



Free HIV and STI Testing in Atlanta

The event supported National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

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Health equity for Black Americans and other minorities may be under attack from the new Trump administration, but local and state service providers continue to offer free testing for HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

AvitaCare Atlanta and partner MedCura Health offered free, confidential STI and HIV testing February 3 to 7 at several of their locations as part of their event Stomp the Noise: Be Fearless. Get Tested.

“In 2025, there’s still large amounts of stigma,” Jewel Sawyer, DMSc, MSHS, an infectious disease physician assistant at Avita Care Atlanta, told Atlanta News First. “We’re not talking about proper education, how to access preventive screening and testing. So we really want to get the word out to come in and get tested, know your status and empower yourself in your health.”

Sawyer adds that confusion surrounds many aspects of HIV. People often wonder, she says, “Now that I’ve been diagnosed, what happens? What’s my long-term outlook? My health outcomes? And how can I be educated to have a patient-provider relationship to take care of my health?”

Georgia has some of the highest HIV rates in the country. In fact, the state ranks fourth in total number of HIV cases, following Florida, California and Texas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Atlanta also sees high HIV rates; an estimated 43,257 residents were living with HIV in 2022 and nearly 70% of them were Black, according to AIDSvu.org, an interactive site that maps and visualizes HIV data for communities across the nation.

The free testing coincided with National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, marked each February 7.

According to the CDC, about 1.2 million people are living with HIV in the United States. The CDC estimates that around 14% of people with HIV do not know they have the virus, and nearly 40% of

new HIV cases are transmitted by people who don't know their status.