

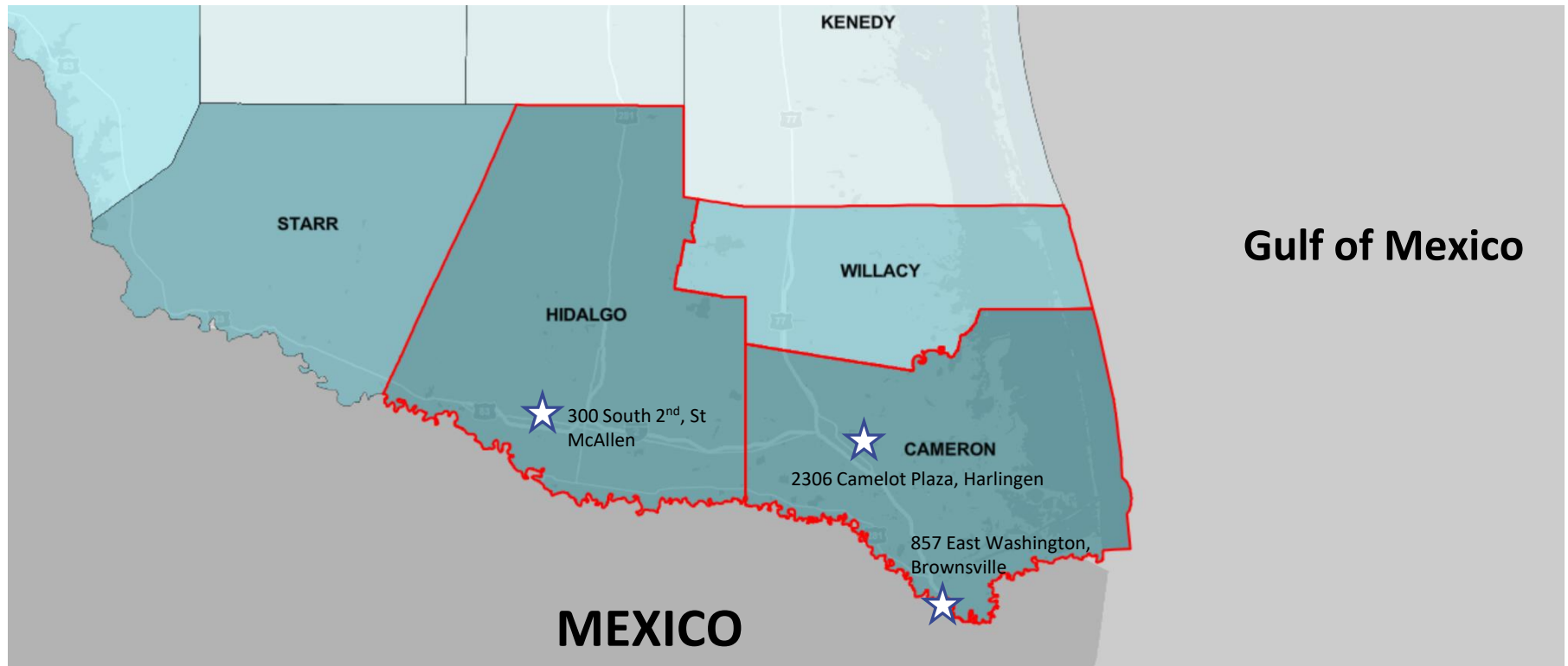


VAC Westbrook Clinics

Wally Cantú | he, him, *el*
CEO, VAC | Westbrook Clinics
wcantu@valleyaids.org



- VAC is the only HIV specialty clinic in the area
 - Largest HIV testing & PrEP provider in the area
 - Covers a 3,057 square-mile area (roughly the size of CT, and DE) and is home to more than 1.2 million people roughly the population of VT and WY





Mission: VAC is a non-profit HIV service organization that delivers culturally-appropriate sexual health & wellness services in south Texas; and, advocates for the Latinx population at the local, state and national level.

Status Neutral Services

- **Prevention/Education & Testing** (HIV, STIs, Hepatitis)
- **PrEP and PEP**
- **Linkage to Care**
- **Outpatient Ambulatory HIV, PrEP Health Services:** Rapid start ART
- **Behavioral Health, Oral Health, Pharmacy**
- **Case Management** (medical / non-medical) and **support services.**
- **Referrals** to specialty medical care, labs, and housing assistance.
- **Community Mobilization & Social Media:** anti-stigma campaigns
- **Training and Technical Assistance** - National Latinx HIV/HCV/SUD Conf.



