Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2025: “Come Learn Why Wellness Is the Tea”

For this year’s SHAAD, Southern advocates fight HIV, evaluate public health under the current White House and plan a PrEPPY Tea Party.

August 20, 2025 By Trent Straube

Wednesday, August 20, marks Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (SHAAD) 2025. It’s a time to make your voice heard as you fight against HIV and health inequities in the South—and raise awareness of the epidemic, advocate for needed resources and work to end injustice.

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A post shared by Southern AIDS Coalition (@southernaidscoalition)

Events planned around SHAAD 2025 include a webinar for the public titled “2030: The Future

Ahead" that assesses the state of public health and a PrEPPY Tea Party in Houston by the Normal Anomaly Initiative—the tea party implores: "Come learn why wellness is the tea!"

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A post shared by The Normal Anomaly Initiative (@thenormalanomaly)

Launched in 2019 by the Southern AIDS Coalition (SAC) and promoted on SouthernSolution.org, the awareness day also provides an opportunity to demand justice for African American and LGBTQ communities, both of which are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS.

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AIDSVu.org, an interactive site that creates maps and charts using current HIV data on communities, cities and states, offers updated information about the epidemic in the South. In promoting SHAAD, AIDSVu writes:

> 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 has lower PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) use.
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> In 2022, the South accounted for 52% of all new HIV diagnoses, despite only representing 38% of the U.S. population. That same year, 14% of people living with HIV in the South were unaware of their HIV status. In 2024, the South had the lowest PrEP-to-Need Ratio (PnR) in the country—12 PrEP users for every new HIV diagnosis—indicating the greatest unmet need for HIV prevention services.
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> Social determinants of health (SDOH), such as poverty, lack of health insurance coverage, housing instability and systemic racism, drive inequities in HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care. In 2022, the South had the highest poverty rate and the lowest median household income in the U.S., further contributing to the region's HIV burden.
>
> HIV disproportionately impacts Black and Hispanic individuals in the South. In 2022, Black individuals represented nearly half (48%) of all new HIV diagnoses but accounted for only 23% of Southern PrEP users in 2024. Hispanic individuals accounted for 26% of new HIV diagnoses in 2022, yet made up just 19% of PrEP users in 2024.
>
> This Southern HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, AIDSVu is highlighting the urgent need to address the health inequities and social determinants of health that contribute to the

SHAAD arrives fueled with extra motivation and energy, as the Southern AIDS Coalition and its partners just wrapped up the SOS Saving Ourselves Symposium: Black to the Future conference in Atlanta.

The advocacy continues into this week with SHAAD and its related events. Search #SHAAD, #HIVInTheSouth and #STEPInSolidarity on social media to find in-person and virtual events.

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Examples of SHAAD events include a community health fair at The Spot in Belzoni, Mississippi, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., CT, Wednesday, August 20, and a webinar at 11 a.m. CT the same day titled “2030: The Future Ahead,” which is billed as a “review of the first 200 days of the Trump administration and its lasting impact on the field of public health.” The webinar will be moderated by SAC director of public policy and advocacy Will Rameriz and will feature Alyssa Crawford, Leah Freeman and Maxx Boykin. You can watch the webinar on any @SouthernAIDSCoalition social media channels.

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On Saturday, August 23, in Houston, the Normal Anomaly Initiative will host a PrEPPY Tea Party. The organization serves Black and queer people in the South and describes the party's theme as "Prevention, Wellness, Awareness, Empowerment and Community." Register for the party on Eventbrite; it begins at noon and is free!

"Hosting a tea party in the South as Black and queer+ people carries deep historical meaning," Shavonne Jaquess-Smith, senior program manager at Normal Anomaly, said in a press statement about the event. "It's a reclamation of space, an act of joy and a statement of resilience in a region where our communities have faced generations of exclusion. In a time when access to health education and prevention resources are under attack, creating a space where we can celebrate, connect and learn about protecting our health can literally change and save lives."

To help spread the word about SHAAD, you can look across social media for graphics to share and raise awareness about HIV in the South; several examples are embedded throughout this article.



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Click here to learn more about 2025 HIV and AIDS awareness days, and click here for a printable poster.



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