TuSalud

National Network for Latinx People Living With HIV Launches

LatinX+ will enable Latinx PLHIV to “define their own agenda.”

July 12, 2019 By Caroline Tien

The formation of LatinX+, a national network for Latinx people living with HIV, has just been announced. LatinX+ will empower the Latinx HIV community to advocate for themselves with regard to local, state and federal HIV policy.

The word Latinx (pronounced “la-teen-ex”) is a gender-neutral alternative to Latino and Latina.

“For too long,” said Yolanda Diaz, one of the founders of LatinX+, in a press release, “the decisions that affect our community have been left in the hands of those who do not represent us, are not part of our community and in turn cannot speak from experience or have our best interests in mind when making decisions that can have life-altering consequences for us.” The press release was emailed from the Sero Project, an HIV criminalization advocacy group.

Earlier this year, Diaz, who has been featured in The New York Times and other outlets for her HIV-related activism, attended a strategic planning session in Milford, Pennsylvania, to discuss the implementation of LatinX+. Sponsored by the Sero Project and Equality Florida, the event spanned two days and included analysis of hot-button topics like Latinx erasure from mainstream LGBT narratives.

Milford is the home of Sero Project director Sean Strub, who also founded POZ magazine.

Of particular concern to Diaz and the other participants, however, is the continuing existence of HIV-criminalization statutes, which affect a disproportionate number of Black and Latinx people.

“In Florida,” for example, said Alejandro Acosta, who serves as Equality Florida’s HIV-advocacy project coordinator, “a person with HIV can be sentenced to up to 30 years in jail, even in circumstances where HIV transmission was impossible. This stigmatization prevents people from getting tested and seeking early treatment, which saves lives.”

You can learn more about LatinX+ by emailing latinxplus@gmail.com.

Diaz appeared in the POZ 100 in November 2018, which you can read here. You can also read a

recent profile on Strub, which appeared in our 25th anniversary issue, here.

In related news about HIV criminalization and Michael Johnson, see "College Wrestler Sentenced to 30 Years in HIV Case Is Now Free."

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