HIV Is Not a Crime Awareness Day 2025

In observance of #HIVIsNotACrime 2025, watch the trailer for “To Be Free,” which documents stories of three Tennessee women living with HIV.

February 28, 2025 By Trent Straube

Friday, February 28, marks the fourth annual HIV Is Not a Crime Awareness Day (#HINACDay; #HIVIsNotACrime), a global effort to inform the public about unjust laws that target people living with HIV and the efforts to modernize those laws.

> Today is #HIVIsNotACrime Awareness Day! Across the world, people living with HIV continue to be criminalised, discriminated against, and denied their rights. With shrinking resources and growing political opposition, the fight for justice has never been more urgent.
>
> [image or embed]
>
> — HIV Justice Network (@hivjustice.net) February 28, 2025 at 6:58 AM

The HIV criminalization awareness day is spearheaded by Sero Project, a nonprofit that fights HIV crime laws, along with the Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation and other global HIV advocacy

groups. Visit the HINACDay Facebook page for the latest updates, and search the hashtags online to find promotional and educational posts and info about events near you as well as those held virtually.

For #HIVIsNotACrime 2025, the Sero Project released a six-minute trailer for the upcoming HIV criminalization documentary To Be Free, which highlights the strides made in Tennessee to modernize laws. It also profiles three women with HIV—Lashanda Salinas, Tiffany Moore and Michelle Anderson—who were successfully removed from the sex offender registry after helping change the state's HIV laws. Watch the trailer at the top of this article or on YouTube.



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A post shared by TheSEROProject (@theseroproject)

In related news, this week, CHLP (the Center for HIV Law and Policy) updated its U.S. maps on HIV criminalization. Thirty-two states criminalize people living with HIV, and 28 states have harsh criminal penalty enhancements that elevate charges based on a person's knowledge of their HIV status. For example, 11 states have penalty enhancements for people living with HIV who violate a general criminal law. Learn more about the CHLP maps here. And see our recent story to learn more about CHLP, which is marking 20 years of "making positive justice possible."

HIV criminalization refers to the use of unfair laws to target people who have HIV—notably, African-American, Latino and LGBTQ people and women—and to punish them because of their HIV status, not because of their actions. Under outdated laws, people with HIV can be sentenced to prison in cases where HIV was not transmitted and their only crime was allegedly not disclosing their status.

It should be noted that repealing HIV laws does not mean that people can't be held accountable for intentionally transmitting HIV. Other laws may apply to the situation.

> HIV is not a Crime Awareness Day is celebrated to expose the racial and LGBTQ+ disparities in HIV criminalization by emphasizing how these laws disproportionately impact Black, Latine, LGBTQ+, and low-income individuals.#HIVisnotacrime #newhavenpridecenter #lgbtq #queer #newhaven #ct
>
> [image or embed]
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> — New Haven Pride Center (@newhvnpridecenter.bsky.social) February 28, 2025 at 10:37 AM

Many HIV laws were passed in the early days of the epidemic, when fear and lack of scientific knowledge about the virus reigned. Fast-forward four decades, and today we know, for instance, that people with HIV who take their meds and maintain an undetectable viral load do not transmit the virus sexually, a fact referred to as Undetectable Equals Untransmittable, or U=U.

For a roundup of related topics in POZ, click #Criminalization. You'll find headlines such as:

- "Positive Destinations: HIV Justice Network Rebrands HIV-Specific Travel Guide,"
- "Conservative Lawmaker Pushes to Repeal Ohio's HIV Criminalization Laws,"
- "People With HIV Have Been Arrested in Indiana for Donating Plasma,"
- "Black Men Make Up Almost Half of HIV Crime Cases in Mississippi" and

- “Nashville Agrees to Rewrite Policies Disqualifying HIV-Positive Police Candidates.”

Click here to learn more about 2025 HIV and AIDS awareness days, and click here for a printable poster.

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