

## Commonly-Used Abbreviations

- AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- ART: Anti-Retroviral Therapy (sometimes HAART, highly-active anti-retroviral therapy)
- BPHC: Boston Public Health Commission
- CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- CQM: Clinical Quality Management
- CY: Calendar Year
- EHE: Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative
- EMA: Eligible Metropolitan Area
- FPL: Federal Poverty Level
- FY: Fiscal Year
- HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- HRSA: Health Resources and Services Administration
- IDB: Infectious Disease Bureau (of the Boston Public Health Commission)
- IDU: Injection Drug Use
- LTC: Linkage to Care
- MAI: Minority AIDS Initiative
- MSM: Men who have Sex with Men
- N: Number (of people represented in a set of data)
- NHAS: National HIV/AIDS Strategy
- NIR: No Identified Risk
- PCN: Policy Clarification Notice
- PDSA: Plan, Do, Study, Act
- PLWH: People Living With HIV
- PM: Performance Measurement, or a performance measure
- PrEP: Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
- QA: Quality Assurance
- QI: Quality Improvement
- QOC: Quality of Care (Committee)
- QOL: Quality of Life (Outcomes)
- RCA: Root Cause Analysis
- RW: Ryan White
- RWHAP: Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program
- RWS: Ryan White Services (team at BPHC)
- SDOH: Social Determinants of Health, or Social Drivers of Health
- TA: Technical Assistance
- U=U: Undetectable equals Untransmittable
- VL: Viral Load
- VS: Viral Suppression

# CQM Terms Defined

## A

- Anti-Retroviral Therapy
  - A group of prescription medications used to manage HIV. People living with HIV who take ART can achieve and maintain a suppressed/undetectable viral load. Some HIV- individuals take ART to prevent HIV, as pre-exposure prophylaxis.

## B

- Baseline
  - A measurement of how things were at the beginning of something – for example, before a project is launched, before a change idea is tested.

## C

- Care Engagement
  - An individual is “engaged in care” when they are receiving ongoing HIV medical care, including having an appointment with their HIV medical provider at least once a year.
- Clinical Quality Management
  - This is a required component of Ryan White grants to ensure the continuous improvement of client care, health outcomes, and client satisfaction for people living with HIV.

## D

- Demographics
  - Personal information including age, gender, race & ethnicity, country of origin, primary language, income, and more.
- Denominator
  - The denominator is the bottom number in a fraction. When calculating a performance measure, the denominator represents the whole group.
  - For example, when measuring linkage to care within 7 days, the denominator represents all newly-diagnosed people, while the numerator represents only those newly-diagnosed people who actually were linked to care within 7 days.
- Disparity
  - A difference in outcomes for one group of people when compared to another.

## E

- Ending the HIV Epidemic
  - A federal program providing flexible funding to areas with high rates of HIV transmission, to diagnose all people living with HIV as early as possible, treat HIV rapidly and effectively, protect people at risk for HIV to prevent new transmissions, and respond to HIV clusters.
  - Suffolk County (the cities of Boston, Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop) is an EHE region, and the BPHC HIV/STI Services Division administers the EHE grant here.
- Eligible Metropolitan Area
  - A federally-defined urban region that is eligible for a Ryan White Part A grant, with a population of at least 50,000 and at least 2,000 new AIDS cases in the most recent 5 years

(or at least 3,000 people living with AIDS in the most recent calendar year). The Boston Eligible Metropolitan Area includes ten counties, seven in eastern and central Massachusetts, and three in southern New Hampshire.

- E2Boston

- The data system we use to collect and analyze data from our Part A, MAI, and EHE-funded programs.

F

- Fiscal Year

- A set 12-month period, usually not aligned with the January to December calendar year, used by a program or organization to manage their finances.
- Our Ryan White Part A program uses a March to February fiscal year. FY26 (fiscal year 2026) began on March 1, 2026, and will end on February 28, 2027.

- Funding Stream

- A source of money that supports care and services (in our context, for people living with HIV). Ryan White Part A and the other Ryan White Parts are funding streams, along with Medicaid and other government grants and programs.

H

- Health Outcomes

- Measures of health and well-being at an individual or population level. Viral suppression gets the most attention as an HIV-related health outcome, but care engagement and social determinants of health are just as important to the well-being of people living with HIV.

- Heterosexual Sex

- A mode of HIV transmission – acquiring HIV through sexual contact between a person assigned male at birth and a person assigned female at birth.

- HIV Care Continuum

- The process of a person living with HIV going from diagnosis to viral suppression. This includes diagnosis, linkage to HIV care, receiving HIV care, retention in care, and achieving and maintaining viral suppression.

- HRSA HIV/AIDS Bureau

- The bureau responsible for administering the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), part of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

I

- Implement/Implementation

- Making something happen, putting a plan into action.

- Infrastructure

- In the context of Clinical Quality Management, infrastructure means the resources, people, and structures to support the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CQM program activities.

- Injection Drug Use

- A mode of HIV transmission – acquiring HIV from using shared injection materials.
- Inverse
  - The opposite of something, or something turned upside-down. An “inverse measure” refers to performance measures where the goal is to decrease, not increase whatever is being measured. Usually, inverse measures are used to track how often bad outcomes or problems happen, like lapses in health insurance coverage or gaps in medical visits.

