See the Magic of 2022's U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS in 17 Pics and Posts

Held in Puerto Rico, #2022USCHA highlighted HIV in Latino populations, language justice, storytelling, music and much more.

October 13, 2022 By Trent Straube

For the first time since 2019, the nation's largest annual HIV-related gathering took place in person. The joy of escaping our screens and reconnecting with friends was palpable at the U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS (#2022USCHA), held October 7 to 11 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

> I met Don Evans when I was 15 years old and I attended a HIV and sexual health training that he facilitated at Brotherhood, Inc. in New Orleans. Full circle as we're both attending #USCHA2022 in Puerto Rico as HIV advocates over 20 years later. pic.twitter.com/dgNyCctBmd
>
> — Michael Chancley, MSW (@KingPiscean504) October 8, 2022

Over 120 institutions were represented—including advocacy groups, AIDS service organizations, clinics, pharmaceutical companies, media, governmental organizations on the local, state and national level and much more—with thousands of attendees staying at 10 different hotels.

It’s Day 3 of the USCHA conference! #2022uscha #WORLD #HIV #positivewomen #HIVeducation #LGBTQ #oakland #bayarea #nonprofit #women #prevention pic.twitter.com/NVQioSQwVv

— WORLD (@womenhivworld) October 10, 2022

Everyone convened daily at the multilevel Puerto Rico Convention Center for mammoth presentations, breakout workshops, worship sessions, dances, art displays and an exhibit hall filled with booths (including one for POZ magazine).

???????? ???? ????⚧ Our first time attending the U.S conference on HIV/AIDS hosted by @NMACCommunity We are ready to commit to build health equity and racial justice in our local communities #2022USCHA #starttalkinghiv #puertorico pic.twitter.com/ZIr6xvNtsK

— Somos Familia Valle (@SFVmovement) October 11, 2022

Joy! Celebration! Laughter! Music! All essential ingredients to sustaining the HIV workforce. This work is not easy, but the building of friendships and community keeps us going toward a better healthcare systems that centers health & wellbeing in BIPOC communities.

#2022USCHA pic.twitter.com/EgptKo76kZ

— Training & Health Equity Collaborative (@THE_Collab_) October 10, 2022

To give you an idea of the energy and breadth of the experience, we've culled a number of tweets, pics, posts and videos from social media. What you see here is but a sampling of what's available online; for more, search #2022USCHA and #USCHA2022.

❤ USCHA before the chaos of the day begins! #USCHA #USCHA2022 pic.twitter.com/nrygRN5aQF

— NebraskaAIDSProject (@neAIDSproject) October 10, 2022

SAN JUAN, PR: Come stop by booth 114 at #2022USCHA and learn more about how #CANCommunityHealth is in the fight against #HIV @NMACCommunity #USCA #USCHA2022 #StopHIVtogether #endHIVstigma #SanJuan pic.twitter.com/EuxVMsXNKl

— CAN Community Health (@CANCommHealth) October 9, 2022

And if this inspires you, mark your calendars now for next year's conference. #2023USCHA is slated for September 6 to 9 in Washington, DC.

Today filled my heart.

The room was standing room only with people spilled out into the halls for my session on Navigating #Racism within #HIV Organizations at #USCHA2022.

.@CDC_HIV .@AIDSFoundation .@NMACCommunity .@NIMHD pic.twitter.com/2OBpOmxmxx

— Ace Robinson (he/él/il/ele) (@akeliah) October 9, 2022

Join us now in Room 103B for our workshop “HIV Long-term Survivorship: 50s, 60s, and Beyond”! Happening now! #USCHA2022 pic.twitter.com/gLah1njZAC

— The Reunion Project (@Reunion_Project) October 10, 2022

Given the location of this year’s conference and the fact that the U.S. Latino community is disproportionately affected by HIV—especially transgender Latinas and gay and bisexual Latinos—many events at USCHA highlighted the disparities, challenges and successes experienced by the Latino population.

