



# HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Accessibility in a rural community utilizing telehealth services: A Pilot Program

## Presenter:

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# CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

Christofer Rodriguez, MPH, CHES®



**Christofer Rodriguez has nothing to disclose.**

# OVERVIEW



- About Us
  - SIU School of Medicine
  - Delta Regional Authority
  - Partnering Agency
  - Demographics of Alexander County and Cairo
- Funding Opportunity
- Health Concern
- Strategy / Method
  - Telehealth Technology
- Contracting Services
- Progress and Impact
- Future Direction
- Acknowledgements
- Questions
- Contact Information



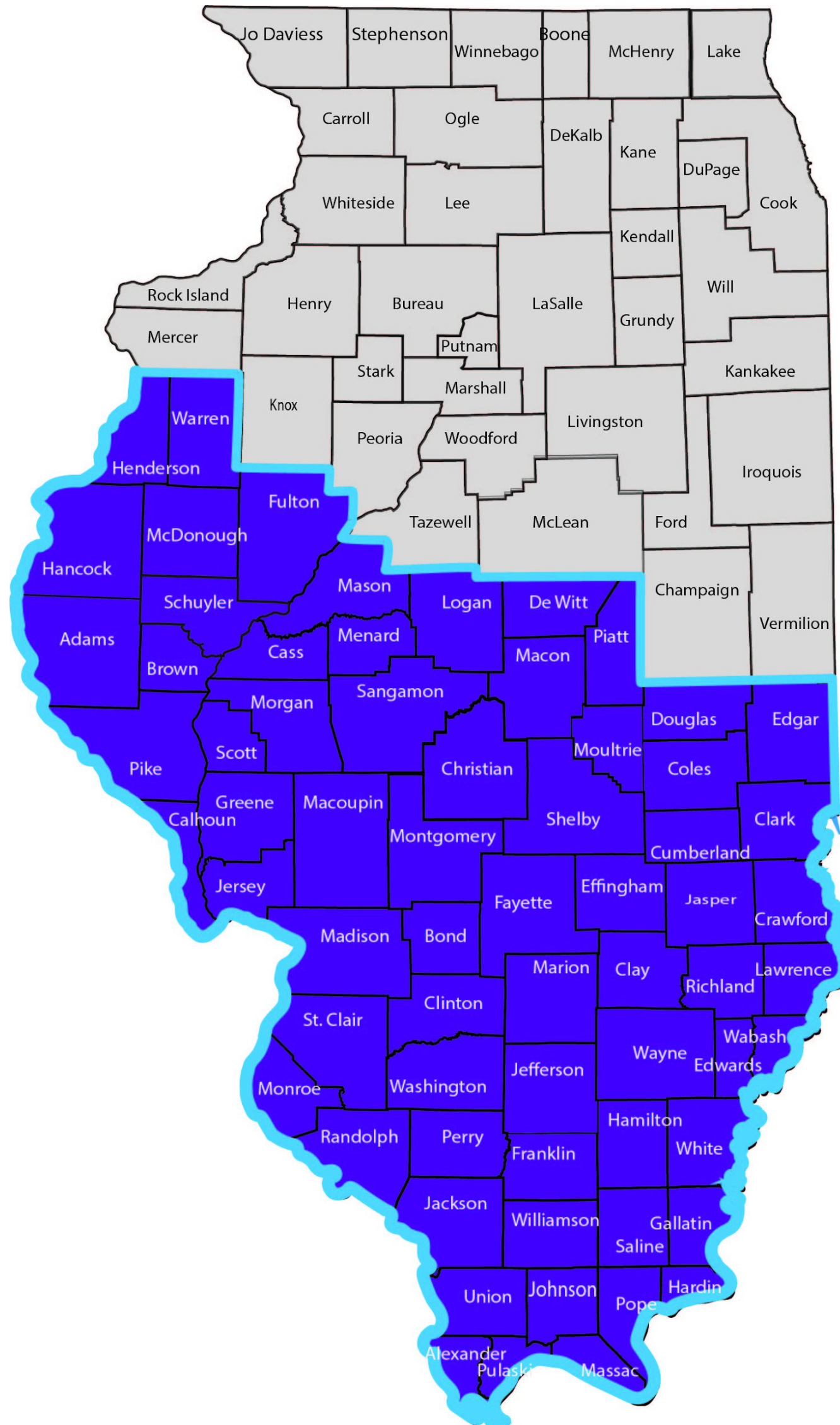
# ABOUT US

## SIU School of Medicine

- Founded in 1970
- Medical Education
- Patient Care
- Research
- Community Service
- Service Region – 66 (and counting) central and southern Illinois Counties (pictured left)

