



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**  
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc  
*Commissioner*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**(347) 396-4177**

## **NEW HIV DIAGNOSES FALL TO HISTORIC LOW AS NEW YORK CITY NEARS GOAL TO END THE EPIDEMIC, MAYOR DE BLASIO TO PARTICIPATE IN “WORLD AIDS DAY 2020” VIRTUAL EVENT**

*New HIV diagnoses down 8% from 2018 to 2019, and 70% since 2001*

*Declines in new HIV diagnoses seen among men, women, and transgender New Yorkers, and among  
all age groups*

*Mayor de Blasio to join Chicago, and Long Beach Mayors for National AIDS Memorial virtual event  
commemorating World AIDS Day 2020*

**December 1, 2020** – New York City continues to near its goal of ending the epidemic as new infections fell, once again, from 2018 to 2019. Men, women, and transgender people, all age groups, nearly all racial/ethnic groups, and nearly all HIV transmission risk groups experienced declines in new HIV diagnoses from 2018 to 2019. According to the Health Department’s [2019 HIV Surveillance Annual Report](#), 1,772 people were newly diagnosed with HIV in New York City in 2019, down 8% from the 1,917 new HIV diagnoses reported in 2018, and down 70% since 2001.

### **[Mayor Bill de Blasio quote]**

“The New York City experience will quite literally be a model for the nation,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. “For those who raised their voices and laid their lives down for the gains that have been achieved, I offer my deepest gratitude. Together we can end the epidemic once and for all by eliminating stigma and discrimination as well as permanently ensuring health care as a human right. What the movement to end HIV showed the world has become even more vital as we fight to end COVID-19.”

“This World AIDS Day is my last at the Health Department,” said **Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, Deputy Commissioner for the Health Department’s Division of Disease Control**. “The amazing and groundbreaking work we have achieved under this administration to come closer to ending HIV in New York City is a testament to the power of political will and community engagement. I look forward to using the lessons I learned here, supplemented by what I will learn from advocates from across the country, to guide my new role as Director of the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Special thanks to Mayor de Blasio and the commissioners I had the pleasure to work with, as well the community in New York City for being my best teachers.”

Later today, Mayor de Blasio will participate in the National AIDS Memorial’s “World AIDS Day 2020 – A National Conversation,” a virtual event featuring Mayors from cities on the frontlines of the

HIV epidemic, including Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia. Hosted by acclaimed actress and advocate Judith Light and moderated by ABC's T.J. Holmes, the event will feature guest speakers, video storytelling, and musical tributes honoring lives lost to HIV, as well as survivors, activists, and heroes in the fight to end the epidemic. During the event, the National AIDS Memorial will unveil its first-ever [virtual exhibition](#) of the AIDS Memorial Quilt featuring nearly 10,000 quilt panels representing all U.S. states and territories. The National AIDS Memorial will honor Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and Dr. David D. Ho, Director of Columbia University's Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center, with National Leadership Recognition Awards. "World AIDS Day 2020 – A National Conversation" will stream this afternoon at 1pm EST at [www.aidsmemorial.org](http://www.aidsmemorial.org).

In addition to tracking new HIV diagnoses in the city, the Health Department estimates the number of new HIV infections each year, a key [Ending the Epidemic](#) metric. Estimated new HIV infections in New York City are down 14% from 2018 to 2019, and 40% since 2015. Men who have sex with men (MSM) experienced a particularly steep decline, with an estimated 840 new HIV infections in 2019, down 44% from the number of estimated new infections in 2015.

