



Honoring Long-Term Survivors

An awareness day addresses their journeys.

August 11, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

Thursday, June 5, marked 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” was 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 when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published the first report of what would come to be known as AIDS.

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 age 50.

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