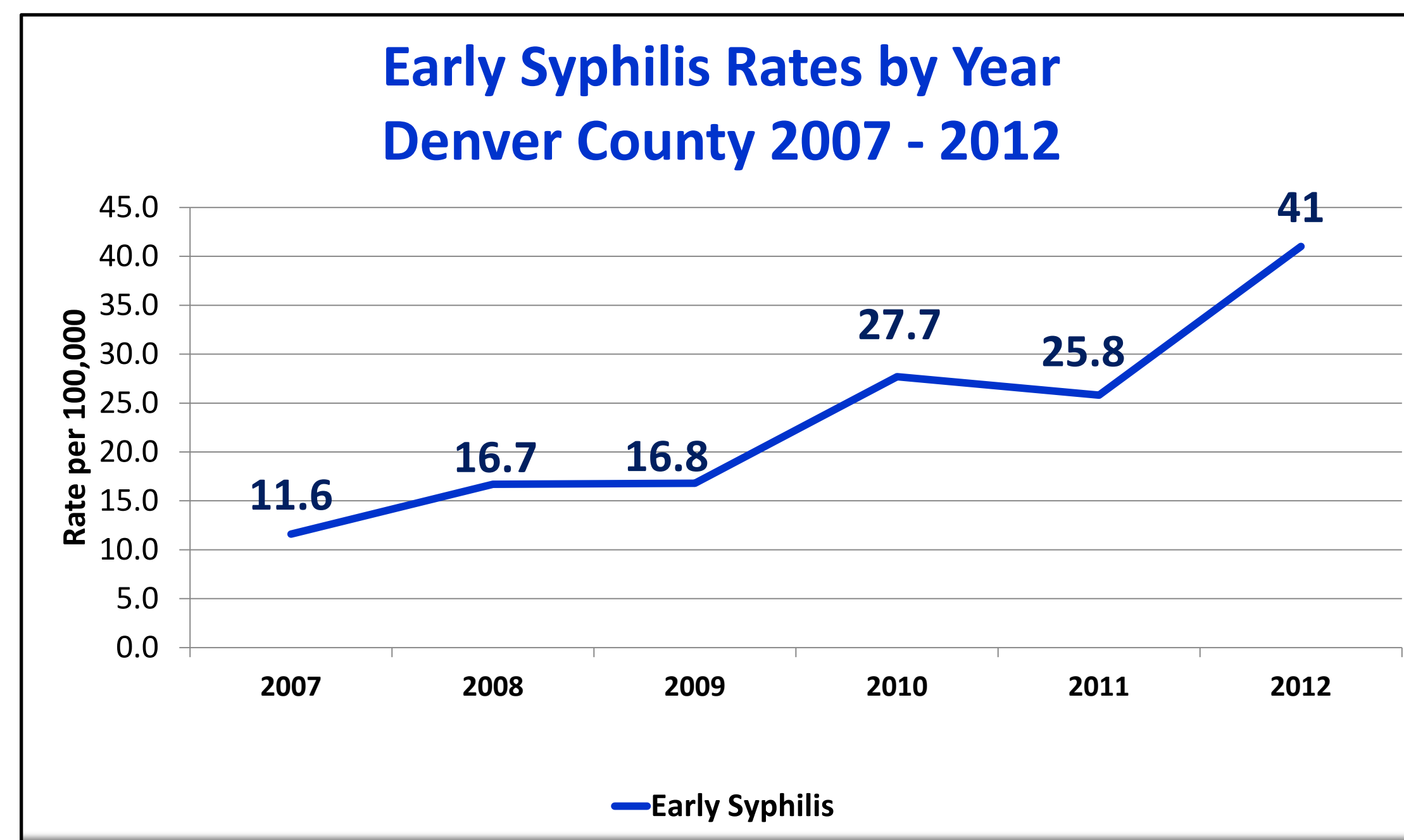


“Syphilis is Up” The Effectiveness of a Short-Term, Integrated Syphilis Campaign

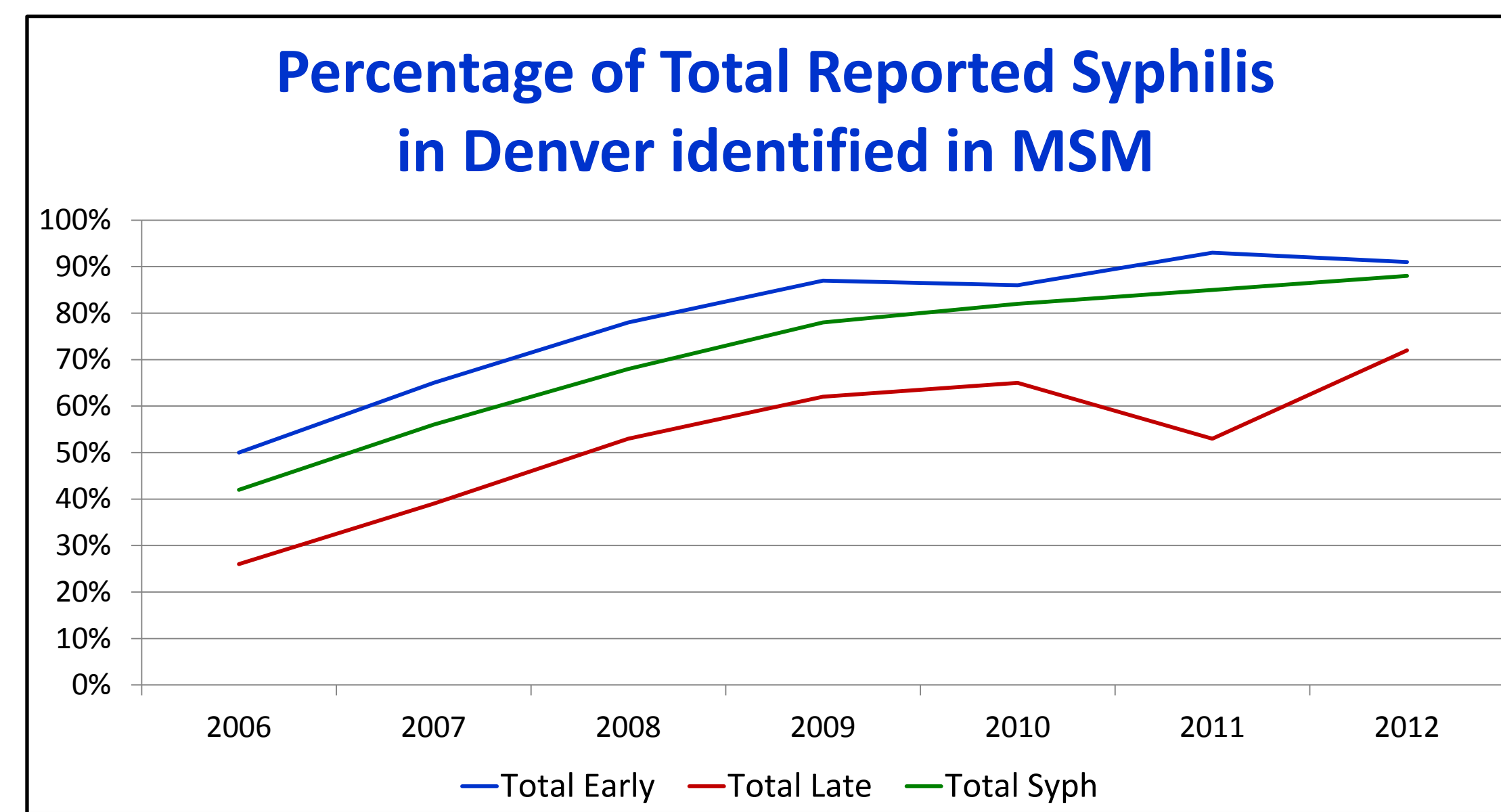
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Background

To address the increase in syphilis cases, a short-term, multi-faceted public awareness campaign targeting MSM was developed.



Between 2007 and 2012, cases of Early Syphilis increased 350%; between 2011 and 2012, the increase was 63%



In 2012, 88% of early syphilis cases were identified among gay, bisexual, and men who have sex with men (MSM).