More New Yorkers with HIV are becoming virally suppressed and living longer, healthier lives. In 2019, 87% of all people with HIV receiving HIV medical care in New York City were virally suppressed, up from 83% in 2015. Last year, New York City [announced](#) that as of 2018 it had reached the [UNAIDS 90-90-90](#) goals two years ahead of schedule. New data show that as of 2019, in New York City, 93% of people with HIV have been diagnosed, 90% of people diagnosed with HIV are on treatment, and 92% of people on treatment are virally suppressed. Viral suppression is important because it reduces the amount of virus in a person's body, helping maintain overall health. People with HIV who are on treatment and maintain an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV through sex. This evidence-based finding is also known as [Undetectable = Untransmittable](#), or U = U. In August 2016, New York City became the first jurisdiction in the United States to join the U = U movement. In September 2017, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [New York State Department of Health](#) (PDF) agreed that people who maintain an undetectable viral load have effectively no risk of transmitting HIV to their sexual partners. The Health Department has since released additional resources promoting U = U, including a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) (PDF), [information for providers](#), an [FAQ handout](#) (PDF), the health bulletin, [Making HIV Undetectable](#) (PDF) and the sexual health marketing campaign, "[Made Equal](#)."

While these data represent an important step toward ending the epidemic, inequities persist across many communities in New York City. In 2019, of all cisgender and transgender women newly diagnosed with HIV, 91% were Black or Latina; of all cisgender and transgender men newly diagnosed, 81% were Black or Latino. In 2019, of all men newly diagnosed with HIV, 69% were MSM; of all new diagnoses among MSM, 80% were among Black or Latino MSM. And 50% of New Yorkers newly diagnosed with HIV in 2019 lived in neighborhoods of high poverty. The data also show inequities in viral suppression among people with HIV in medical care, with 94% of White people and Asian/Pacific Islander people virally suppressed, compared to only 87% of Latino/Hispanic people and 84% of Black people.

The Health Department shared these data during this morning's World AIDS Day 2020 virtual citywide event, hosted by the End AIDS NY 2020 Coalition in conjunction with the City and State health departments. During the event, Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi presented World AIDS Day Awards to the following individuals and organization for their outstanding commitment to ending the HIV epidemic in New York City.

- **Shirley Torho**, a public health, education, and equity strategist working at the intersection of educational and health equity, for her years of service with New York City HIV Planning Group and Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services, and for her expertise on HIV prevention, community engagement, eliminating structural barriers that create and exacerbate health disparities among marginalized groups, and addressing unconscious bias and stigma in patient-provider relationships.
- **Lisa Best**, a social advocate, entrepreneur, and veteran HIV advocate, for her years of service with the HIV Health and Human Services Planning Council of New York, for helping organize virtual town halls for people with HIV to share information on housing assistance, telehealth, and public policy during the COVID-19 public health emergency, and for bringing her life experiences with substance use, mental health issues, and homelessness into conversations about how to best serve vulnerable communities affected by HIV.
- **Decrim NY**, for advocating and organizing to shape City and State policy and public opinion around people involved in the sex trades and to improve the lives of people who perform sexual labor by choice, circumstance, or coercion, and for providing valuable insight as the Health Department develops programming and services to meet the health and safety needs of New Yorkers involved in the sex trades.

“World AIDS Day is a call to action in the global fight against HIV/AIDS, and New York continues to be a model for good public health policy,” said **Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried, Chair of the Assembly Health Committee**. “We’re on a path to ending the HIV epidemic in our lifetimes, and the City’s example shows that if we can engage communities, expand access to care, and ensure affordable medications and housing, we can win the fight against AIDS.”

“New York City has made serious progress in combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and on World AIDS Day we must celebrate that progress and recommit to our goal of ending the epidemic once and for all,” said **City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**. “To do so we must continue to focus our efforts on communities that are still seeing a disproportionate amount of positive cases, including Black, Latinx, and transgender New Yorkers. We need to make sure that people who enter into care are supported and continue receiving the care they need. And last but not least, we must remain vigilant that PrEP and PEP remain affordable and accessible to all. We are so close to ending this epidemic. The Council will continue to fight even harder to do so.”

“When New Yorkers work together, we can do anything,” said **Councilmember Carlos Menchaca, member of the LGBT Caucus and the Chair of the Committee on Immigration**. “The new data shows that robust community engagement and education work as we continue to see a steep decline in new HIV diagnoses. I commend the advocates and the city for the critical outreach and health resources that has been extended to all New Yorkers including the undocumented LGBTQ community. As we also confront the COVID-19 health crisis, government must remain steadfast in our commitment to the wellbeing of our neighbors.”

