HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day 2025

This awareness day celebrates survivors aging with HIV and recognizes their unique challenges and needs.

June 5, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

Thursday, June 5, marks HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day (HLTSAD), an annual observance that honors long-term survivors of HIV and raises awareness about their unique needs and journeys. “Leading with Legacy” is this year’s theme.

Launched in 2014 by Let’s Kick ASS—AIDS Survivor Syndrome, HLTSAD coincides with a significant milestone in history: the date in 1981 that the first report of what would come to be known as AIDS was 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. Effective treatment for HIV—combination antiretroviral therapy—did not become available until 15 years later, in 1996.

Several decades later, the narrative surrounding HIV has evolved from one characterized by fear and stigma to one marked by hope and progress. Today, about 50% of people with HIV in the United States are over 50 years old, according to the CDC. By 2030, 70% of people with HIV will be over 50.

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According to HLTSAD's website, HIV Long-Term Survivors represent a diverse group of people, including:

- People diagnosed with HIV before the advent of highly active antiretroviral therapy, or HAART in 1996. They 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.
- People who have been living with HIV for over 10 years are also part of this group.
- People who acquired HIV at birth or as young children, also known as lifetime survivors of HIV, or dandelions.

In honor of HLTSAD, the National AIDS Memorial is premiering the 10th chapter of its award-winning Surviving Voices AIDS oral history and documentary film series. Surviving Voices: HIV Lifetime & Long-Term Survivors will screen at San Francisco's iconic Roxie Theatre in the Mission District. A panel discussion featuring some of the voices captured in the film will follow the screening.



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Spread the word on social media and start conversations by using the hashtags #HLTSAD, #LongTermSurvivors and #HIVawareness.

For related articles from POZ, click #Long-Term Survivors. You'll find stories such as "Sharing Knowledge Through Art," a profile of two friends who use art to combat HIV stigma, or "We Are Lifetime Survivors," a profile of people born with HIV who are giving themselves a new name.

Click here to learn more about 2025 HIV and AIDS awareness days, and click here for a printable poster.



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