Impact of COVID-19 on Status Neutral Service Delivery

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Challenges

- **COVID:** COVID affected everyone. Leading to isolation, increased mental health concerns and increased substance use. For Latinos in the RGV, the COVID pandemic worsened the already bad health, social, and income inequities and raised fears of disparities in disease rates, exposure, testing, and prevention.
- Access to COVID vaccine, and to primary care services
- **Latinos (largest racial and ethnic minority population in the US and the majority population in South Texas) continue to be disproportionality affected by HIV** as well as other chronic health conditions such as cancer, and cardiovascular disease.
 - Prevention efforts previously led to promising declines in HIV among Latinos. However, progress has stalled in recent years, with new infections beginning to rise, particularly among Latino gay and bisexual men.
 - Not enough Latinos with HIV are aware of their status, and too few are receiving the HIV care and treatment that will help them live longer, healthier lives and get and keep an undetectable viral load.
 - Despite recent increases in PrEP use among Latinos, significant gaps remain.



Impact of COVID-19 on Our HIV Prevention

**PRIDE in the Park
Movie Night!**
April 29, 2020



Netflix Watch Party
8 PM

Join us in the comfort of your own space and watch the story of how two women keep their decades-long love a secret. But coming out later in life comes with its own set of challenges.

A Secret Love



*Tea Time
with a Queen*



Join us for a fun evening learning all about PrEP with our PrEP Team.

WHEN: OCTOBER 30, 6PM | WHERE: FACEBOOK LIVE

VALLEY AIDS COUNCIL


CASA ORGULLO

The Rio Grande Valley's first
ever all inclusive LGBTQ+
Drop-In Center

OCTOBER 11TH 1:30PM


Join us via Facebook LIVE
for a special
announcement regarding
Casa Orgullo.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & TESTING

 **HIV/STI Testing
COVID-19 Protocol**

Coronavirus disease is spread mainly through contact with an infected person when they cough or sneeze. It also spreads when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus, then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

CDC




**1 ARE YOU WANTING AN
HIV/STI SCREENING?**

If the answer is yes. This is what we ask you to do before coming to the clinic.


Please call one of our 3 sites


Brownsville: 956-541-2600
Harlingen: 956-428-2653
McAllen: 956-668-1155



**2 A TEST COUNSELOR WILL BE
RIGHT WITH YOU.**

In reference to COVID-19, we are currently following the protocols of the CDC and recommend social distancing. A secure phone call will be administered with our testing advisor to discuss your HIV / STI risks, sexual health and how we can help you. All while in the comfort of your home or car. Based on the information you provide to the test advisor, they will give you further instructions in regards to your sexual health.



 Valley AIDS Council



Impact of COVID-19 on Services

2019

- UDC: 1,590
 - New clients: 183
- Receiving medical care: 1,491
- HIV Tests: 1,876
 - Newly diagnosed: 32
- Positivity Rate: 1.71%

2020

- UDC: 1,660
 - New clients: 145
- Receiving medical care: 1,557
- HIV Tests: 761
 - Newly diagnosed: 28
- Positivity Rate: 3.68

2021 (thru 11/14)

- UDC: 1,766
 - New clients: 220
- Receiving medical care: 1,665
- HIV Tests: 1,458
 - Newly diagnosed: 50
- Positivity Rate: 3.43%



Celebrating Successes

- Able to quickly pivot to virtual medical, case management, support groups
- Rethinking for HIV outreach and testing events
 - outdoor community events testing, mailing at home testing and condoms
- Collaborating with Departments of Health, FQHCs and community organizations to provide COVID-19 education, outreach and vaccines
 - As of August, 40% of total COVID vaccines by all health centers in US were to Latinx
- Viral Suppression rate of 90% for our VAC | Westbrook Clinic
 - More than 90% of HIV DXs linked to care within 1 month – many within a couple of days
- Annual client conference (VIDA – *vivir* | *inspirar* | *defender* | *amar*) Nov. 19
 - A day of empowerment, health education, medication updates; mental health education and more. Virtual event



Planning for 2022 and Beyond

- **Virtual services:** which do we keep
 - In-person opening for Casa Orgullo | LGBTQ+ Youth Resource Center
 - In-person National Latinx Conference on HIV/HCV/SUD conference
- Expand access to **PrEP and PEP**
- Continue work to eliminate HIV **stigma and discrimination**
- Expand onsite **behavioral health services**
- Continuing work addressing **social determinates of health**
 - Collaborating with other community organizations
- Continued **advocacy**
 - Expanded Medicaid, national health insurance program (preventive & primary care)
 - Access to health care (sexual reproductive health, LGBTQ+ care)
 - Immigration reform
- Reconnecting with community