Dancing to End HIV Stigma

...and to support statements on transmission risk when undetectable

June 26, 2017 By Trent Straube

Some news is so good you'll want to dance in the streets! That was the idea behind a rally and dance party at the New York City AIDS Memorial, held to celebrate the public release of the End AIDS NY 2020 Community Coalition's Statement on Viral Load Suppression. The event also supported the "Undetectable = Untransmittable" (U=U) campaign from the Prevention Access Campaign (PAC).

The New York consensus statement affirms "the now conclusive scientific evidence that people with HIV who are on antiretroviral treatment (ART) that suppresses the virus to an 'undetectable' level not only successfully protect their own health but cannot transmit HIV to others.... The incontrovertible evidence that HIV cannot be sexually transmitted if one is durably virally suppressed is something that we all celebrate as a key milestone in ending AIDS as an epidemic."

The PAC statement reads: "People living with HIV on ART with an undetectable viral load in their blood have a negligible risk of sexual transmission of HIV. Depending on the drugs employed, it may take as long as six months for the viral load to become undetectable. Continued and reliable HIV suppression requires selection of appropriate agents and excellent adherence to treatment. HIV viral suppression should be monitored to assure both personal health and public health benefits." It notes that negligible means "so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering; insignificant."

Also this year, the 44-member AIDS United Public Policy Committee released its own statement regarding HIV risk when undetectable, as did the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD).

Now if only Katy Perry or Kendrick Lamar would put these words to a catchy beat—then we'd really fill a dance floor!

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