



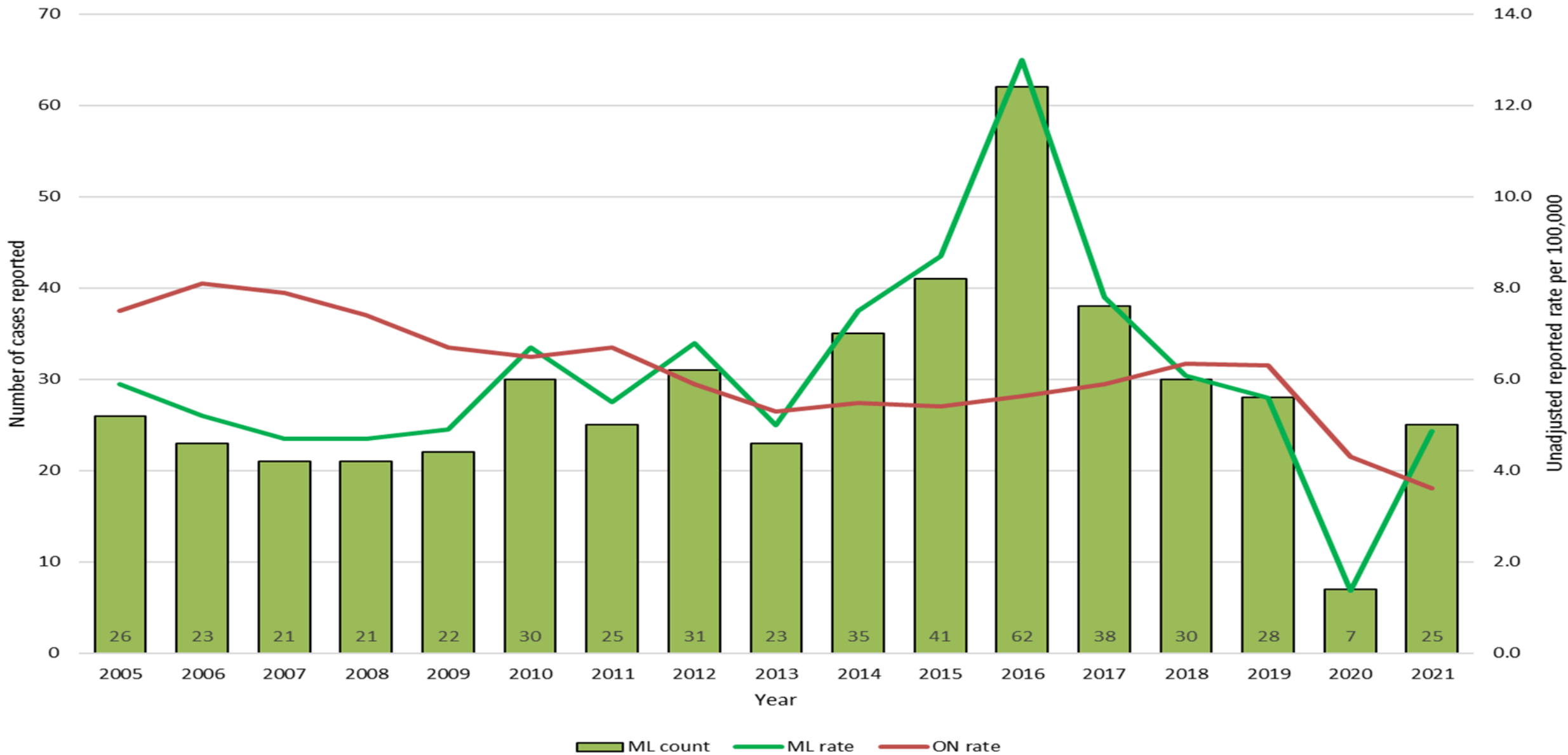
Public Health Challenges, Opportunities and Success In
Addressing HIV And Complex Health Issues In Persons
Who Use Drugs (PWUD) in Middlesex-London, Ontario
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Increasing HIV Rates

- In June 2016, MLHU issued a public health alert related to rapidly increasing rates of HIV, hepatitis C, invasive Group A Streptococcal (iGAS) disease, and infective endocarditis among people who inject drugs (PWID).
- Prior to 2014, the Middlesex-London area identified an average of 25 new cases of HIV annually. However, by the end of 2016, the total number of new cases of HIV reported that year had climbed to 61—the highest number of new cases that Middlesex-London has seen in a single year.

Count and rate of new HIV/AIDS cases, Middlesex-London and Ontario, 2005-2021

(Note: Ontario rate excludes Middlesex-London cases)



Response

- In response, local stakeholders and more than fifty provincial and national experts were consulted and a local HIV Leadership Team was established to identify and implement strategies to address the outbreaks.
- As of December 31, 2018, the number of newly diagnosed cases reported in 2018 had fallen to 30, representing a 49% decrease from the outbreak peak in 2016. As well, the number of cases reporting injection drug use as a risk factor has decreased from 74% of cases in 2016 to 52% of cases in 2018. Currently there have been 25 cases reported in 2021.

Key initiatives believed to have contributed to this significant reduction in new HIV cases

- ❖ enhanced collaboration in client support provided by the agencies involved in HIV care;
- ❖ implementation of HIV outreach programs, as well as use of assertive engagement models of care;
- ❖ establishment of the Temporary Overdose Prevention Site which is now a Consumption and Treatment Services;
- ❖ increased access to harm reduction supplies, naloxone training and distribution and HIV testing;
- ❖ targeted public awareness campaigns promoting safer injection practices and;
- ❖ increasing HIV testing in Emergency Departments

The marked reduction in the annual number of new HIV cases over the past several years is a very positive trend and has demonstrated the value of collaboration, education, and evidence-based interventions with the HIV Leadership Team and community partners.