



Preventing Mother to Child HIV Transmission: A Whole-Person Approach

Eliminating perinatal HIV transmission requires policy solutions that meet birthing people where they are and strengthen systems that support them.

March 30, 2026 By Cecelia Thomas

Perinatal HIV transmission, the passing of HIV from mother to child, can happen during pregnancy, labor and delivery, or breastfeeding. Aligned with Women's History Month and leading up to National Minority Health Month, our [newest fact sheet](#) translates the data and offers contextualized policy recommendations for a highly preventable issue affecting birthing people, especially in communities of color.

HIV does not exist in a silo; perinatal transmission occurs at the intersection of women's health, reproductive care, and HIV prevention and treatment. 170 children under the age of 13 were diagnosed with HIV in the United States and Puerto Rico between 2018-2021. These transmissions were preventable at a fraction of the cost compared to a lifetime of HIV treatment and other care services.

Therefore, it is essential to increase investments in safety net programs like Medicaid, the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), and the Ryan White Program that provide such comprehensive services as HIV testing during the early stages of pregnancy, access to PrEP to prevent HIV before or even while pregnant, and affordable HIV treatment to manage viral load to prevent transmission. Each of these services are offered in conjunction with comprehensive maternal and postpartum care which is, in essence, a whole-person "syndemic" approach to ending the HIV epidemic.

Maternal-Infant Health and HIV Fact Sheet: Takeaways

- Perinatal HIV transmission is completely preventable and cheaper than a lifetime of HIV treatment cost.
- Ensuring pregnant people living with HIV receive antiretroviral treatment during pregnancy and postpartum is the most effective way to prevent infant transmission

- Proposed cuts to social safety net programs like Medicaid further strain the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program, restricting access to care for those who have lost Medicaid coverage

Eliminating perinatal HIV transmission requires policy solutions that meet birthing people where they are and strengthen systems that support them. Download the [fact sheet](#), get informed, and educate your lawmakers now.

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