

Two HIV Service Providers Close in Minneapolis

Rainbow Health and the African American AIDS Task Force shuttered, leaving clients and remaining agencies scrambling.

August 16, 2024 By [Trent Straube](#)

Rainbow Health, a Minneapolis health care service provider for the [HIV](#) and [LGBTQ](#) communities, shuttered without warning July 19 due to financial problems, [reports MinnPost](#). The loss comes just a few months after the African American AIDS Task Force (AAATF), which served Black Minnesotans, also closed.

Like most HIV service organizations, Rainbow Health and AAATF provided more than HIV testing, treatment and care. They provided food support, housing assistance, financial aid for living expenses, sobriety and mental health care, support groups and even legal support to transgender people who wanted to change their name, to name just a few of the services they offered.

The closures left people scrambling for assistance. For example, some clients at Rainbow Health faced having their utilities disconnected or even being evicted, according to MinnPost.

Several local organizations are stepping forward to address the crises, including Aliveness Project, PFund and Interna Mental Health & Wellness. The Aliveness Project, MinnPost reports, is taking over contracts that were held by Rainbow Health, including those funded by the federal Ryan White program and by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. What's more, the Aliveness Project has been able to provide financial assistance to many of Rainbow Health's former clients.

"All of us opened extra spots on our schedule to take clients that lost services immediately," Kaylee Bond, MA, a cofounder and therapist at Interna, told the newspaper, adding that Interna is "working with Family Tree [Clinic] to cross-refer people who need gender-affirming care or upcoming surgery requests for their gender-affirming care."

The situation may become even more complicated in the future, as the Minnesota Department of Human Services plans to cut its HIV budget by \$9 million, or 30%, next year, [reports the Sahan Journal](#).

Matt Toburen, the executive director of Aliveness Project, said the budget cuts are the result of decreases in federal funding. He and other advocates are urging state lawmakers to provide more

funding for HIV services and related programs.

About 9,223 people were living with HIV in Minnesota in 2021, according to [data on AIDSVu.org](#). Most new diagnoses in the state are in Hennepin, Crow Wing, Ramsey, Stearns and Scott counties, and in Minneapolis and St. Paul. About 42% of new HIV diagnoses in the state were among African Americans, about 35% were among white Minnesotans, and nearly 15% were among Latinos. Most news cases (79%) were among men.

HIV outbreaks have been reported across the state the past four years, reports MinnPost. “If you look at our neighbors in Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa, they’re all seeing declining HIV infection,” Toburen told the paper. But in “Minnesota, we’re seeing a spike.”

For one example, see the 2021 POZ item “[HIV and Syphilis Outbreaks Raise Alarms in Minnesota](#).”

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