



HIV/AIDS Awareness Health Moment



Acquiring HIV does NOT mean you have or will have AIDS.

HIV and AIDS are not the same thing. HIV is a virus that weakens the immune system. It can cause inflammation and damage inside the body, making it harder for your immune system to fight off other diseases. If left untreated, HIV can eventually lead to AIDS, also known as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. Living with HIV does not mean it has to progress to AIDS. Sticking to treatment can help you live a longer and healthier life.

HIV is NOT a death sentence.

While HIV used to be considered a death sentence, today's treatments make it possible for people living with HIV to live longer and healthier lives. And it's never too late to start treatment. But it's important to stick to treatment and take good care of yourself.





People CANNOT get HIV by being around people who are living with HIV.

HIV cannot be transmitted through touch, tears, sweat, or air. You can get it from blood, semen, rectal fluid, vaginal fluid, or [breast milk](#). And research shows that while taking treatment as prescribed and getting to and staying undetectable is one way to prevent transmitting HIV through sex, there are other prevention methods available. Undetectable means that there is so little virus in the blood that a lab test can't measure it. Talk to a healthcare provider about other prevention methods that might be right for you.

HIV is NOT a "gay man's disease."

HIV can happen to anyone regardless of assigned sex at birth, gender identity, or sexual orientation. And HIV doesn't have to change who you are.



Today's HIV treatments DO work.

In the beginning of the HIV epidemic, there were no effective medicines for HIV, and the idea of living a long life with HIV was a distant dream. Today, HIV treatment can help people living with HIV live longer, healthier lives by reducing their viral loads. Have a conversation with your healthcare provider about which HIV treatment may work best for you.



What does undetectable mean?

A major goal of HIV treatment is getting your viral load to undetectable. Undetectable means that there is so little virus in the blood that a lab test can't measure it. If you have questions about your lab results, talk with your healthcare provider.

For many people living with HIV, getting to an undetectable viral load is a key step in their treatment journey. But starting and sticking with treatment is the only way to get there. And reaching that milestone can provide important health benefits for you and others within the community. So, stick with it to help you stay on track and be proud that you are taking steps to manage your HIV.

**U=U...undetectable equals
untransmittable**

Serodiscordant Couples

(PrEP = Pre-exposure prophylaxis)...Truvada, Apretude, Descovy

PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99%. PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from injection drug use by at least 74%.

Just the facts...South Carolina

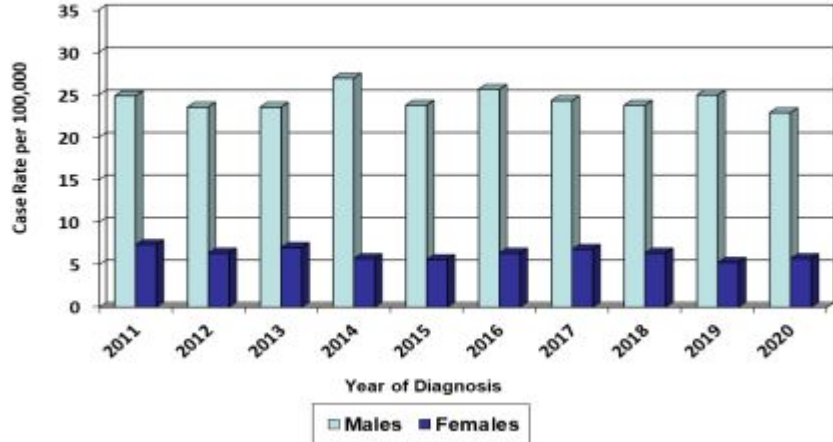
African Americans are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS and are over-represented among all risk populations.

During the calendar year of 2021, South Carolina ranked 9th among states with an HIV case rate of 13.2 per 100,000 population.

The epidemic is continuing to grow with an average of 61 cases of HIV infection reported each month during 2020...by the end of 2020 there were 19,437 new HIV and AIDS diagnosis.



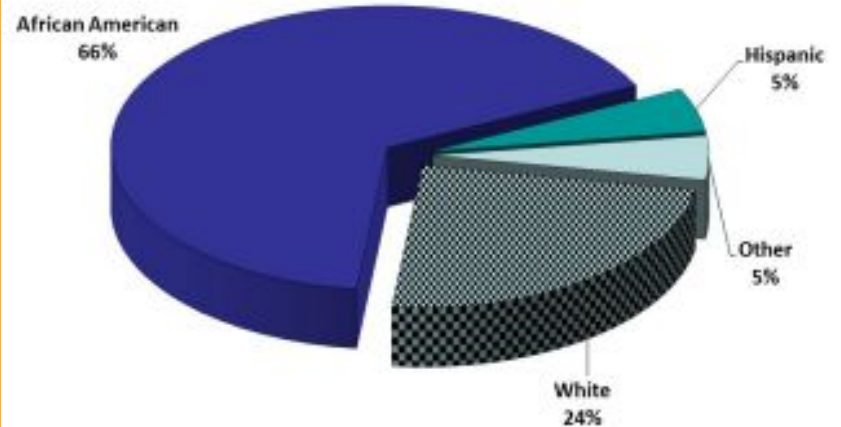
Figure 2.02: S.C. HIV/AIDS Case Rate per 100,000 Males and Females, 2011-2020



Men are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. They make up 48 percent of South Carolina's total population but comprise 72 percent of PLWHA.

African Americans are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS in South Carolina. African Americans make up 27% of the state's total population but 66% of the total people living with HIV.

Figure 2.03: Proportion of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS by Race/Ethnicity, 2020



Vulnerability and honesty with regard to one's sexual health is a taboo topic for most people to talk about...let's change that.

There is hope.