“New HIV diagnoses in NYC are at an all-time low because of our long-term commitment to HIV prevention efforts,” said **NYC Council LGBT Caucus Chair Daniel Dromm**. “While our work is not over until we have eradicated HIV/AIDS completely, these results give us cause to celebrate. I will continue to work alongside the de Blasio administration, service providers, my colleagues in government and other advocates to end the epidemic once and for all.”

“HIV and AIDS continue to disproportionately impact the transgender and gender non-binary community,” said **Cristina Herrera, CEO and Founder of Translatinx Network**. “In partnership with the NYC Health Department, Translatinx Network will continue to work to reduce the rates of new HIV infections while supporting our HIV-positive community so that they can lead a healthier life.”

“As a transgender woman, a person with history of sex work and drug use I am so pleased to live in the city where HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment are approached without shame and with empowerment for everyone instead,” said **Cecilia Gentili, Principal Consultant and Founder of Transgender Equity Consulting**. “Punitive approaches, humiliation or embarrassment have no place in creating real results around harm reduction regarding sexual health or health in general as a matter of fact. The NYC Health Department continues to pave the way to the world to follow a method of tackling disease with a gentle and humanitarian point of view.”

“As a partner with the NYC Health Department, Exponents is poised to continue its efforts to end the HIV epidemic here in NYC and are encouraged by the amazing progress made thus far,” said **Donald Powell, Senior Director of Programs & Development at Exponents, Inc.** “We encourage our local and national funding partners to acknowledge, amplify and engage in solutions to address the multi-dimensional challenges that continue to prevent Black & Latinx (cis and transgender) communities from experiencing the declines we see in other populations. It is imperative that we find solutions to challenge inequities based on ethnicity, sexual orientation/gender identity, justice-involvement and highlight examples of culturally-responsive programs that address poverty, substance use, justice involvement, and food insecurity. We thank the leadership of the NYC Health Department (both past and present) for their leadership and look forward to working closely with Dr. Daskalakis in his new role at the CDC.”

“For this World's AIDS Day, it's especially important for us to reflect on the last year and how our community has pulled together in many ways. Despite the obvious restraints put upon HIV service delivery communities due to the spread of COVID-19, each of our sites has found innovative ways to continue to provide the services needed by our clients,” said **Caroline Carnevale DNP, MPH, Nurse Practitioner at the Comprehensive Health Program/Project Stay at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital**. “From sites quickly ramping up telemedicine to implementing groundbreaking home testing options, NYC's HIV service programs have continued to demonstrate that nothing, not even a pandemic, can stop them from offering comprehensive sexual health services to their communities.”

“Community Healthcare Network is proud to have worked with the “End the Epidemic” campaign to successfully decrease the number of new HIV infections in New York City,” said **Dr. Freddy Molano, Vice President of Infectious Diseases and LGBTQ Programs and Services at Community Health Network**. “We look forward to continuing to work with our patients to further decrease rates of new infection, increase the number of undetectable persons, and providing our patients, and the whole of New York City, with the resources they need to live healthy and full lives-- regardless of their status.”

“The report that new HIV diagnoses in New York City have dropped significantly not just in a one-year period but by 70% since 2001 is a testament to the tireless, coordinated efforts by our elected representatives, health care professionals, and community-based organizations like Alliance who have made this a priority,” said **Sharen I. Duke, Executive Director and CEO of Alliance for Positive Change**. “World AIDS Day is a moment when we come together to honor those whose lives have been lost. Sadly, in 2020 the people we serve are facing the behavioral health and access challenges of COVID-19, on top of living with HIV, and so we must work to address the inequities that persist

among people of color, women and the transgender community, and be relentless in our pursuit of the day we can say we have ended the epidemic.”

"NYC's progress towards ending the HIV epidemic in the City is impressive," said **Mark Harrington, executive director of Treatment Action Group (TAG)**. "However, continuing disparities with respect to new infections show that we cannot end HIV in NYC without investing massively in public health and community responses to address social and structural barriers to successful HIV prevention, treatment, and care. The ongoing disaster of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 will surely disrupt NYC's progress against HIV. We must redouble our efforts in 2021 to end both pandemics."

