

HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day 2023

About 300,000 people with HIV are long-term survivors, meaning they acquired HIV before 1996, when effective treatment was introduced.

June 5, 2023 By [Trent Straube](#)

Monday, June 5, marks [HIV](#) Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day (#HLTSAD) 2023. “The day celebrates the resiliencies and strengths of survivors of the AIDS epidemic and raises awareness and sets an agenda to flourish,” [according to HLTSAD.com](#), which adds that this year “HLTSAD is not a one-day event. We are carrying our campaign throughout the year into 2024. We are using Pride as an opportunity to raise awareness that leads to action.”

The [long-term survivors](#) awareness day was launched in 2014 by Let’s Kick ASS—AIDS Survivor Syndrome. What is AIDS Survivor Syndrome? Watch the video below by Let’s Kick ASS to learn more:

HLTSAD takes place on June 5 because on that date in 1981 the first report of what became known as [AIDS](#) was published in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, an epidemiological digest published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report detailed five cases of a mysterious disease affecting young gay men and as such is considered by many to mark the start of the AIDS epidemic.

Effective treatment for HIV—combination antiretroviral therapy—did not arrive until 15 years later, in 1996. People who contracted HIV or who were born with it before 1996 are considered long-term survivors, according to HLTSAD.org, which also states:

Today, HIV Long-Term Survivors (HLTS) represent a diverse group of people.... 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 [effective HIV treatment]....

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.

The #JourneyTo400K campaign refers to the fact that an estimated 400,000 people living with HIV are not virally suppressed, either because they’re not diagnosed or they’re not in care or have co-occurring conditions. To learn more, check out the video below:

For related articles in POZ, click [#Long-Term Survivors](#). You’ll find articles such as “[HIV Survivors Look Back, and Explore the Meaning of ‘Getting to Zero,’](#)” about a new documentary exploring the lives of long-term HIV survivors and what initiatives to “end the HIV epidemic” mean to them.

To learn more about other HIV awareness days and to access a calendar you can download and print, visit “[2023 HIV/AIDS Awareness Days](#).”