



Commemorating National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day - February 7, 2020

[The Legacy Project & the Women's HIV Research Collaborative](#)

As we commemorate [National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#) it is critical that we continue to discuss and address the impact of HIV and AIDS in Black communities. Increased HIV education, testing, community involvement, treatment, prevention, and research remain urgent. While it's important to acknowledge that progress has been made, HIV incidence remains higher among Black Americans than among any other racial group.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), young Black men who have sex with men account for more new HIV cases than any other group. HIV affects Black women more than women of any other race or ethnicity. From 2009-2014, 58% of all transgender men diagnosed with HIV were Black, and 51% of all transgender women diagnosed with HIV were Black. Ending the HIV epidemic in America is impossible without ending the HIV epidemic in Black America.

Due in large part to these statistics, communities and researchers are designing and implementing HIV interventions centering Black Americans. In particular, the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) has been a leader in partnering with African American communities to conduct culturally responsive clinical research. Examples include:

- HPTN 061, which sought to better understand factors in the lives of Black men who have sex with men (BMSM) throughout the US that could be related to becoming HIV positive.
- HPTN 064, a study which focused on examining HIV incidence in Black women across the US.
- HPTN 073, which explored client centered care coordination to increase PrEP uptake in BMSM.
- The creation of the HPTN Black Caucus, a body of African American HIV investigators, research staff and community members, raising awareness and providing guidance in incorporating marginalized peoples into HIV research in culturally responsive ways.

In addition, organizations like [SisterLove](#), [Black AIDS Institute](#), and [The Counter Narrative Project](#) are working hand in hand with researchers toward an HIV research agenda that is more responsive to the needs of Black communities.

While we acknowledge our progress, we must also acknowledge that more work is needed to address racial disparities in HIV prevention, treatment and research. In keeping with the theme of this year's National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, "*Together for Love: Stop HIV Stigma*," we need to work in solidarity to combat stigma, fear, discrimination, homophobia, and transphobia. It is within our power to end HIV and all other health disparities so that all can live full, healthy and productive lives.

“Since 1999 National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day has served as an opportunity to increase knowledge and awareness of HIV, a reminder to increase service provision and utilization, and to align our collective mobilization efforts to address an epidemic that affects us all. To address this epidemic, however, we first need to acknowledge the truth of its impact. We must also address social and cultural norms and stigmas that perpetuate its impact and work as a collective to ensure we are doing all we can to support comprehensive health and wellness services and programs in our communities. Let us move together, in love, to end HIV stigma where ever it may exist and increase the health of our communities. We are worth it. We deserve it.” ~ Stephaun Wallace, PhD

“This day means so much to me. Though my research specialty in undergrad focused on prevention of HIV within Black women, and stigma reduction; I do appreciate that there is a designated day where all people take the time to acknowledge and uplift the Black community in terms of prevention and reduction. Together, we can expand our efforts beyond this one day, and continue to make progress for/with the Black community.” ~ Leah Franklin

The Legacy Project works nationally to increase awareness of and build support for HIV prevention and treatment clinical and behavioral research by addressing factors that influence participation of historically underrepresented communities.

The Women’s HIV Research Collaborative (WHRC) provides guidance and leadership in HIV research focused on and responsive to the needs of cisgender and transgender women and girls in the United States.