Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2024: Power to the People

The South accounts for 38% of the U.S. population but 53% of the nation's new HIV cases.

August 20, 2024 By Trent Straube

Tuesday, August 20, marks Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (SHAAD) 2024. This year's theme is, "Power to the People!" The day is an opportunity "to bring national attention to the urgency of addressing the disproportionate impact of HIV on the region," notes SHAAD organizers Southern AIDS Coalition on SouthernSolution.org.

Today is Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, a day to raise awareness about the disproportionate impact of #HIV in the...

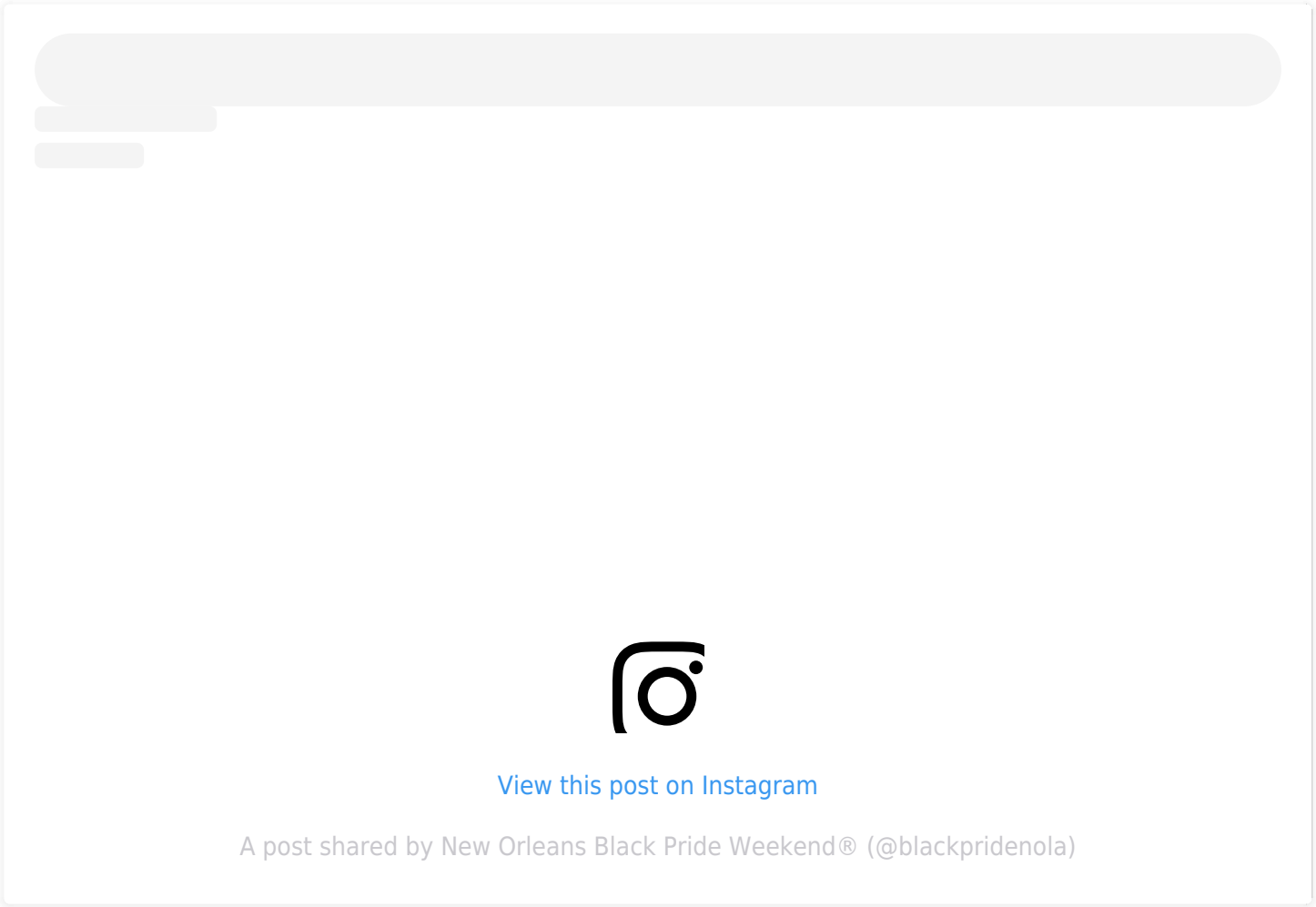
Posted by CDC HIV on Tuesday, August 20, 2024

Today is #SHAAD—Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day! Let's use our collective power today—sign up and encourage support for SHAAD! Communities in the South have necessary and unique strengths. Together, we can make a lasting impact: https://t.co/C4ASN84JL0#SouthernJoy #HIVinTheSouth

pic.twitter.com/JYFFkdMf7J

— Southern AIDS Coalition (@SouthernAIDSCo) August 20, 2024

“Celebrated annually on August 20, SHAAD is more than just a date on the calendar, it is a powerful reminder of the need for an unwavering commitment to southern communities,” the organizers state. “This is a day where every voice is valued! Organizations, advocates and communities are encouraged to join this day in raising awareness and advocating for new and necessary resources and solutions to turn the tide of HIV/AIDS in the South.”



The South represented 38% of the U.S. population in 2022 but accounted for 53% of new HIV diagnoses, according to AIDSVu.org, which presents federal HIV data in interactive maps and graphics. What’s more, AIDSVu adds:

> “The South, and particularly the ‘Deep South’ (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas) experiences a higher burden of HIV compared to other regions in the country and lower uptake [of pre-exposure prophylaxis, PrEP, referring to the pills and injections that can prevent HIV].

> “Compared to other regions, the South had the highest number of people living with HIV in 2022. Social determinants of health (SDOH) such as poverty and median household income may contribute to higher rates of HIV in the South, as the South had the highest poverty rate and lowest median household income in 2022. SDOH impact access to care, and thus, knowledge of HIV status and access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services.

> “HIV disproportionately impacts Black individuals in the South. In 2022, Black individuals accounted for nearly half of all new HIV diagnoses in the South, but only represented 22% of Southern PrEP users in 2023.”

Southern states lag behind other regions in #HIV prevention and treatment outcomes. See the causes of the Deep South’s disproportionate HIV burden here: https://t.co/tfsJbxJjGM pic.twitter.com/yESj02BrYN

— AIDSVu (@AIDSVu) August 9, 2024

“HIV diagnosis rates and treatment disparities are most severe in the South, highlighting a critical need for action,” notes ViiV Healthcare’s Randevyn Pierre, director of external affairs community liasion team. “To tackle this challenge, we must think differently and remain guided by the community for the community. That’s why ViiV Healthcare’s approach spans from deep listening and community engagement to prevention initiatives and cultural arts programs—ensuring that the voices of under-represented and historically marginalized groups inform the way we fight disparities.”

To find events related to this awareness day in your area, search #SHAAD on social media. Sample posts and sharable graphics are posted throughout this article. To read more about HIV in the region, click #South. You’ll find articles such as “Black Queer AF Media Tour to Bring Culture and HIV Awareness Across the South” and “HIV Program Turns Hair Salons Into Educational Hot Spots [VIDEO].”

And to learn more about other HIV awareness days and to access a calendar you can download and print, check out the POZ feature “2024 HIV and AIDS Awareness Days.”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.