Watch the PBS Special “Ending HIV in America” [VIDEO]

Focused on San Francisco and Birmingham, the “Nova” film explores the progress, advocacy and challenges involved in ending HIV in America.

October 5, 2022 By Trent Straube

In the 41 years since AIDS was first identified, scientists and public health advocates have made much progress in tackling the HIV epidemic, but many hurdles remain. A new one-hour special from Nova, the documentary science series on PBS, highlights advances in HIV treatment and the obstacles that stand in the way of efforts to stamp out the virus.

Titled Ending HIV in America, the program debuts Wednesday, October 5, and can be viewed on local PBS channels and on PBS.org as well as via apps and in the video below.

“HIV is a uniquely challenging virus to fight, and the scientific journey over the last four decades has been a dramatic roller coaster filled with hope and frustration and some truly remarkable discoveries,” said Nova co–executive producer Julia Cort in a press statement. “All leading to today, when public health experts say ending HIV transmission in America is within our grasp.”

The documentary highlights efforts to end HIV by focusing on San Francisco, and Birmingham, Alabama. On the one hand, San Francisco, one of the areas hit hardest during the early days of the epidemic, has seen phenomenal success in reducing new infections and connecting people who test HIV positive to lifesaving treatment and care. By contrast, in Birmingham, it remains challenging to get treatment and prevention tools to those who need it. In fact, southern states are now the epicenter of today’s HIV epidemic in the United States.

“Public awareness of the continuing havoc wreaked by HIV has declined over the years. This important film provides some welcome news and a timely examination of the current state of the AIDS epidemic and how we got to this point,” said Nova co–executive producer Chris Schmidt. “It also reveals how scientific advances in the battle against COVID-19 originated from pioneering research into HIV vaccines—including treatments like remdesivir and paxlovid—and how the many years of scientific research around HIV and AIDS have benefited us all in the long run.”

Almost 40 years after the discovery of HIV, could we be

on the verge of ending the AIDS epidemic in America?

“Ending HIV in America” premieres WED OCT 5 at 9/8c on @PBS. pic.twitter.com/4TM4p8v9dq

— NOVA | PBS (@novapbs) October 3, 2022

Ending HIV in America airs as the United States government recently updated its National HIV/AIDS Strategy (first launched under the Obama administration) and as federal efforts support the Ending the HIV Epidemic in America initiative launched by President Donald Trump. Both aim to lower new HIV rates by 75% by 2025 and by 90% by 2030. This would amount to fewer than 3,000 HIV cases a year. “Reducing new infections to this level,” according to the initiative, “would essentially mean that HIV transmissions would be rare and meet the definition of ending the epidemic.”

In related news, see “$20M in Federal Funds to Help Community Health Centers End HIV” and “Out for Delivery: Nation’s Largest-Ever HIV Self-Testing Program” about the new effort to deliver 1 million free home HIV tests.

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