NYC Is the First U.S. Fast-Track City to Meet the 90-90-90 HIV Goals

Which other cities have aimed for these targets, and how are they doing?

December 4, 2019 By Trent Straube

On the heels of World AIDS Day, New Yorkers have good HIV news to celebrate. The city announced it reached the 90-90-90 HIV targets set by the United Nations' AIDS group, making it the first U.S. city participating in the "Fast-Track Cities" initiative to do so. What's more, it reached the goals two years ahead of schedule.

The 90-90-90 targets are:

- 90% of people living with HIV know their status
- 90% of people diagnosed with HIV are on treatment
- 90% of people on treatment are virally suppressed.

As of 2018, New York City statistics show that 93% of New Yorkers with HIV have been diagnosed, 90% of diagnosed people are on treatment and 92% of New Yorkers on meds are virally suppressed, according to a press release from the city of New York.

Demetre Daskalakis, MD, MPH, New York City's assistant commissioner of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control at his officeBenjamin Ryan

"Once a city known for being the epicenter of the U.S. HIV epidemic, New York City is now the epicenter of the end of the domestic HIV epidemic," said Demetre Daskalakis, MD, MPH, deputy commissioner for the Division of Disease Control of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Quoted in the press release, he added: "The incredible success of reaching UNAIDS's 90-90-90 goals belongs to the entire city—from the people who are vigilant in being tested to the community partners who tirelessly work to remove barriers to HIV care—and is a credit to what health departments can accomplish when working hand in hand with their community. I am now more confident than ever that together we will end the HIV epidemic in New York City."

In 2014, the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) launched the 90-90-90 targets, urging cities, municipalities and nations to try to reach them by 2020 (in 2016, the target date was updated to 2030). The related Fast-Track Cities initiative encouraged mayors and municipal leaders to sign the Paris Declaration on Fast-Track Cities and formally join the effort.

Since 2014, more than 300 cities and municipalities have joined the network. As of September, 22 cities in the United States are participating. See the full list here. To view data on each city, visit Fast-TrackCities.org. In a September update on Fast-Track Cities, UNAIDS reported that London and Amsterdam were the first cities to reach the 90-90-90 goals. Since then, two other cities in the United Kingdom achieved the targets.

Technically, Seattle is the first city in the United States to have reached the 90-90-90 targets. It announced that success via a press release and then at an HIV conference in 2017, but Seattle is not an official fast-track city.

San Francisco has also made strides in fighting its epidemic. It is a fast-track city, but as of 2017, 94% of San Franciscans with HIV are diagnosed, 79% of them are on meds and 94% of those taking meds are virally suppressed.

Early this year, health officials in southern Nevada announced they were informally taking up the 90-90-90 targets but setting a goal of 2030, with hopes of reaching the targets several years early.

For related POZ articles, see "Much of Sub-Saharan Africa on the Path to Hit UNAIDS 90-90-90 Targets," "Western Europe Nears UNAIDS's 90-90-90 Targets While Rest of Continent Lags" and "Podcast Series Tells Unique Stories of Fast-Track Cities Fighting HIV." To find more, search the hashtag #90-90-90.

Viral suppression is a pivotal goal of the targets. That's because people with HIV who take meds and remain undetectable not only live longer and healthier lives, but they also can't transmit HIV sexually, a fact referred to as undetectable equals untransmittable, or U=U.

"Years of hard work and determination have put New York front and center in the global fight against HIV/AIDS," said New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio in the city's press release. "With more New Yorkers receiving treatment than ever, the day of zero diagnoses is closer than ever—something many believed unthinkable not so long ago. We will not rest until we end the epidemic once and for all."

Last month, the city health department released its 2018 HIV Surveillance Annual Report. For the first time since reporting on HIV data began in 2001, the city saw fewer than 2,000 new HIV diagnoses. To read the POZ article on the report, see "New York Is Steadily Sending Its HIV Epidemic Into Retreat."

The 90-90-90 targets aren't the only strategy for fighting HIV. For example, earlier this year, the Trump administration launched the federal initiative "Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America." For more about that plan and others—including New York State's "Blueprint to End the AIDS Epidemic"—read "Plans to End the HIV Epidemic at Home and Abroad."

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