## J

- Jurisdiction
  - An area or region covered by a certain level of government.

## L

- Linkage to Care
  - The process of connecting a person who is newly-diagnosed with HIV, or who is out of care, to HIV care and treatment. Since people are more likely to stay engaged in care when they’re linked quickly, it’s common for HIV services providers to measure how many days it takes to link someone to care after their HIV diagnosis.

## M

- Men who have Sex with Men
  - A mode of HIV transmission – acquiring HIV through male-to-male sex. This mode of transmission is defined based on the sex at birth of the individuals involved, regardless of their current gender.
- Minority AIDS Initiative
  - This is a supplemental federal funding stream through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, to reduce the spread of HIV within communities of color and improve health outcomes for people of color living with HIV.

## N

- No Identified Risk
  - This is recorded as a mode of HIV transmission when the way an individual acquired HIV can’t be determined or verified, or when the available information about how a person acquired HIV doesn’t fit into any of the CDC-defined mode of transmission categories. This can include some types of HIV transmissions that occur outside the US, where it is not possible for US-based public health systems to verify necessary information.
- Numerator
  - A numerator is the top number in a fraction. When calculating a performance measure, the numerator represents the portion of the whole group that meets the definition of the measure.
  - For example, when measuring linkage to care within 7 days, the denominator represents all newly-diagnosed people, while the numerator represents only those newly-diagnosed people who actually were linked to care within 7 days.

## P

- Part A
  - The branch of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program that provides grants to urban areas that are significantly affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Part B
  - The branch of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program that provides grants to all 50 states, DC, and 6 US territories to fund care and services for PLWH.
- PDSA Cycle/Model for Improvement
  - A PDSA cycle is a component of the Model for Improvement, a structured approach to doing quality improvement (QI) projects.
  - The Model for Improvement uses guiding questions to frame a QI project and then repeated PDSA cycles to identify and test potential improvements, understand their impact, and decide whether to expand the improvement or try a different strategy.
- Performance Measure
  - A tool for using data to measure the success of a service or a project. A performance measure has a defined denominator and numerator, which are used to calculate a rate – what percentage of the time something does or doesn't happen, or for what percentage of clients something does or doesn't happen.
- Performance Measurement
  - The ongoing process of gathering data, making sense of it (analysis), and sharing it (reporting). In the context of Clinical Quality Management, this is done for the purpose of continuously improving client care, health outcomes, and client satisfaction.
- Perinatal
  - A mode of HIV transmission – acquiring HIV at birth.
- Policy Clarification Notice
  - Policy Clarification Notices are issued by the federal government to provide more detailed guidance/instructions on how to implement legislative policies. For example, Policy Clarification Notice 15-02 explains the components of a strong Ryan White Clinical Quality Management program.
- Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
  - A method of preventing HIV acquisition, by treating an HIV- individual with anti-retroviral medication before they are potentially exposed to HIV.

## Q

- Quality Assurance
  - The ongoing process of making sure that a program, product, or service sticks to minimum quality standards.
- Quality Improvement
  - In the context of Ryan White Clinical Quality Management, developing and implementing activities to make changes to the program based on data, for the purpose of continuously improving client care, health outcomes, and client satisfaction.

- More generally, QI is a process-based, data-driven approach to improving the quality of a product or service. It operates under the belief that there is always room for improving operations, processes, and activities to increase quality.

## R

- Rapid Start
  - A process for beginning ART as quickly as possible for people living with HIV, ideally on the same day as their diagnosis.
- Recipient
  - The recipient receives grant money directly from the federal government and is responsible for administering the grant. The federal government monitors the recipient for compliance. Depending on the grant, a recipient may provide services directly or grant money to sub-recipients to provide services. Also called the “grantee.”

## S

- Social Determinants of Health
  - These are aspects of life that affect individual and community health, even though they’re not often included in standard health care. For example, food access, housing costs and conditions, transportation access, and social support.
- Stratify/Stratification
  - Stratifying data means separating out different sub-groups represented in the data, in order to make comparisons and understand how outcomes differ for different groups.
- Subrecipient
  - A subrecipient receives federal grant money from the grant recipient (e.g. BPHC) and reports back to the recipient, not the federal government. The recipient monitors its subrecipients for compliance.
- Surveillance Data
  - Positive tests for HIV, STIs, and certain other infectious diseases must be reported to the state public health agency in the state where the test occurred. This ongoing tracking of disease transmission is called “surveillance.” State public health agencies gather, analyze, and report data about trends in infectious diseases, to support care & treatment for people diagnosed with these diseases, as well as to inform prevention efforts.

## U

- Units
  - The amount of a service that is provided to clients. Units may be in the form of time (a two-hour PSS support group = 2 units) or in the form of tasks or items (2 referrals made = 2 units, 2 taxi rides = 2 units, 2 months of rental assistance = 2 units).
- Utilization
  - Clients using Part A-funded services. Utilization data can include the number of clients who used a particular service, how many hours or units of the service clients used, and more.