

MITR CLINIC: NON-HIV ENTRY POINTS TO DELIVER HIV SERVICES TO TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

Background

- The 2011 census enumerated approximately **0.48 million** transgender persons in India. Currently, NACO works with an estimate of **70,000 transgender individuals** in the country
- The HIV general population prevalence in India is estimated to be 0.22%, whereas the **prevalence among the transgender people is 3.1%**
- Globally, evidence has shown that **comprehensive and combined service delivery models** are more effective in providing HIV services to the transgender community

Relevant Population

- Transgender women and men
- *Hijra*
- Transgender sex workers
- Gender non-conforming
- *Shiva-Shakthi*
- Intersex individuals
- *Jogappa/Mangalmukhi/Jogti/Aravani*



Approach

- In January 2021, the **first Mitr Clinic** was established in **Hyderabad**. Since then, **two more clinics** have been opened in **Pune and Thane**
- *The Mitr* clinics are run predominantly by physicians and **personnel from the community**
- The facilities **provide non-HIV services preferred by the community**, serving as an entry point to deliver HIV services
- Some **services offered** include gender-affirming care, mental health services, cosmetology, general health services, HIV/STI services and social support schemes
- The clinics aim to improve the socioeconomic status of the community and their **overall well-being** by offering linkage to social protection schemes and other welfare programs



Mitr Clinics Virtual Space

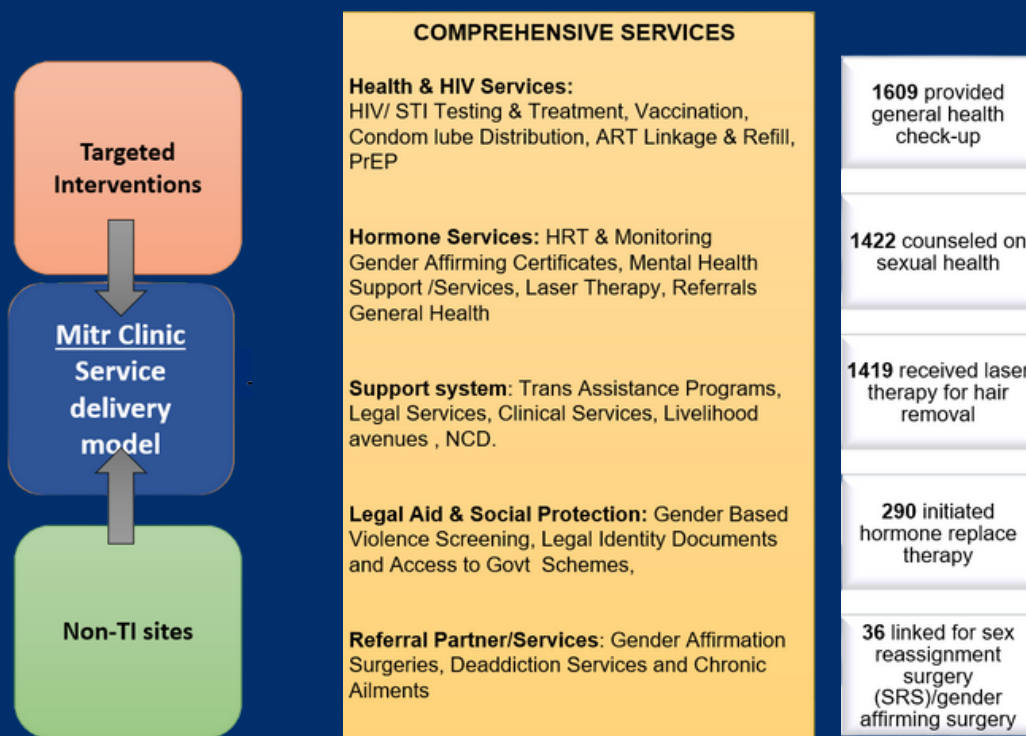
Significance

Mitr clinics are the **first transgender community-led comprehensive health care models in India**, providing access to integrated care and HIV services in a community-friendly environment. Non-HIV services are effective entry points to deliver HIV services

Mitr clinics Outcomes

February 2021 -September 2022





Assessment of the Mitr Clinic in Hyderabad, September 2022

- Overall, clients reported high **satisfaction levels with the services** offered
- The community-led, stigma-free and friendly environment was the main reason for clients' satisfaction
- Laser therapy was the most preferred service along with other non-HIV services (e.g., hormone replacement therapy, social protection), and served as entry points to HIV testing and care
- **HIV self-testing kits** are available at the clinics and are identified as a **critical resource** for the community due to benefits (confidentiality)