## Population Science and Policy

- Founded in 2016
- Advance social mission
- Innovative solutions to improve health
- Academic Department – July 2018 – First in more than 30 years!
  - Epidemiology and Biostatistics
  - Human and Community Development
  - Health System Science
  - Medical Student Education





# DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY



- Established in 2000 by Congress
- Makes strategic investments of federal appropriations into the physical and human infrastructure of Delta communities.
- Consisting of 252 counties and parishes
- Make up the most distressed area of the country.
- Historically underserved, underrepresented populations
- Illinois represents 16 counties in the DRA

# PARTNER AGENCY



- **The Community Action Place, Inc. (tCAP)**

- To develop, plan, promote and provide interventions, services and resources to otherwise under served populations in an effort to assist in breaking the cycles of poverty, addiction, unhealthy or unsafe behavior.
- Founded 2015

- **Services**

- HIV, STD, HCV testing
- Barrier method contraception distribution
- Sexual Risk Reduction Counseling
- Drug Treatment Referral
- Syringe Exchange Program (clean needles)
- Harm Reduction Counseling

- **Reach**

- Approximately 19 southernmost counties of Illinois (including 16 Delta Region Counties)



# DEMOGRAPHICS

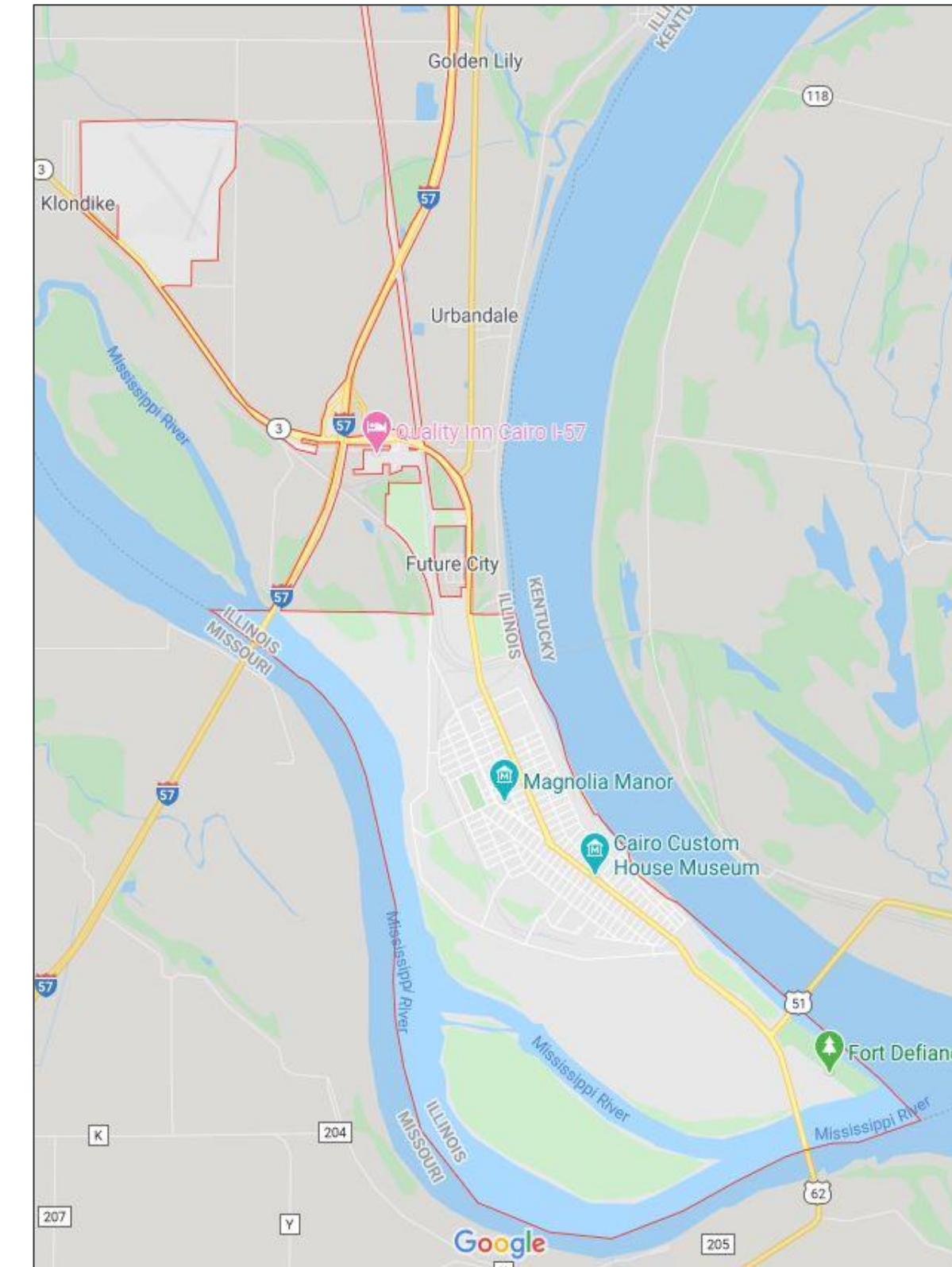
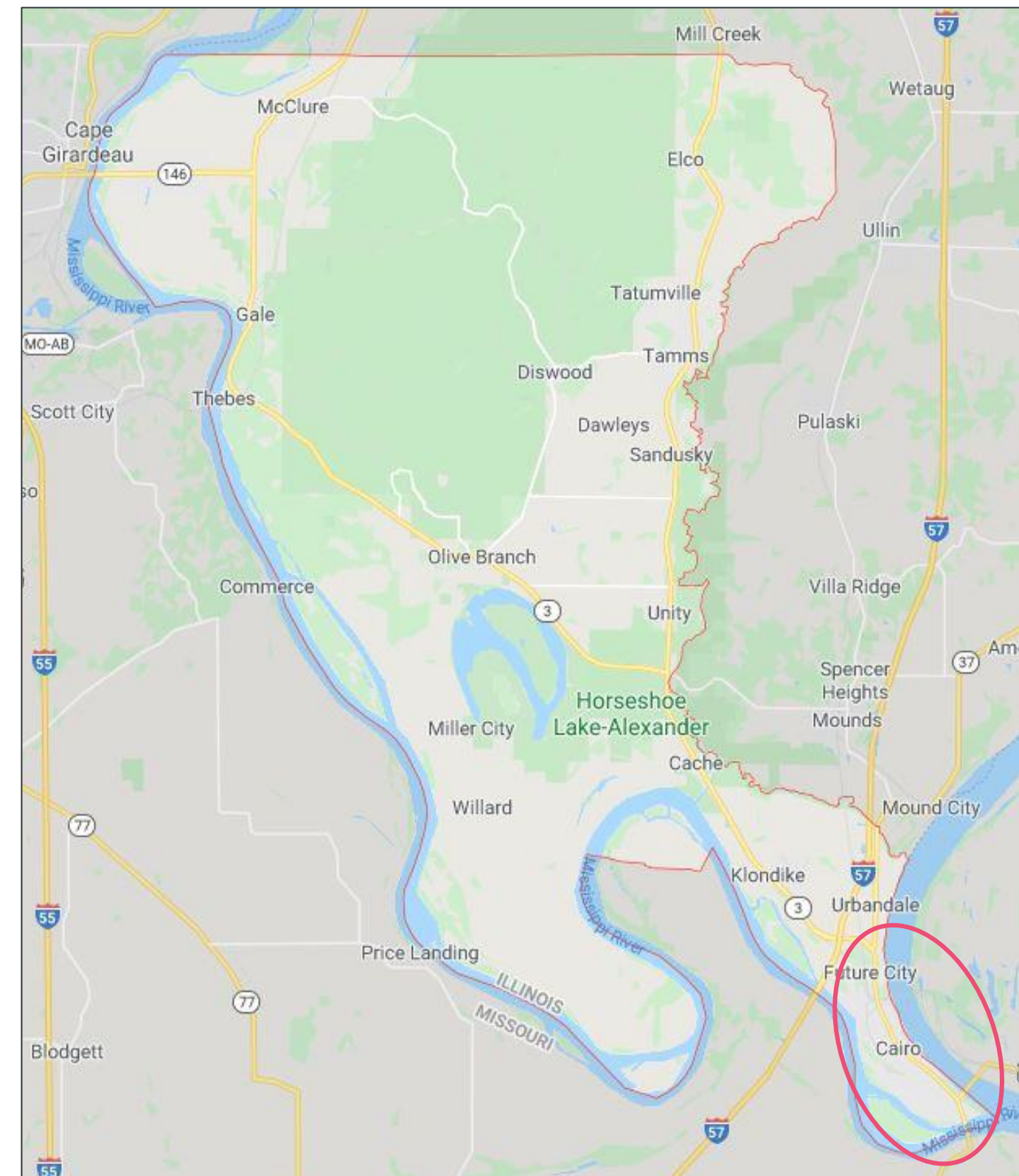


