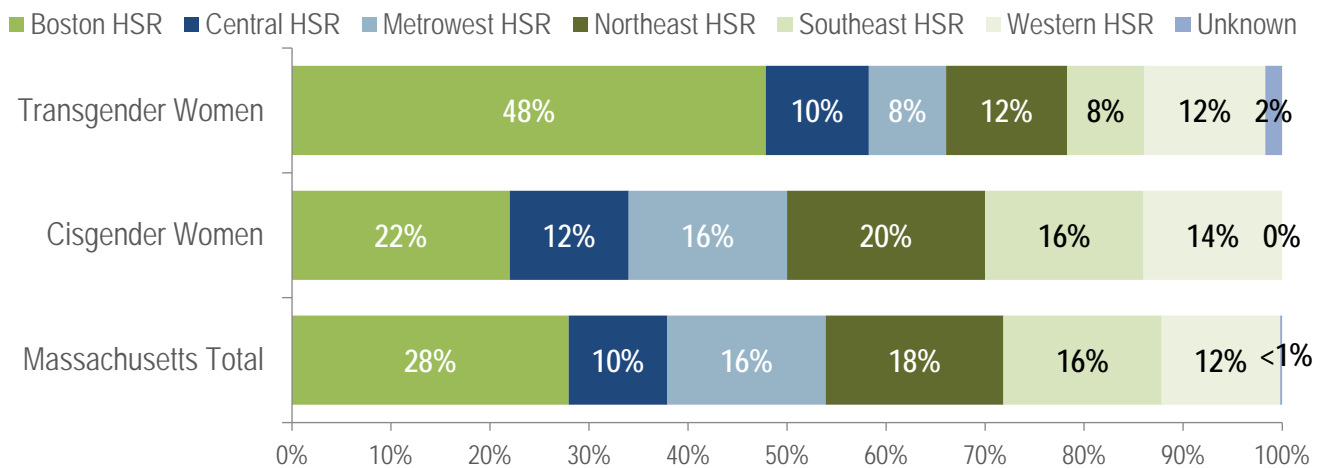


* 98% of individuals living with HIV infection on 12/31/18 who were born in a US dependency were born in Puerto Rico

- The distribution of place of birth among transgender women living with HIV infection on December 31, 2018 was more similar to that of all persons living with HIV infection (PLWH) in Massachusetts than cisgender women. Sixty-six percent of transgender women were born in the United States compared to 62% of all PLWH and 48% of cisgender women.

AREA OF RESIDENCE

FIGURE 5. Persons living with HIV infection on December 31, 2018 by Health Service Region (HSR) of residence: transgender women (N=115) vs. Massachusetts total (N=23,073)



- Almost half of all transgender women reported to be living with HIV infection in Massachusetts on December 31, 2018 were living in the Boston HSR, compared to 22% of cisgender women and 28% of all persons living with HIV infection. A total of 12% of transgender women were living in the Northeast HSR, 12% in the Western HSR, 10% in the Central HSR, 8% in the Western HSR, and 8% in the Metrowest HSR.

TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

REPORTING OF TRANSGENDER IDENTITY

Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS): *A continuous anonymous telephone survey of adults ages 18 and older that collects data on a variety of health risk factors, preventive behaviors, chronic conditions, and emerging public health issues.*

- Reported rates of transgender identity in Massachusetts are consistent with national estimates. Among 18,321 adult respondents to the BRFSS from 2016 to 2018, 0.6% (95% Confidence Interval (CI)=0.4%–0.8%) identified as transgender. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reference an estimate of nearly one million transgender individuals in America. This equates to a current best estimate of 390 per 100,000 adults, or 0.4% of US adults identifying as transgender.‡

Data Source: Office of Data Management and Outcomes Assessment, Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). For more information, see: Office of Data Management and Outcomes Assessment, Massachusetts Department of Public Health. A Profile of Health Among Massachusetts Adults, 2018, Results from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, December 2019, <https://www.mass.gov/lists/brfss-statewide-reports-and-publications#2018->

‡CDC, HIV and Transgender People, April 2019, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/gender/transgender/index.html>
Meerwijk EL, Sevelius JM. Transgender population size in the United States: a meta-regression of population-based probability samples. *Am J Public Health* 2017; 107(2):e1-e8, available at <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303578>

Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS): *An anonymous survey of public high school students conducted every odd year that collects data on health-related behaviors that may threaten the health and safety of young people.*

- Among public high-school enrolled respondents to the 2019 YRBS, 2.1% (95% CI=1.2%–3.0, n=2,160) identified as transgender.

Data Source for Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data: Office of Data Management and Outcomes Assessment, Department of Public Health and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. For more information see, <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/yrbs/>