Happening now! My sisters from @thewellproject

dropping wisdom on the intersections of sexual health, wellness, pleasure, & #HIV in Rm 209A at #USCHA2022! So proud! ???? #onewomanatatime pic.twitter.com/nD2XenqXAs

— Olivia G. Ford (@o_g_ford) October 10, 2022

For example, the conference stressed the importance of “language justice,” in this case referred to the idea that people have the right to receive lifesaving health information in a language they understand. To underscore that idea, many of the plenary events—the lunchtime presentations on the main stage for all attendees—were conducted in Spanish, sometimes with English subtitles on the jumbo screens that projected the speakers to the crowds and sometimes without, in which case English speakers in the audience wore headsets to listen to translators.

Un honor poder conocer a la doctora Carmen Zorrilla durante la #2022USCHA, este fin de semana. pic.twitter.com/pEtDwujF3H

— Lousif Nevárez De Gracia (@LousifNevarezpr) October 12, 2022

The opening plenary discussion traced the history of HIV in Puerto Rico, including the successful effort to end mother-to-child transmission, a goal the island accomplished before states on the mainland did. Carmen Zorrilla, MD, who led those efforts, spoke during the plenary. And the final plenary was devoted to the federal response to monkeypox.

“The biggest risks for death among people living with HIV (PLWH) aren’t opportunistic infections or AIDS---the’yre hopelessness & depression.” - TAG HIV Project

Director Riko Boone (@rikoamour), moderating a #USCHA2022 panel on social determinants of HOPE/HEALTH #EndTheEpidemic pic.twitter.com/UIvcePFeoX

— Treatment Action Group (TAG) (@TAGTeam_Tweets) October 12, 2022

A plenary presented by Gilead Sciences underscored the vital role of music and dance—from salsa to merengue—in Puerto Ricans' ability to persevere and thrive in the face of numerous challenges, be it slavery, hurricanes or health disparities.

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by Tyler TerMeer (@dr.tyler.termeer)

Similarly, a plenary by ViiV Healthcare included live readings of excerpts taken from its podcast Love in Gravity—a series of HIV-related tales by and about Latinos that illustrate the healing power of storytelling. (A complete reading of the episode "Our Lady of the Six Train" was held at the historical Teatro Tapia in Old Town. Do yourself a favor and listen to this hilarious and emotional

story—it’s free online.)

Amazing lip sync by @TheAlyssaHunter after @DominicColon’s beautiful play here in #PuertoRico.

Theatre is healing and this night was divine.#USCHA2022 pic.twitter.com/spbtRz3Q7U

— Juan Michael Porter II (@juanmichaelii) October 10, 2022

?????????????? #UequalsU and #PrEP, working together to end the HIV epidemic! ???? #USCHA2022 pic.twitter.com/oLdccX8v9R

— Prevention Access (@PreventionAC) October 11, 2022

In short, USCHA 2022 was an educational, emotional and inspiring event—and the island setting magnified the feel-good vibes. Although Hurricane Fiona had struck the island just weeks before the conference, most of San Juan was spared major damage. NMAC, the group that spearheads the convention, had assured everyone that moving forward with the event was the right decision, and surely anyone who attended would agree.

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by Trenton Straube (@trentonstraube)

Visitors also enjoyed the beaches, local food, culture (Jennifer Lopez!) and many of the gorgeous sights, such as Old San Juan and the island's jungles, while supporting the local economy. Our minds, bodies and souls left Puerto Rico enriched, educated and inspired, ready to face the challenges ahead.

#USCHA #USCHA2022 Thanks for visiting and sharing. Safe travels!! pic.twitter.com/YOGNZRJD9M

— CarlosSJ (@CarlosIslaVerde) October 12, 2022

In related news, see "Five Takeaways From the 2022 U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS (USCHA)" by blogger Mark S. King and a collection of POZ blog posts by NMAC executive director Paul Kawata.

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