## • Alexander County Demographics

- Population: 6,532 (ACS 5-year Estimates, 2018)
- Black or African American: 36%
- Below Poverty Level: 30.2% (pop determined 6,440)

## • Cairo Demographics

- Population: 2,528 (ACS 5-year Estimates, 2018)
- Black or African American: 72.1%
- Below Poverty Level: 38.3% (pop determined 2,465)





# OPPORTUNITY



## • Funding Opportunity

- Telligen Community Initiative – FY 2019 (12 month calendar year funding)
- Awarded \$50,000 to develop and deploy telehealth technology to provide pre-exposure prophylaxis to resource deprived communities in southern Illinois, who are at risk of HIV acquisition.
- No-cost extension through May 31, 2020.

## • Telehealth Technology

- SIU Medicine Telehealth Services
- Single Unit Lease
- Placement at tCAP location in Cairo, IL



# HEALTH CONCERN



- **Health Concern Identified**

- HIV prevention – Low uptake of PrEP
- Resource deprived – LHD does not have a medical clinic; little to no nearby physicians
- HIV incidence remains an issue

- **Needs Addressed**

- Engaging populations at risk of HIV acquisition in Cairo IL
  - MSM, PWID
- Initiation of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis for HIV prevention

# STRATEGY / METHODS



- **Cairo, Illinois**

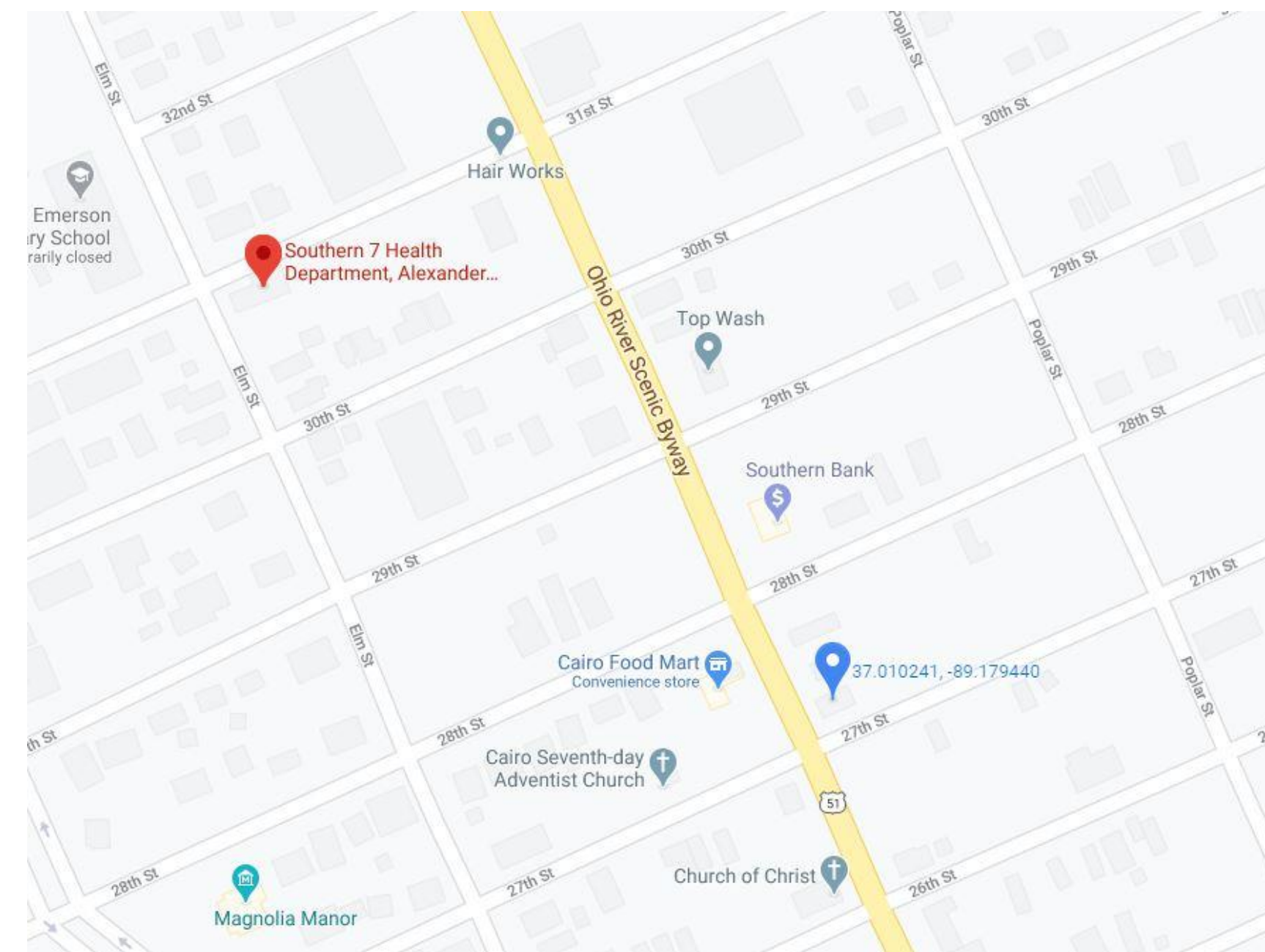
- Selected location for telehealth equipment

