# HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day 2024

On Wednesday, June 5, #HLTSAD celebrates HIV long-term survivors, but how is this group defined?

June 5, 2024 By Trent Straube

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Wednesday, June 5, marks HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day (HLTSAD). It's an opportunity to celebrate this group of survivors aging with HIV and to also raise awareness of their unique challenges and needs.

Search the hashtag #HLTSAD on social media for infographics to share, events to attend and articles to read, such as these:

#HLTSAD, we talked with HIV advocate and long-term survivor Ronald Johnson, current Chair of the @HIVCaucus , for a conversation about his work leading the HIV and Aging Policy Action Coalition as he continues to advocate for older adults living with HIV.https://t.co/BIhFocsugt pic.twitter.com/bOQ1VbxBi2

— AIDS United (@AIDSUnited) June 4, 2024

Hey #ATL peeps! Join me for "Author Talk" on National #HIV #AIDS Long-Term Survivor Day on June 5th at

4pm, sponsored by @fulcolibrary #HLTSAD Registration suggested but not required at https://t.co/m4vFB1zSqr pic.twitter.com/klqCueq6VP

— Mark S. King (@MyFabDisease) May 26, 2024

Long-Term Survivors Awarness Day was launched in 2014 by Let's Kick ASS—AIDS Survivor Syndrome. HLTSAD takes place on June 5 because on that date in 1981 the first report of what became known as AIDS was published in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, an epidemiological digest published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report detailed five cases of a mysterious disease affecting young gay men and as such is considered by many to mark the start of the AIDS epidemic.

June 5th is the 43rd anniversary of the initial report of five cases that would later be identified as AIDS. These cases...

Posted by HIV.gov on Tuesday, June 4, 2024

The awareness day's website, HLTSAD.org, elaborates on this cohort of survivors:

> "Today, HIV Long-Term Survivors (HLTS) represent a diverse group of people diagnosed with HIV before the advent of highly active antiretroviral therapy or HAART in 1996. We make up about 25% of all people living with HIV and AIDS. 1.2 million people are living with HIV in the U.S. That makes about 300,000 long-term survivors, defined as individuals who acquired HIV before 1996 and the introduction of HAART.
>
> "Often overlooked, HLTS includes people born with HIV or who acquired the virus as babies and are now in their 30s and 40s. HLTS are also those living with HIV and AIDS for over 25 years."

Other groups define long-term survivors differently. The Reunion Project, an alliance of long-term survivors, holds a more expansive view, including:

- Many people who identify as long-term survivors have been living with HIV for 10 years or more.

- Others feel that their long-term survival is shaped by the experience of living with HIV since before the time when there was any effective treatment (about 1996).

- Some feel that their long-term survival experience is marked by going through different eras of their life—perhaps from being young adults to now being elders—while living with HIV.

- Lifetime survivors have been living with HIV their entire life, some for decades, and may still be relatively young because they have been living with HIV since birth.

- We also welcome people who are not living with HIV to join our network or workgroups as allies, many of them have been involved with or affected by HIV for many years.

The Reunion Project will hold a National Virtual Reunion Meeting on Tuesday, June 11, at 2 p.m. ET (11 a.m. PT). You can register for the Zoom discussion here. The meeting is described as:

> The Reunion Project's next National Virtual Meeting will set the tone of gentle introspection as we delve into a panel discussion that covers a range of the emotional and spiritual dimensions of facing mortality and loss of loved ones. We will also explore some of the practical aspects of end-of-life planning such as wills and advanced directives, plus a presentation on the cure research study known as "The Last Gift."

For related articles in POZ, click #Long-Term Survivors. You'll find stories such as "We Are Lifetime Survivors," a profile on people who were born with HIV and are giving themselves a new name.

## June 5 is HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day

## #HLTSAD

## HIV Long-Term Survivors (HLTS) are those diagnosed

with HIV prior to 1996 and the introduction of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART). Today, ~25% of all people living with HIV & AIDS are long-term survivors. pic.twitter.com/f3CFSdwAqX

— CLEHIV (@CLEHIVtrials) June 3, 2024

To learn more about other HIV awareness days and to access a calendar you can download and print, check out the POZ feature "2024 HIV and AIDS Awareness Days."

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