Methods

With limited funding, the “Syphilis is Up” campaign was deployed between January and April 2013. The Campaign included a website, social media, mobile applications, print advertising, and client outreach.

Between January 23 and May 31, MSM tested through our outreach program were surveyed about the campaign.

In addition, website analytics were collected.

Objectives

The campaign was designed to:

- Inform the MSM population of Metro Denver about increase of syphilis.
- Motivate the target population to seek testing for Syphilis.
- Provide information about testing opportunities.
- Increase the number of Syphilis tests at Denver Public Health testing sites including Outreach testing venues.

We sought to assess the reach and effectiveness of the campaign by surveying clients tested for HIV, syphilis, and other STIs through our outreach testing program.

“Syphilis is Up” Campaign



Denver Public Health’s Public Relations Department Developed a Short-Term, Multi-Faceted, Integrated Syphilis Campaign

Short-Term: mid-January through mid-April 2013



DPH’s Website: On-line Resources

- Denver Public Health webpage:
 - Denverhealth.org/syphilis
- Information in English and Spanish
- Testing locations and schedules



Print Advertising: Local Publications

- **OutFront Colorado**
 - 5 editions (January – March)
 - Banner ads OutFrontColorado.com
 - E-newsletter
- **Gayzette**
 - 2 editions (February – March)
 - Digital Edition



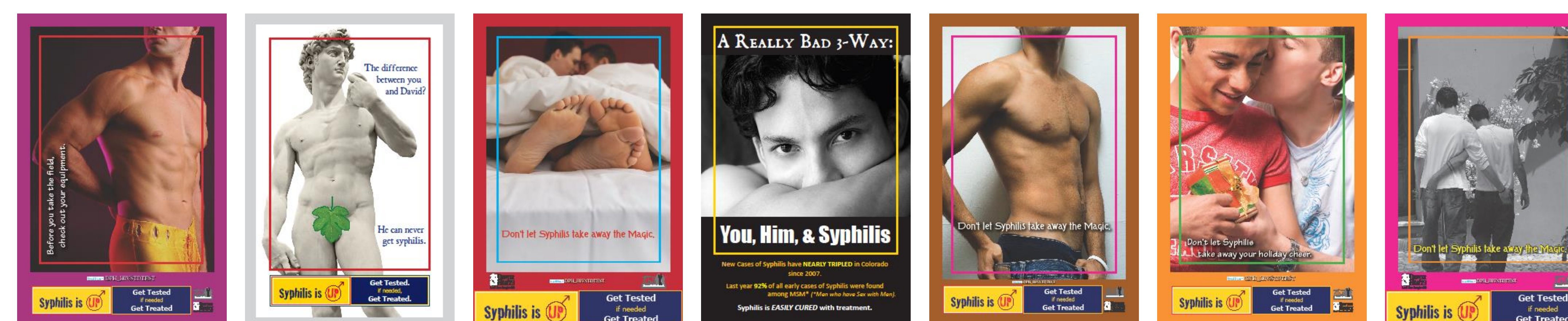
Social Media: Blogs and Mobile Applications

- MileHighGayGuy.com**
 - mid-January to mid-March
 - Banner ads & featured content
- Grindr**
 - mid-January to mid-April
 - Full screen & pop-up ads



