HIV2020 Global Conference Will Now Take Place Online

Free virtual sessions will run from June through October.

April 29, 2020 By Trent Straube

COVID-19 will not cancel the HIV2020 conference after all. Originally scheduled for July in Mexico City, the event will now take the form of multiple virtual sessions running from June through October. What's more, the online series will be free to the public.

The full announcement on HIV2020.org reads:

> "The HIV2020 Conference has been reimagined as a series of virtual convenings that will take place June through October of this year.
>
> "HIV2020 Online will draw from the top-scoring, peer-reviewed program proposals we received from last year's call for Expressions of Interest. In lieu of face-to-face meetings, these virtual sessions will include live-streamed keynote addresses from leaders in the field, panel presentations led by community advocates and community-led service providers, and virtual discussion rooms aligned with the HIV2020 themes of affinity, intersectionality, and solidarity.

This ongoing virtual event will continue to reaffirm the leading role that communities play in the global response to HIV.

"Given HIV2020's focus on people living with HIV, gay and bisexual men, people who use drugs, sex workers, and transgender people, the virtual series will start in June with sessions aligned with the theme of affinity. Sessions will highlight the need to create space for civil society and showcase issues facing our communities. Although the event will no longer take place in Mexico City, many of our sessions will still highlight the priorities and needs of advocates in Latin America.

"All virtual sessions offered as part of the HIV2020 Online series will be entirely FREE and made available as recordings online. Translation will also be available for all sessions in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Russian.

"Stay tuned to the HIV2020 newsletter and social media channels for upcoming announcements about our program."

At the end of March, event organizers announced the cancellation of the conference over concerns about COVID-19, the potentially lethal disease caused by the new coronavirus. In fact, the Mexican government had suspended all large gatherings and events through at least August.

Welcome to @HIV2020 Online!

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— HIV2020 (@HIV2020) April 27, 2020

As POZ wrote earlier this year, HIV2020 was scheduled to run at the same time as the first half of

the International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2020) planned for San Francisco and neighboring Oakland. AIDS 2020 organizers announced March 27 that in light of COVID-19, that conference would be virtual.

AIDS 2020, which is organized by the International AIDS Society (IAS), takes place every other year in a different city across the globe.

Why hold competing conferences? In short, when it was announced nearly two years ago that San Francisco would be the home of the 2020 event, a group of activists felt that the conference should be moved off U.S. soil because of the country's discriminatory immigration and travel policies. When IAS refused to change course, activists launched HIV2020 with the goal of highlighting the often-overlooked communities affected by HIV.

For background information on the two conferences, see "AIDS 2020 vs. HIV2020" and "Positive Response," a Q&A with George Ayala, founding executive director of MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights, which is one of the organizers of the HIV2020.

In related COVID-19 news, keep in mind that novel coronavirus guidance and concerns for unique populations may vary. For example, see "How Many People With HIV Are Getting COVID-19?" as well as "3 Reasons COVID-19 Poses a Higher Risk for the LGBTQ Population," "UPDATED: What People With HIV Need to Know About the New Coronavirus" and the similar article for people with cancer.

Go to poz.com/tag/coronavirus for our continuing coverage of COVID-19.

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