TuSalud

Read My Lips: An HIV Kiss-In Sends a Hopeful Message at U.S.-Mexico Border

The Besoton Sidoso Internacional (the International HIV Kiss-In) is a declaration of resistance and solidarity for people living with HIV.

December 11, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

Love conquers all—including discrimination against immigrants, the LGBTQ community and people living with HIV. That's the hopeful message conveyed by a group of HIV-positive men who staged an HIV kiss-in in a California park along the Mexico border, reports The Advocate.

Organized by MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights, the third annual Besoton Sidoso Internacional, also known as the International HIV Kiss-In, was a powerful act of defiance and solidarity. The lip-locking demonstration took place in Friendship Park/Parque de la Amistad, California, on November 30, a day before World AIDS Day, marked each December 1.

The event aims to uplift people living with HIV and reduce stigma associated with dating and sex. In today's political climate, the event also supports queer migrants who may be facing persecution from the Trump administration.

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“As of one of the only openly HIV-positive executive directors of a global organization, I am inspired and heartened by this highly visible action for the rights of all people living with HIV, especially queer migrants, when there’s so much fear and disinformation out there,” MPact executive director Andrew Spieldenner told The Advocate. “Our communities are powerful when we come together.”

A 2018 report by the National Institutes of Health found that migrants living in high-income countries were disproportionately impacted by HIV. What’s more, this population often experiences factors associated with poor HIV clinical outcomes, such as limited access to health care, poverty, limited education and stigma.

A separate report by the Williams Institute found that about 3% of immigrants (about 640,000 people) living in the United States identify as LGBTQ. This includes as many as 288,000 undocumented immigrants.



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MPact was founded in 2006 by an international group of activists concerned about the disproportionate HIV burden experienced by gay and bisexual men. The global organization focuses on protecting and expanding sexual health and human rights through campaigns geared toward gay, bisexual and queer folks in the United States, Mexico, Latin America and beyond.

“MPact works in collaboration with local communities to create the International HIV Kiss-In because it’s a bold, provocative and revolutionary act to publicly demonstrate the sexuality of people living with HIV and declare the human rights of queer migrants,” said Alex Garner, senior director of strategic initiatives and communications at MPact. “We’ve transcended borders of sexuality and of gender and borders cannot restrict our fight for queer migrants and people living with HIV as we utilize the power of a kiss.”

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In related news, for the first time since 1988, the U.S. government did not observe World AIDS Day this year. That didn't stop HIV advocates across the country from celebrating. Go here to see how the HIV community and activists honored the millions of lives lost to HIV since the start of the epidemic.

To read more, click #Advocacy. There, you'll see headlines such as "HIV Expert Who Resigned From the CDC in Protest Finds a New Home at Callen-Lorde," "The Benefits of HIV Research? Let Us Count the Ways" and "A Southern HIV Icon Announces Her Retirement."

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