Way Forward

- **Subsidized PrEP** are offered at the clinics as part of a **comprehensive prevention package** for eligible transgender clients
- **Mitr Help Desk Model** launched at Karim Nagar District's Hospital as a pathway for transgender individuals to access health services from public healthcare settings
- Link transgender individuals living with **HIV to treatment schemes to achieve viral suppression**

ACCELERATE's PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PrEP)

Background

In 2016, PrEP was licensed for use in India, with unregulated availability in the private sector. Consequently, in October 2019, the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) convened policy and **technical guidelines** meetings bringing together key stakeholders

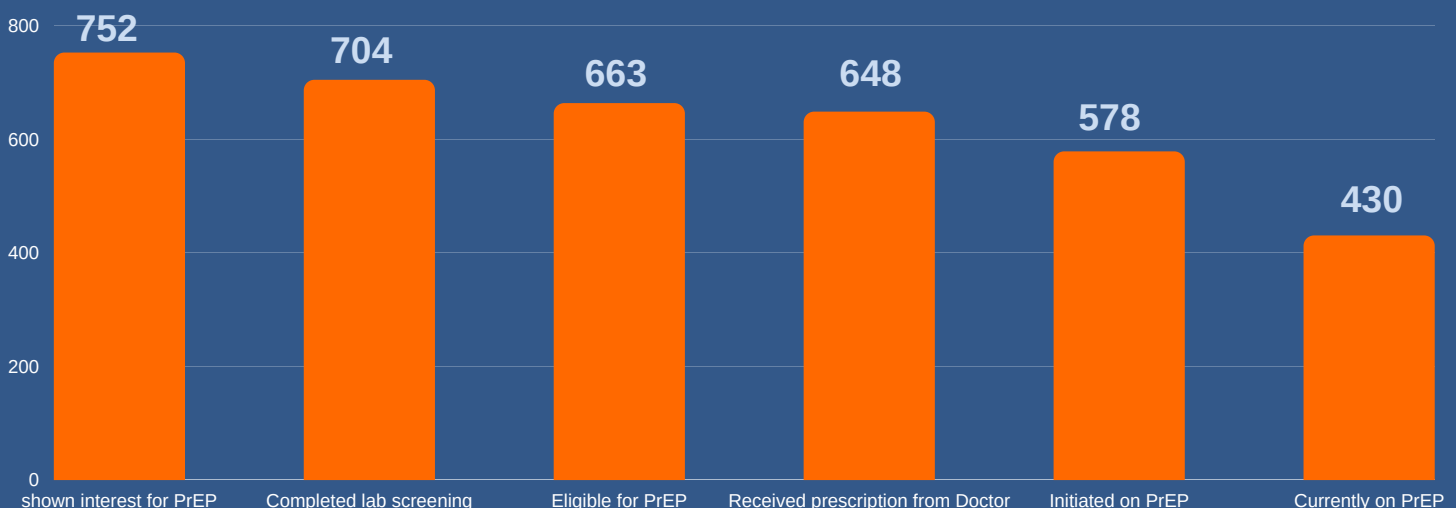
Focused Strategy

- With support from USAID/PEPFAR, ACCELERATE started providing **technical assistance to NACP** to develop **national technical guidelines** for PrEP
- ACCELERATE also launched an **online certification program for PrEP prescribers** in Oct - Dec 2019
- ACCELERATE, under the guidance of NACO, launched the PrEP program through **virtual platform, Safe Zindagi** (formerly known as Yes4ME) as a combination prevention intervention to reach hard-to-reach virtual populations

Key Highlights

- The PrEP package focuses on promoting **accessible and affordable services through virtual spaces**
- **Demand generation activities** for PrEP are undertaken in coordination with community members and key opinion leaders from KP groups on social media
- Implemented innovative PrEP package, in collaboration with communities, having an **online network of hard-to-reach populations** through the Safe Zindagi platform
- Integration of PrEP with other ACCELERATE interventions, such as, community/facility-based index testing activities, targeting higher-risk negative clients at the TIs, ICTCs and ARTs
- Introduced subsidized PrEP through Mitr clinics in October 2022

Significance (As of Sep 2022)



"Saying 'Be careful, stay safe' is easy, but knowing how to be safe matters. The online platform of Safe Zindagi gave me detailed information on PrEP, it is indeed an added precaution."