- **Local Health Department**

- Southern Seven Health Department – Covers Seven Counties in Southern Illinois
- Cairo Location mostly handles WIC and Family Services
- Intended location – changed due to staffing shortages

- **The Community Action Place, Inc. (tCAP)**

- Office location close to the health department location
- Occupied by tCAP staff every Wednesday





# TELEHEALTH TECHNOLOGY



- **Telehealth Mobile Equipment**

- Rolling Cart
- Desktop Computer
- 26 Inch television display
- Mouse and Keyboard accessories
- Webcam
- Wired stethoscope
- Wired otoscope
- Camera for video close-up

- **Telecom Capability Requirements**

- Minimum 768 Kbps download/upload speeds (actual capacity 1 Gig download/upload)
- Non-throttled network coverage
- Wired-connection preferred (wireless acceptable if necessary)

# CONTRACTED SERVICES AND BILLING



## • Required Medical Services

- Telehealth Technology
- Laboratory Services
- Pharmaceutical Services
- Behavioral and Medication Adherence Counseling

## • Laboratory Services

- Contracted Lab Services with LabCorp
  - Labwork paid through grant funding
- Contract to limit services to PrEP-specific labs
  - HIV, Hepatitis A / B / C, Syphilis Test with reflex/cascade to confirmatory
  - CBC, CMP
  - Chlamydia, Gonorrhea urine
  - Chlamydia, Gonorrhea Extragenital (pharyngeal and rectal)
- Labs collected on site and delivered to LabCorp processing site in Carbondale, IL or picked up by LabCorp technician in Murphysboro, IL.



# CONTRACTED SERVICES AND BILLING



## • Pharmaceutical Services

- Contracted with Schnuck's Pharmacy
- Pharmacist enrolls patient into medication assistance programs
  - Gilead
  - Illinois MAP (PrEP4Illinois)
- Mail order Pharmacy
  - Participants offered the option of receiving mailed medication to their residence or to the tCAP office location if needed (homeless population, privacy concerns, etc.)
  - Prescriptions mailed to tCAP office location – participants receive medication at follow-up appointment
- Participant does not pay for medication

## • Billing for Medical Services

- Participants were not charged for medical services
- Insurance information was collected if available, though not charged for services
- Partnering agency tCAP was identified as a CMS originating site for telehealth services

# CONTRACTED SERVICES AND BILLING



- **Advertisements**

- Radio advertisement
- Local newspaper
- Facebook Targeted Ads
- Flyers

- **Appointment Scheduling and Workflow**

- Scheduled through SIU EHR
- Blocked scheduling – 1 hour increments
  - First 30-minutes for collecting information and biospecimen collection
  - Second 30-minutes to be spent with the physician



# IMPACT



- **Increased PrEP Education**
  - Social Media messaging
  - Community Engagement
- **Telehealth Utilization**
  - Easier appointments
- **Facebook Advertisement Set**
  - Set demographic profile (18 years and older, residing in the region)
  - Reach: 64,353
  - Impressions: 171,561
- **Public Health Emergency**
  - COVID-19 (coronavirus)

# FUTURE DIRECTION



- **Services Offered**

- PrEP
- Behavioral or Mental Health Counseling
- Primary Care

- **Telehealth Network**

- True Mobile telehealth capabilities
- Increased provider network

- **Additional Funding Opportunities**

- R01
- R21



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



- Scott S. Fletcher, MPH, CHES - Executive Director, The Community Action Place
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# QUESTIONS





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