Outreach: HIV Prevention & Outreach Team

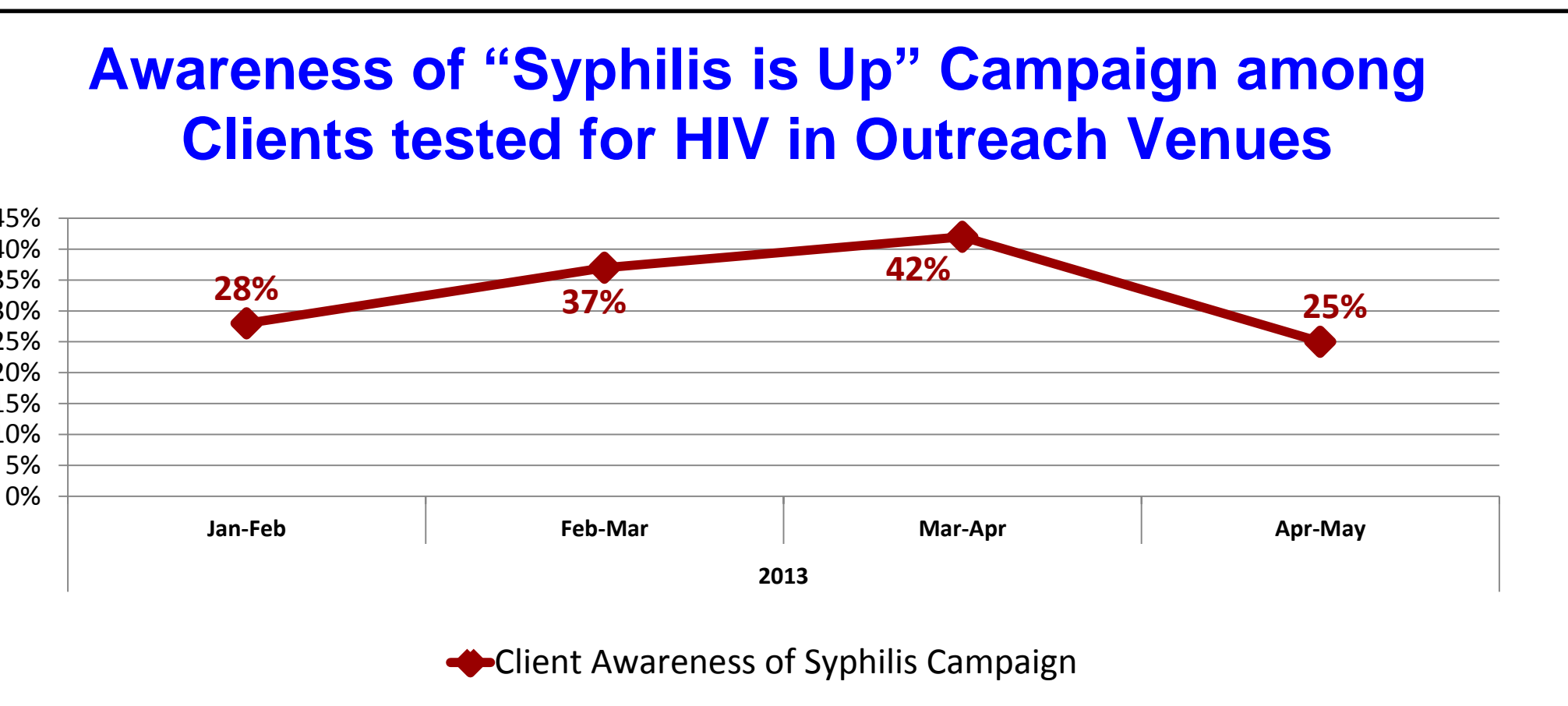
- Distribution of posters, flyers, palm cards
 - CBOs, Bars, Bathhouses, Commercial Venues
- HIV/STD and Syphilis Testing
 - Community and Commercial Venues (CBOs, Bathhouses, Outreach Centers)
 - Afternoon and evening schedules



