HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day 2022

#HLTSAD—which is Sunday, June 5—urges you to #Mobilize2Thrive and prioritize the quality of life for HIV long-term survivors.

June 3, 2022 By Trent Straube

Sunday, June 5, marks HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day (#HLTSAD) 2022. This year's theme is "Mobilize to Thrive: Prioritizing Quality of Life."

Long-term survivor Tez Anderson and the advocacy group Let's Kick ASS—AIDS Survivor Syndrome launched the awareness day in 2014. Based in San Francisco, Let's Kick ASS aims to empower HIV long-term survivors to thrive.

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by HIV.gov (@hivgov)

As the organizers of #HLTSAD, the folks at Let's Kick ASS describe AIDS Survivor Syndrome in the short video below, filmed at the National AIDS Memorial in San Francisco:

On HLTSAD.org, the organizers spell out some priorities, define "long-term survivors" and give historical context for the annual awareness day:

> HLTSAD is an opportunity to raise awareness that leads to action. We don't have the luxury of time to wait for the government to do the right thing. We are tired. We are old. But we can still kick ass.
>
> The selection of June 5 for this annual observance coincides with the anniversary of the first official reporting of what became known as the AIDS epidemic on June 5, 1981. When the CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] first reported on five cases of a mysterious disease affecting young gay men. June 5, 1981 is considered the start of the AIDS pandemic.
>
> Today, HIV Long-Term Survivors (HLTS) represent a diverse group of people diagnosed with HIV before the advent of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy, or HAART in 1996. We make up about 25% of all people living with HIV and AIDS. 1.2 million people are living with HIV in the U.S. That makes about 300,000 long-term survivors, defined as individuals who acquired HIV before 1996 and the introduction of HAART.
>
> Often overlooked, HLTS includes people born with HIV or who acquired the virus as babies and are now in their 30s and 40s. HLTS are also those living with HIV and AIDS for over 25 years.
>
> We are developing a social media campaign and tangible calls to action to improve the quality of our lives.
>
> It's up to us to set our action plan addressing the present-day and future needs, issues, and challenges facing people living longest with HIV/AIDS.
>
> We've waited long enough.
>
> HLTSAD is not a time to look back at our traumatic pasts. (That's for World AIDS Day.) Our goal over the coming months is for YOU to set our agenda and priorities for moving forward and take action to make changes.
>
> People living with HIV/AIDS deserve to age with dignity.
>
> Some Priorities

- Make the quality of life for HIV long-term survivors and older adults aging with HIV and AIDS a true priority

- Demand universal treatment access to help end the HIV epidemic, which is the message of the #JourneyTo400K campaign from the team that created Undetectable Equals Untransmittable (#UequalsU)

- Prioritize culturally aware mental health care

- Overcome the challenges of poverty and economic insecurity

- Fight discrimination and invisibility against older adults with HIV and AIDS. It is called “ageism.” We will not condone it.

Negative and inaccurate stereotypes about older people are called “ageism,” which leads to invisibility

Invisibility is deadly for Older Adults with HIV

AGEISM is a public health emergency
Stop ignoring us. We’re an untapped resource
https://t.co/f6HzMmbt57
Fight #AIDSageism pic.twitter.com/WsYyPr6CIV
— Let’s Kick ASS-AIDS Survivor Syndrome (@LetsKickASS_hiv) October 6, 2021

For a collection of related articles in POZ, click #Long-Term Survivors. Don’t miss the article “Tool Time,” about the Reunion Project’s Long-Term Survivors Toolkit Webinar Series.

And don’t miss the POZ Basics page “HIV and Aging.” To learn more about other HIV awareness days, including a calendar you can download and print, visit “2022 HIV/AIDS Awareness Days.”

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