

## Introduction:

- Data indicate that third year high school students in Belize City report high rates of alcohol (76.4%) and marijuana (31.1%) use, with similar rates of use by males and females.
- Recent data shows an increase in newly diagnosed HIV cases in Belize for males and females with the highest rates among females 20-24 and 60-64 years of age.
- Drug use and risky sex among Belizean and migrant FSW elevates their risk for contracting HIV.

## Methods:

- Data were drawn from international and national reports, research studies, and outreach activities reports.

## Acknowledgements:

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## References

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- National HIV/AIDS Program (2016, March). *Annual HIV Statistical Report*. <http://www.health.gov.bz>.
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Organization of American States, Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (2014, August). *Perceptions of Harms and Benefits Associated with Marijuana Use among Adolescents within Four Caribbean and Five Latin American Countries*.
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## Drug Trafficking:

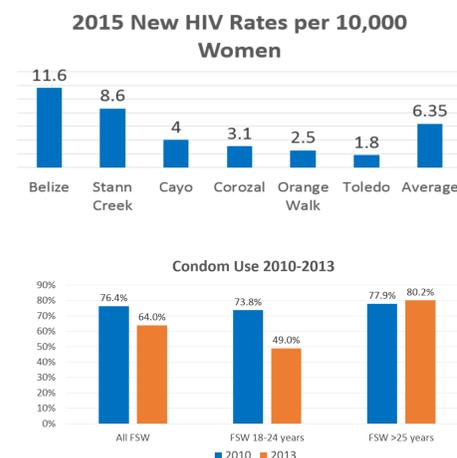
- Belize is not typically a destination country for illegal drugs or precursor chemicals – although substance use is substantial.
- Belize is a major transport country for drugs destined for the U.S. from South America.
- Major modes of drug trafficking:
  - Vehicles/boats/person: Through unpopulated jungles on the Belize-Guatemala international border;
  - Airplane: Refueling in remote airstrips (Belize does not have air defense systems);
  - Boat: Traveling unpatrolled coastline through hundreds of cays.

## Substance Use:

- Drug use has resulted in serious health problems in Belize.
- Alcohol is widely used by youth and adults.
- Marijuana, followed by crack cocaine, are the two most commonly used drugs.
- Increase in stimulant and inhalant use was noted in 2014; rates of methamphetamine and pharmaceutical drug use remain low.
- Assistance for and referrals to drug treatment have increased.

## Women, Female Sex Workers, & HIV:

- Newly diagnosed HIV cases in Belize increased for males and females, with the highest rates among females 20-24 and 60-64 years of age.
- Belize and Stann Creek have the highest rates of HIV among women
- HIV testing among FSW is lower in Belize (65%) than in other Central American countries (e.g. 100% in Costa Rica).
- Data from 3,293 FSW in six Central American counties show over 80% reported consistent condom use. In Belize, only 60% of FSW reported consistent condom use with clients.
- Younger FSW showed a significant decrease in condom use (2010-2013) with all type of clients.



## Female Sex Workers Outreach Efforts:

- Tikkum Olam Belize (TOB) ramped up prevention efforts for FSW by:
  - Issuing social media messages;
  - Teaming with LGBT organizations;
  - Addressing police issues;
  - Providing additional mobile HIV testing;
  - Networking member of the Key Communities Advocacy Team;
  - Facilitating FSW group sessions;
  - Attending regional meetings.
- TOB engaged 126 FSW, 24 potential clients of FSW, and 12 “other” contacts during March-June 2016.
- Additional efforts to reduce drug and sexual risks among FSW are urgently needed; particularly migrant FSW from other countries.

TOB Communication Efforts