"On the occasion of World AIDS Day, Apicha Community Health Center lauds NYC's progress toward ending the epidemic," said **Therese R. Rodriguez, CEO of Apicha Community Health Center**. "The overall decline in new infections shows that outreach, linkage to care, and adherence to antiretroviral treatments lead to viral load suppression. But our work is not done until the trajectories of new HIV diagnoses are all bent downwards, including among all communities of color. Note that Asians and Pacific Islanders, while successful in viral load suppression, continue to show an upward trend in new HIV diagnoses. NYC must continue the strategies that have proven effective, such as addressing social determinates of health, offering services in preferred languages, and making sure resources are available to end the epidemic for all."

"World AIDS Day 2020 is a call on each and every one of us to recommit to addressing the HIV, AIDS epidemic," said **Guillermo Chacon, President of the Latino Commission on AIDS and founder of the Hispanic Health Network**. "Mayor Bill de Blasio remains committed to ending the HIV epidemic in New York City. This is a sign of hope to those communities most impacted. We also call for an equal commitment to work towards reaching Zero Homophobia, Zero Transphobia and Zero discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS. HIV has not gone away because of COVID-19. More than ever we need to refocus our efforts as we see the impact that unemployment, social isolation and other issues created by the current global pandemic. It is critical to increase access to care, prevention and support services as we also take into urgent consideration health and racial disparities and health inequities."

"We have been thrilled to partner with both the governments of New York City and New York State to drive down new transmission of HIV," said **Charles King, a founder and CEO of Housing Works**. Despite our shared success, reflected in the 2019 data, we are sobered by the knowledge that the coronavirus pandemic has impacted our efforts. In addition, we must implement basic recommendations in the EtE Blueprint, such as overdose prevention centers, and are now facing large cuts in funding that are critical to achieving the goal of ending the epidemic. We need a new commitment to this cause at all levels of government, with resources adequate to sustain this community-wide effort."

"I am proud of what New York City has accomplished in reducing the number of new infections particularly for cis and transgender women," said **Ingrid Floyd, Executive Director, Iris House (NYC) and WORLD (Oakland, CA)**. "However, the data clearly shows the alarming disparity that exists for Blacks and Latinas. We cannot end the epidemic for one group of people and not all. There is still much work to be done."

"Congratulations NYC Department of Health for your leadership, guidance, and especially for the support you provide to community-based organizations in the fight to end HIV," said **Nathaly Rubio-Torio, Executive Director, Voces Latinas**. "Although the data show a significant decline in overall

HIV infections among all groups between 2015 to 2019, inequities continue to exist among Black and Latinos. This has not changed! Among the foreign-born, Latinos are the highest in HIV prevalence and infections. The work continues, especially for organizations that target these groups, such as Voces Latinas. COVID-19 is a reminder that these groups continue to be most vulnerable and most affected. We have a lot more work to do.”

“On this World AIDS Day, we remember all those lost to the epidemic and honor those who have been on the frontlines since the earliest days,” said **Kelsey Louie, CEO of GMHC**. “We are closer than ever to ending the epidemic because of the strong partnerships among HIV/AIDS service organizations and local and state governments. We are proud of our partnerships with the City and State health departments. Our prevention programs, particularly those focusing on communities at increased risk of HIV, are moving us closer to the day when there are no new infections.”

“The progress NYC announced today is a testament to the commitment of New Yorkers at every level – people with HIV, community health providers and advocates, City and State health departments, and elected officials – to do whatever it takes to end the HIV epidemic,” said **Doug Wirth, President and CEO of Amida Care**. “Special credit is owed to Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, who brought extraordinary vision, courage, and leadership to NYC, which he will now bring to the CDC for national impact. There is still work to do to ensure equitable access to HIV care, but the fact remains that New York is on track to be the first state in the country to end the epidemic – a goal that seemed unattainable not so long ago, and that is cause for celebration today.”

