Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2022

There's an HIV crisis in the South. Participate in #SHAAD on Saturday, August 20, and change the narrative around the epidemic.

August 19, 2022 By Trent Straube

Saturday, August 20, marks Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (SHAAD) 2022. The region accounts for 53% of new HIV cases and 47% of all deaths among people with HIV, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Specifically, it's estimated that 18,500 of the 34,800 new HIV diagnoses in 2019 were in the South.

"There is an HIV/AIDS crisis in the South," declares the Southern AIDS Coalition, which launched the awareness day in 2019. "SHAAD is the day we rewrite our narrative! SHAAD gives us all an opportunity to join a national movement to raise awareness, erase HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination and to advocate for new and necessary resources and solutions to stem the tide of HIV/AIDS in the South."

August 20th is Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day #SHAAD. To recognize this day, AIDSVu spoke to the Director of Health Department Initiatives at @SouthernAIDSCo, Darnell Barrington, on challenging misconceptions around the #HIV epidemic in the South: https://t.co/ZdbR1oN52N pic.twitter.com/xolT7qx8n7

— AIDSVu (@AIDSVu) August 18, 2022

Listings of events and links to resources are available on awareness day's website SouthernSolution.org.

AIDSVu.org, which creates graphics and interactive maps based on HIV data, also offers a look at the disproportionate impact of HIV in the region. “The South experiences a higher burden of HIV compared to other regions across the country, especially among communities of color,” AIDSVu states in Deeper Look: HIV in the South. “Black Americans in the South represented half of all new HIV diagnoses in the region in 2020, despite comprising only 19% of the Southern population. The South also only accounted for 21% of PrEP users in 2021.”

PrEP [pre-exposure prophylaxis] refers to the daily pills and long-term injectables that can prevent a person from acquiring HIV. AIDSVu recently updates its PrEP interactive maps to include data on race and ethnicity.

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A post shared by CDC HIV (@stophivtogether)

AIDSVu also posted an interview with Darnell Barrington, MPH, the director of health department Initiatives at the Southern AIDS Coalition. He makes the case that current narratives around HIV in the South are outdated. “I truly believe that the solution to ending the epidemic on a national scale will be found in the South,” he says. “The South is such a cradle of innovation, where so many of the answers exist but where people are not always invited to the table. This is the new narrative: The South is fully capable of addressing the needs of people living with HIV or at increased risk for HIV, but it needs opportunities for people’s voices to be heard and opportunities to advocate so that there are adequate resources and funding.”

To coincide with the awareness day and address the epidemic among Black Americans in the South, HIV drugmaker Gilead Sciences announced it is funding a $4.5 million collaboration with the

Satcher Health Leadership Institute at the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta and the Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education at Xavier University of Louisiana’s College of Pharmacy.



View this post on Instagram

A post shared by Sunny Clin (@sunburstclinicsacto)

To learn more about HIV in the Southern United States, click #South. You’ll find articles about racial disparities in monkeypox cases and in PrEP uptake as well as information on Gilead’s COMPASS Initiative to fund HIV groups in the South and on Lil Nas X’s visit to Southern organizations fighting HIV.

Tomorrow is Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day! Explore and share our new set of #SHAAD infographics that visualizes the HIV epidemic in the South with the latest data: https://t.co/z84rv8ymWX pic.twitter.com/AOhBPEdjTO

— AIDSVu (@AIDSVu) August 19, 2022

Additional data can be found in “HIV in the U.S. Deep South: Trends From 2008–2019,” a 24-page report produced by the Southern AIDS Coalition, the Center for Health Policy and Inequalities Research at Duke University and the Duke Global Health Institute.

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