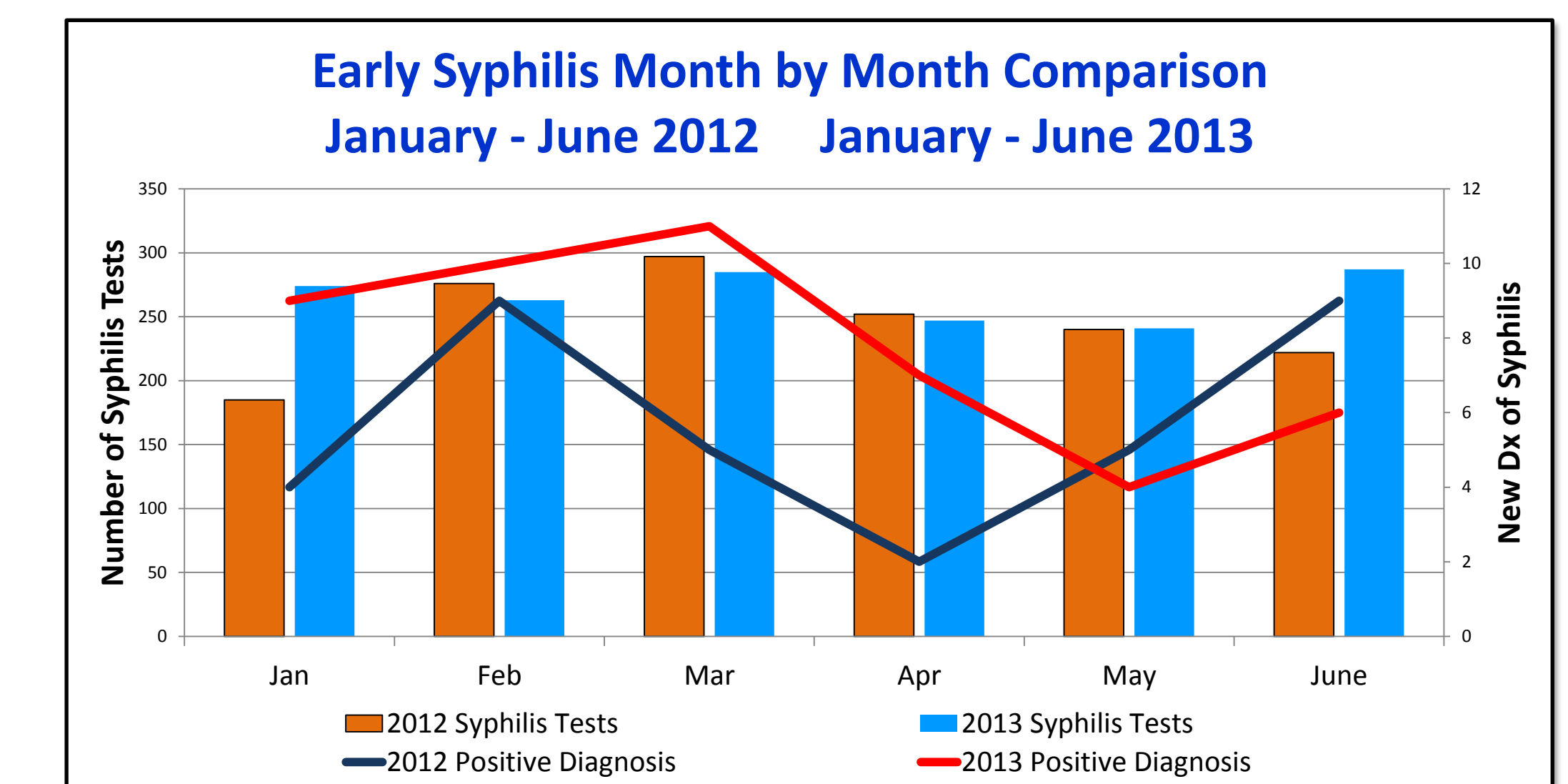
Results



- Most visited page on the Denver Public Health website, averaging 131 hits per day: Jan – May: **19,801** visits; [Jan – Mar 31: **14,782** visits]
- Users spent an average of **6:06 minutes** on page compared to overall website average of only **0:53**
- Top referral sites: Grindr, Google, Facebook



The survey of 597 MSM outreach clients indicated that awareness of the syphilis campaign increased from 28% initially to 42% during the campaign.



Syphilis testing in the STD Clinic and Outreach Venues between January – June 2013 increased 8.5% over the same period in 2012, from 1,472 tests to 1,597 tests.

During the same time period, the number of syphilis diagnoses increased from 34 to 47, or 38%.

Conclusions

Public information campaigns, even for limited duration, can be effective when they are multi-faceted, integrated (including print advertising, website and on-line resources, social media, and mobile apps), and focused on a targeted population.

Implications

Despite limited resources and funding, health departments can successfully increase public awareness, promote health screenings, and enhance access to treatment and care through short-term, multi-faceted, and integrated campaigns which focus on targeted populations and specific health issues.

Funding

Funding for the “Syphilis is Up” campaign was provided by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.