



“Change the Pattern” Campaign Breaking the Stigma and Saving Lives in Black and Brown Communities

From May 3-7, more than 200 pieces of the National AIDS Memorial Quilt will be displayed at The MAG, located in Houston’s downtown, as a part of the *Art of Black Pride: Black Like Me* exhibit and May 4-5 at the Black Queer AF Music Festival.

May 3, 2023 By [National AIDS Memorial](#)

The statistics tell the story, and there’s a serious HIV crisis in Houston and even more specifically among Blacks and Hispanics. That’s why the National AIDS Memorial Quilt is making a stop in Houston May 3-7.

“According to the Houston Health Department, Blacks and African Americans make up 50 percent of all HIV/AIDS cases, and Latinos comprise 29 percent of all HIV/AIDS cases,” said Duane Cramer, director, Quilt community engagement, [National AIDS Memorial](#). “These numbers are too high, and the stigma around HIV and AIDS in Black and Hispanic communities is too prevalent. Through [Change the Pattern](#), we’re working on the ground in Houston to ensure those who are most affected by HIV and AIDS are getting information they need to live while at the same time honoring lives lost to this devastating disease.”

In another report from the [Centers for Disease Control](#), Houston ranked ninth in the nation for rates of new HIV diagnoses. Compared to the rest of the U.S., Houston also had lower rates of people remaining in HIV care and achieving viral suppression. The highest burden is among younger, Black men who have sex with men and make up 19 percent of all new diagnoses.

“*Change the Pattern* pays homage to loved ones lost to AIDS while at the same time sparking action to end HIV/AIDS in Houston,” said John Cunningham, chief executive officer, National AIDS Memorial. “This national initiative works on a local level to shine a light on the impact the disease has had on Black, Brown, and LGBTQ+ communities and educate and energize people to help end the epidemic.”

***Change the Pattern* in Houston**

From May 3-7, more than 200 pieces of the National AIDS Memorial Quilt will be displayed at The MAG, located in Houston’s downtown, as a part of the *Art of Black Pride: Black Like Me* exhibit and

May 4-5 at the [Black Queer AF Music Festival](#). The exhibits are available in Spanish and English, free to the public, and include quilting workshops and educational forums. For more information about Quilt locations, event times, and special programming, visit www.changethepattern.org.

On Saturday, April 29, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Houstonians are invited to fellowship and enjoy celebrating the quilt through a quilting workshop at the Blue Triangle Community Center, 3005 McGowen St, Houston, TX 77004.

National AIDS Memorial, [Southern AIDS Coalition \(SAC\)](#), and [Gilead Sciences](#) are working to 'change the pattern' in Houston by bringing sections of the National AIDS Memorial Quilt to town. Additional sponsors include Bank of America, Chevron, and CVS Health.

The Quilt honors Black and Brown lives lost to HIV and AIDS and has traveled to several states throughout the South as part of *Change the Pattern*, a national campaign to end HIV in Black, Brown, and LGBTQ+ communities across the Southern U.S.

Visitors to the Quilt will see hand-stitched panels honoring Black and Brown lives lost to AIDS, many of which were made by Houston and Texas residents to honor and celebrate the stories of their friends and loved ones. Newly crafted Quilt panels will also be displayed to introduce the importance of the Quilt to a new generation while spreading awareness of how HIV affects lives across the South.

As an active display of the ongoing fight for civil rights for individuals living with AIDS, the National AIDS Memorial Quilt proudly displays a panel handmade by Civil Rights icon Rosa Parks.

Alarming Statistics Tell the Story

The disproportionate burden of HIV in the South is among Black women, Black and Latinx gay and bisexual men, and Black and Latinx transgender women. Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, North Carolina, and Tennessee rank in the top 15 states with the highest rates of HIV in the country. Racism, HIV stigma, homophobia, poverty, and barriers to health care continue to drive these disparities.

About Change the Pattern

In the fight to end HIV and AIDS in the Southern U.S., the National AIDS Memorial has partnered with Southern AIDS Coalition to bring sections of the AIDS Memorial Quilt honoring Black, Brown, and LGBTQ+ lives lost to HIV and AIDS to communities throughout the region to raise awareness about the HIV crisis that persists today within communities of color and marginalized populations. Funded through a \$2.4 million grant from Gilead Sciences, Change the Pattern is focused primarily on reaching communities disproportionately impacted by HIV and AIDS through free Quilt displays, quilt-making workshops, educational programming, and advocacy. Learn more at www.changethepattern.org.