“These new data are heartening, and this progress is a testament to the power and pressure of activism, partnership between government and community, strategically used resources and important advancements in clinical care,” said **Kimberleigh Smith, Senior Director for Community Health Planning and Policy at Callen-Lorde Community Health Center**. “The work we have left to do to ensure that everyone experiences this progress will be even harder, especially in the context of today’s devastating COVID-19 pandemic, which only re-exposes the persistent health inequities we in the HIV and AIDS community were aware of all along. The challenge of moving forward to end AIDS will not just be to secure progress, but to make meaningful movements to advance health equity and justice. New York City must continue to lead, using the Ending the Epidemic platform to dismantle the inequities that drive these epidemics in the first place.”

“The 2019 data are a welcome sign of the progress we are making in our fight to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in NYC,” said **Jacquelyn Kilmer, CEO of Harlem United**. “It is a testament to the hard work of all those who have been part of this fight – the activists, the City health department, and the community-based organizations that provide the services essential to reaching our goal of ending the epidemic. But the data also confirm what we know – the progress we are making is not uniform. We must redouble our efforts – particularly as we confront another public health crisis – to eliminate health disparities faced by people of color, low-income New Yorkers, and all people who face barriers to effective disease prevention and treatment due to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, status as a drug user or sex worker, or other sources of bias, discrimination and exclusion in health care delivery. We look forward to continuing to partner with the City Health Department as we continue in this fight.”

“ACQC is commemorating a virtual World AIDS Day on December 1, 2020 for the first time in 32 years,” said **Rosemary Lopez, Executive Director for the AIDS Center of Queens County**. “We have been servicing those who are living with the virus for the past 36 years. This pandemic, COVID-19, and HIV/AIDS have truly changed our community. We have been essential staff throughout this

pandemic, and never closing our doors. We continue to provide full wraparound services for the clients and the community through ACQc and AHF, and we will continue to provide services in this new pandemic as we move toward one day ending the epidemic.

“This latest data from the NYC Health Department’s HIV Surveillance Report, coupled with the alarming rate of deaths in black and brown communities due to the inequities laid glaringly bare by COVID-19, demand of us to work with a laser-focus to systematically address the racial disparities and inequities of health that stand stubbornly in the way of an end to the HIV/AIDS epidemic,” said **Amanda Lugg, Director of Advocacy and LGBTQ Programming at African Services Committee.**

While the Health Department works to stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep New Yorkers safe and healthy, it remains committed to ensuring that New Yorkers have access to the HIV and sexual health services they need.

- The Health Department has released **public-facing guidance** on [safer sex and COVID-19](#), [COVID-19 and people with HIV](#), and [expedited partner therapy \(EPT\) during COVID-19](#), and **provider-facing guidance** on [COVID-19 and HIV](#), [PrEP and PEP best practices during COVID-19](#), [maintaining HIV and sexually transmitted infection \(STI\) services during COVID-19](#), and [treating STIs during COVID-19](#).
- The Health Department’s Community Home Test Giveaway (CHTG) Virtual Program offers **home delivery of free HIV self-test kits**. To locate a CHTG Virtual Program partner organization to request a free HIV self-test, visit the [NYC Health Map](#).
- The Health Department maintains **online directories of providers** currently offering sexual and reproductive health services in the [Bronx](#), [Brooklyn](#), [Manhattan](#), [Queens](#), and [Staten Island](#), and PlaySure Network providers offering [HIV and STI testing, PrEP, PEP, and HIV care services](#) in clinics and [HIV-related navigation and supportive services](#) in community-based settings.
- The Health Department offers contracted HIV service providers **technical assistance and support** related to telehealth and holistic client care. Earlier this year, the Health Department leveraged Ryan White Part A (RWPA) and CARES Act funding to expand short-term rental assistance and housing programs, emergency financial assistance, and food and nutrition services for RWPA clients with HIV.
- Select [Sexual Health Clinics](#) are currently open and offering limited walk-in HIV and STI services. Telemedicine services for STIs and HIV are available through the **NYC Sexual Health Clinic Hotline** at 347-396-7959, Monday through Friday, 9am to 3:30pm.

For more information on COVID-19, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus).

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Patrick Gallahue / Michael Lanza, (347) 396-4177  
[PressOffice@health.nyc.gov](mailto:PressOffice@health.nyc.gov)