Riddhiman Paul, PrEP Beneficiary, Thane



Safe Zindagi Webpage



Virtual Service Delivery: Online to Online/Offline

First in the country to launch PrEP, along with HIV self-testing services through an online platform, with free doctor consultation and follow-up services. It is now implemented in 14 Indian states



Subsidized Service Package

PrEP baseline tests and medications delivered to the clients at 60–70% subsidized market cost, with free adherence counseling and refill reminders, through the virtual counselors

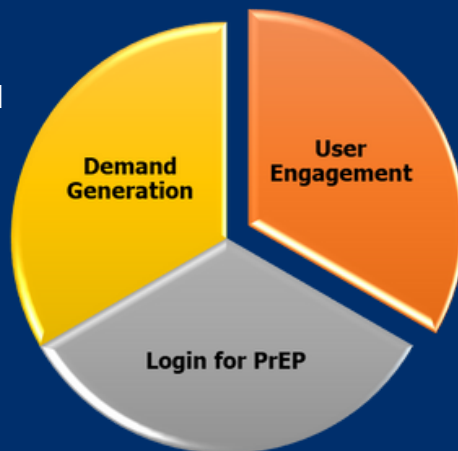


Collaborative Model

Collaboration with the regional CBO's in cluster districts, with continuous training on PrEP counseling, preparedness, initiation and adherence & empanelled pick-up-points (PuP) through local CBO's

Demand Generation & Engagement

20 Posters &
7 Videos/GIFS published
(Oct 21 - Aug 22)
Reach: 3.9 mn users



Engagement: 6.41% of the users (250k)
Ad Clicks: 64.5k users

Ad Clicks: 48.8k users (75.7%) driven to SZ platform
Login: 4.5% (2.1k users)

SAFE ZINDAGI: INDIA'S FIRST COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH E-PLATFORM

Background

- In India, the national HIV testing strategies are designed to reach only those who seek services at physical testing sites
- India has been able to diagnose 79% of those individuals who are estimated to be positive leaving a gap of 21% as unreached
- Traditional testing strategies with in-person outreach appear to have reached saturation as evidenced by plateauing of new HIV diagnoses. These strategies often fail to reach clients using virtual platforms to seek sexual partners
- We implemented a virtual outreach program and an integrated service delivery platform called as Safe Zindagi to provide counseling and HIV/STI services to virtual at-risk populations

Key Populations

- Men Who Have Sex With Men
- Transgender Women
- Female Sex Workers
- People Who Inject Drugs
- At risk young vulnerable individuals
- Sex or needle-sharing partners, children, and families of key populations
- Partners of key populations and PLHIV



Action

- Safe Zindagi platform was built to provide a safe, user-friendly and non-judgmental space for those who seek counseling around sexual health and other HIV-related services whereby HIV and STI testing, self-testing prevention services like condoms and PrEP through telemedicine and linkage to treatment in government or private facilities is provided
- A team of trained virtual counselors (vC) also known as sexual health managers reach out to at-risk individuals via online dating applications and targeted demand generation through social media platforms promoting safe sexual practices and assisting in booking an HIV test on the online testing platform
- Clients ≥ 18 years old registered and completed a risk assessment prior to booking a test and linkage to a testing facility in the vicinity (public/private/NGO)
- vCs assisted clients testing positive with confirmatory testing to government ICTCs and linkage to ART or in private facilities as per the requirement of the client
- vCs provided prevention counseling and PrEP services to at-risk negative individuals. Additionally, those clients where there was a need to test but refused to go to a physical site for testing were provided support for HIV self-testing through the same platform



Safe Zindagi Webpage

Significance

These results highlight the feasibility and effectiveness of a 'vcounselor' approach coupled with an online user friendly testing platform to reach a high-risk population not currently reached by traditional HIV programming. Integrating HIV self-testing and telemedicine approaches with such platforms will be critical to achieving the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets



15,384

registered at Safe Zindagi platform
(Oct 2019 - July 2022)



15,401

completed testing via a physical site (10,000) or a self-testing kit (5,401)



7%

overall HIV positivity rate



578

clients initiated on PrEP since June 2022

safe zindagi
also sexy & healthy

HIV Testing Risk Assessment HIV self-testing Mitri Clinic

LIVE SAFE & HAPPY

Prevent or control HIV & sexually transmitted infections

Request a doctor's appointment

GET A FREE HIV TEST NEAR YOU

+91-9700710071

LEAVE WORRIES BEHIND
WITH HIV RISK ASSESSMENT