Gay Dating Apps Hook Up With Health Officials to Fight HIV

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In an unprecedented summit, representatives of seven gay dating apps and websites met with health officials in San Francisco to launch a plan to fight HIV and reduce stigma using their platforms, according to a press release from the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, which organized the meeting using funding from amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research.

The meeting resulted in a set of recommendations and actions that owners of the dating websites and apps agreed to take. By coordinating with public health workers and using innovative campaigns and messaging, site owners aim to:

- Promote HIV testing as well as testing for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Reduce HIV stigma, particularly in dating profiles. The press release states: “In order to support healthy environments for all users, sites can proactively encourage users to select among optional, stigma-free profile options to communicate HIV status such as ‘positive,’ ‘undetectable,’ or ‘negative as of’ with a date of the user’s last HIV test, or partner preferences such as ‘HIV-neutral’ or ‘Poz-friendly.’”
- Work with health officials to publicize information such as disease outbreaks, new testing techniques and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

Participating apps and sites included BarebackRT, Daddyhunt, Dudesnude, Gay.com, Grindr, POZ Personals and Scruff, with Bigmuscle and two others ready to join the effort. Public health groups represented at the meeting include AIDS United, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Alliance for State and Territorial AIDS Directors, the National Coalition for STD Directors, and Project Inform.

To read the report from the meeting and for information on “The Great Online Hookup Survey,” which was developed to find ways online communities can promote sexual health, click here.

In related news, Scruff recently partnered with the National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC) to

promote HIV awareness and a PrEP campaign.

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