



New HIV Clinic in Baton Rouge

The Louisiana city has one of the highest rates of new U.S. HIV cases.

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To expand access to HIV prevention and care in Louisiana, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) opened an [AHF Health Center in Baton Rouge](#), according to WAFB News.

In 2022, Louisiana ranked fourth in the country for new HIV diagnoses (18.6 per 100,000 population) and 12th in the estimated number of overall HIV diagnoses, according to recent data from the Louisiana Department of Health. What's more, Black people in the state experience disproportionate rates; in 2023, they accounted for 68% of new HIV cases.

In 2023, there were 875 new HIV diagnoses statewide. Of those, 133 were in East Baton Rouge Parish, which landed it in the top five cities nationwide in terms of new HIV diagnoses.

In Baton Rouge and its surrounding cities, many people face barriers to timely and effective HIV care, including low income, food insecurity and lack of housing and transportation, according to AHF mobilizer and advocacy consultant Sashika Baunchand.

The new AHF Health Center aims to broaden access to HIV services to those most at risk in Baton Rouge.

The HIV specialty clinic will offer primary care services from HIV specialists, including HIV and sexually transmitted infection screenings, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) services, HIV treatment and more. It will also feature wellness days for people 14 years or older to get tested and treated for HIV regardless of their ability to pay.

Erika Forbes, a family nurse practitioner, will be the lead provider at the clinic. Forbes told WAFB that eliminating barriers to HIV care is vital to reducing the rate of new diagnoses and lowering the risk of other HIV-related conditions.

According to Forbes, the number of people in the Baton Rouge area seeking HIV care has nearly doubled over the last five years. She hopes the new clinic will encourage at-risk individuals to access care without stigma or fear of judgment.

The clinic is located at 8425 Cumberland Place in Baton Rouge. It's open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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