



The Sexually Transmitted Disease/Human Immunodeficiency Virus (STD/HIV) Prevention Services Grant Program

San Antonio Metropolitan Health District

Results in Brief

Why OIG Conducted This Audit

The Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General Audit and Inspections Division (OIG Audit) conducted an audit of the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health), a local health department administering sexually transmitted disease (STD) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) control and prevention activities under the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) STD/HIV Prevention Services Grant Program.

This program provides essential services designed to prevent and control the spread of STDs through monitoring, surveilling, and responding to STD outbreaks.

For the period from January 1, 2019, through August 31, 2021, Metro Health had a total budget of \$5.6 million for the STD/HIV Prevention Services Grant Program and received reimbursement for \$4.9 million.

Summary of Review

The audit objective was to determine whether Metro Health had processes and controls in place to ensure it administered the STD/HIV Prevention Services Grant Program in accordance with selected grant agreement requirements for performance, data management, reporting, and grant expenditures.

Conclusion

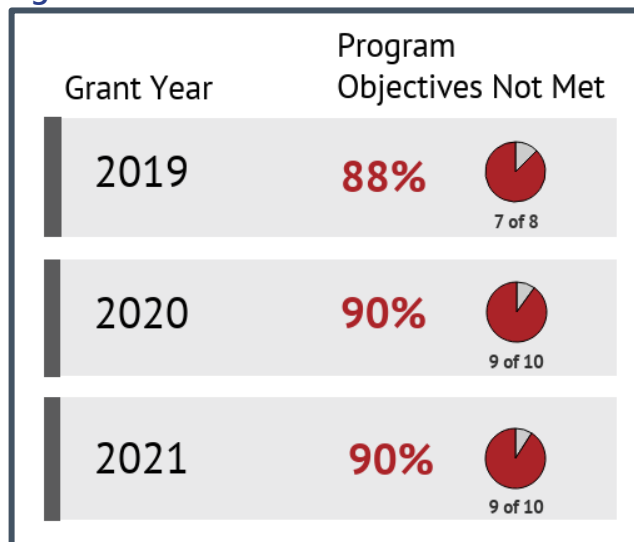
The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health) performed key sexually transmitted disease (STD) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention services activities; however, Metro Health did not have processes in place to ensure (a) program objectives were met, (b) financial expenditures were recorded accurately, and (c) compliance with selected security and confidentiality requirements was achieved.

Key Results

Metro Health performed grant agreement activities; however, Metro Health consistently did not meet program objectives designed to measure the effectiveness of the STD/HIV Prevention Services Grant Program.

Specifically, Metro Health did not meet 25 of 28 (89.3 percent) program objectives reviewed as part of this audit. Figure 1 details the number of program objectives Metro Health did not meet by grant year.

Figure 1: Metro Health’s Performance of Program Objectives



Source: OIG Audit

The audit scope covered the period from January 1, 2019, through August 31, 2021. The audit included a review of Metro Health's internal controls as well as testing of controls that were significant within the context of the audit objective.

Background

The DSHS STD/HIV Prevention Services Grant Program is designed to control and prevent the spread of STDs, including Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and viral hepatitis.

Metro Health performs STD/HIV Prevention Services Grant Program activities to prevent and control the spread of STDs. The prevention activities include identifying individuals with STDs, identifying partners of those diagnosed with STDs, and connecting both the diagnosed individual and their partners to care and treatment. The control activities include conducting surveillance, responding to STD-related outbreaks, and promoting U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-recommended practices to relevant providers.

Metro Health directly administers STD testing and is assigned outreach activities by DSHS. Metro Health then provides education, outreach, and screening services to individuals diagnosed with STDs and other at-risk populations.

DSHS acts as a pass-through entity between the CDC and Metro Health for STD prevention and control programs. As of August 31, 2021, Metro Health was one of eight local health departments in Texas with a grant agreement with DSHS.

Management Response

Metro Health predominantly agreed with the audit recommendations and indicated corrective actions would be implemented by August 2022.

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Additionally, Metro Health did not ensure expenditures were incurred or reported in the correct grant year. Specifically, Metro Health (a) received reimbursement of \$2,890 in 2020 for expenses incurred in 2021 and (b) included non-program information on the financial status reports, which resulted in expenses that were understated by \$63,124 in 2021.

Further, Metro Health did not have effective security and confidentiality controls in place to ensure (a) access to systems and information was appropriate or (b) required documentation was maintained.

Recommendations

Metro Health should:

- Implement (a) processes to identify when grant activities are not meeting program objectives and (b) initiatives to improve performance.
- Ensure it has processes and controls in place to limit reimbursement requests to allowable grant activities for the STD/HIV Prevention Services Grant Program.
- Ensure it has processes and controls in place to prepare accurate financial status reports with relevant program information for the STD/HIV Prevention Services Grant Program.
- Strengthen its security and confidentiality controls for STD/HIV data.

Confidential Information Omitted from This Report

Pursuant to Standard 9.61 of *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, certain information was omitted from this report because the information was deemed to present potential risks related to public safety, security, or the disclosure of private or confidential data. Under the provisions of Texas Government Code Section 552.139, the omitted information is also exempt from the requirements of the Texas Public Information Act.