National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day (#NYHAAD) 2023

"Young people living with HIV are the least likely of any age group to be retained in care and have a suppressed viral load."

April 10, 2023 By Trent Straube

Monday, April 10, marks the annual National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day (#NYHAAD) 2023. An opportunity to educate the public about the impact of HIV on youth, NYHAAD is spearheaded by a collective that's part of Advocates for Youth, a national nonprofit that works to ensure young people have the tools and power to protect themselves against HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy.

According to federal data from 2021, young people under age 24 accounted for 19% of new HIV diagnoses, or about one in five new cases.

> Young people (13-24) accounted for 1/5 of new HIV diagnoses in the U.S. in 2021. This #NYHAAD, let's break down barriers and help young people get the support and care they need. Learn more here: https://t.co/4nlrKaTLFX pic.twitter.com/5KQ8wu9Rg3
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> — AIDSVu (@AIDSVu) April 6, 2023

"Today's young people are the first generation who have never known a world without HIV and AIDS," writes Advocates for Youth on the importance of NYHAAD. "Young people living with HIV are the least likely of any age group to be retained in care and have a suppressed viral load. Addressing the impact of HIV on young people requires they have access to affirming, culturally competent and medically accurate resources and tools."



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A post shared by Advocates for Youth (@advocatesforyouth)

In promoting NYHAAD events and education, the National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day Collective sets out the following goals:

- Increasing empathy and reducing stigma about HIV and its impact on young people on campus and in communities;
- Affirming policies around HIV care, treatment and prevention on campus and in communities;
- Decriminalizing HIV (for example, by urging Congress to pass the Repeal HIV Discrimination Act. You can send a letter to your members of Congress here, and share the action online);
- Accessing HIV services, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), on-campus and in communities without parental consent; and
- Updating sex education curricula, which includes medically accurate information about HIV.

Advocates for Youth hosted several virtual events for NYHAAD in the week leading up to NYHAAD and will host a Monday, April 10, conversation at 3:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. ET with youth activists, the White House and Congresswoman Barbara Lee's office.

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AIDSVu.org, which creates interactive maps and sharable infographcis based on HIV data, offers more insight into HIV among young people. Writing about NYHAAD, AIDSVu.org notes:

> "This NYHAAD, we are focusing on how investment in health education and services for youth is critical to ending HIV. In 2021, despite efforts to reduce transmission, youth still accounted for more than 19% of all new HIV diagnoses nationwide.
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> "HIV disproportionately impacts Black youth. In 2021, 53% of new HIV diagnoses among youth were among Black people. The disparity is even more stark among young Black women—in 2020, over 61% of young women living with HIV were Black.
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> "Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a valuable tool in HIV prevention—in 2021, young people under age 24 accounted for 19% of new HIV diagnoses but only 13% of PrEP users. In addition, young people face challenges in accessing and maintaining HIV treatment—only 81% of young people (aged 13–24) were linked to HIV care in 2021, the lowest rate of any age group.

> “Many young people who are at risk for HIV receive insufficient sex education and experience health-related inequities that are linked to low testing rates, high rates of sexually transmitted diseases, and low condom use. For example, in 2020 only 27% of 18- to 24-year-olds reported having ever been tested for HIV, far lower than the national average of 39%. Also, according to the CDC [Centers for Disease COntrol and Preveton], in 2019 18% of 18- to 24-year-olds with diagnosed HIV had unprotected sex (sex while not virally suppressed with a partner whose HIV status was negative or unknown, a condom was not used, and the partner was not taking PrEP) in the past 12 months, the highest across all age groups. Quality health education is critical for young people to learn the information and skills they need to prevent the transmission of HIV and other STDs.”

Young people accounted for 1/5 of all new HIV diagnoses in 2021, but only made up 13% of PrEP users. This #NYHAAD, let’s support young people’s access the care and give them the resources they need to prevent #HIV. Learn more: https://t.co/4nlrKaTLFX pic.twitter.com/42Wn5MweMK

— AIDSVu (@AIDSVu) April 7, 2023

Also on AIDSVu.org, read a Q&A with Samantha Hill, PhD, MD, a medical director at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, who talks about improving youth education around HIV.

The special fold-out cover of April/May 2023 POZ

For more POZ articles about young people and HIV, click #Youth. You'll find a collection of articles including this month's cover story, "HIV Advocacy on TikTok," which profiles several members of the new generation who are using the social media sensation to promote sexual health.

To learn more about other HIV awareness days, including a calendar you can download and print, visit "2023 HIV/AIDS Awareness Days."

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