

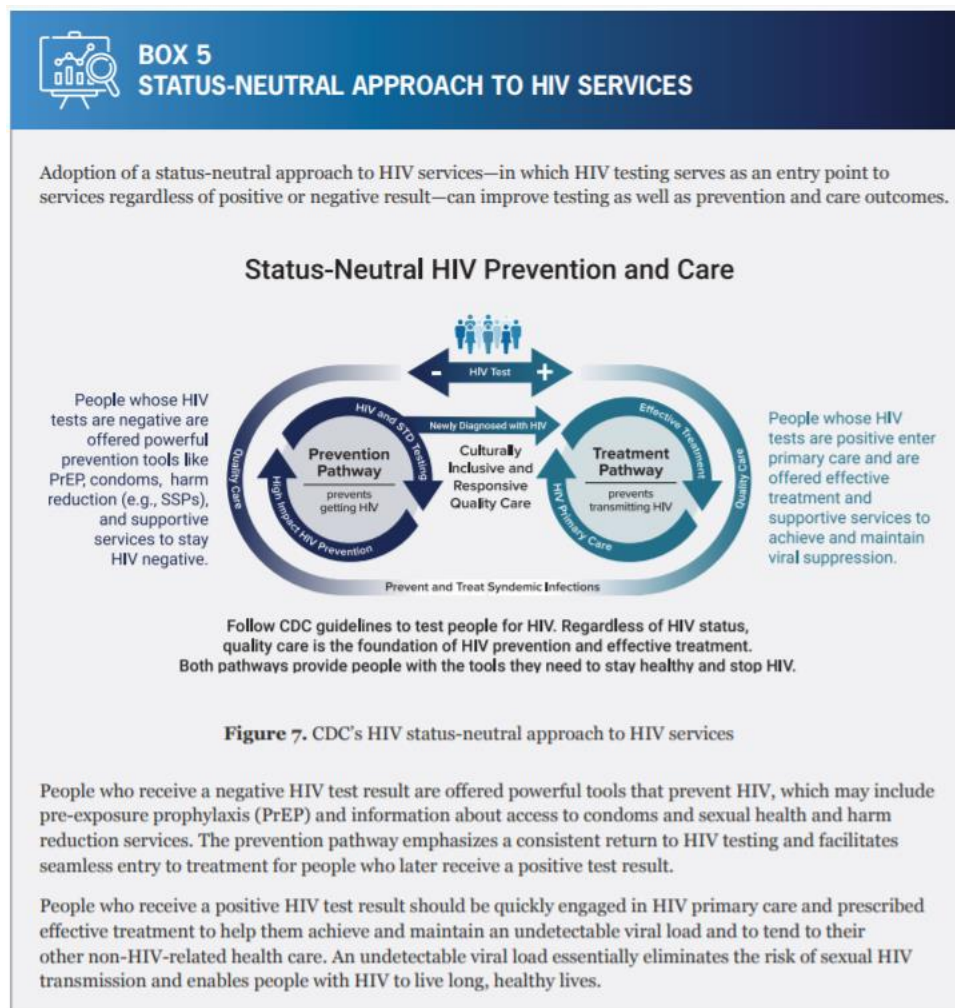
# Employing Status-Neutral Approaches to End the HIV Epidemic

Webinar 4:  
Status-Neutral Messaging and Promotion for EHE  
March 8, 2022 | 2:00 – 3:30 PM



# Status-Neutral Approach Guidance

- NHAS: Incorporate a status-neutral approach to HIV testing, offering linkage to prevention services for people who test negative and immediate linkage to HIV care and treatment for those who test positive.
- Integrated Plan Guidance: Implement innovative program models that integrate HIV prevention and care with other services and other service organizations as a means to address comorbid conditions and to promote a status neutral approach to care.



# Agenda

- ❖ National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD)
  - ❖ Michael Canty, MPH, Senior Manager, Clinical Programs
- ❖ Gwinnett, Newton, & Rockdale County Health Departments
  - ❖ Dorian Freeman, MPH, MSN, ASN, Clinical Infectious Disease Program Director
  - ❖ Yazmin Silva, Community Health Worker
- ❖ Trans Equity Consulting
  - ❖ Mateo Belen, MSW, Consultant
- ❖ Kaiser Family Foundation
  - ❖ Robbyn Kistler, B.S., Social Impact Media Consultant
- ❖ Q&A
- ❖ Wrap Up

# Creating Status Neutral Health Communications

**Michael Canty**  
**Senior Manager, Clinical Programs**  
**National Coalition of STD Directors**



**NCSO**

National Coalition  
of STD Directors

# Setting the Scene

## THEN

Unintentionally, many prevention efforts were oriented at keeping people apart.

- Abstinence
- Avoidance
- Choosing partners based on HIV status

## NOW

Today we have the opportunity to reduce stigma.

- More knowledge about HIV
- Access to better treatment
- New prevention methods

**A BAD REPUTATION  
ISN'T ALL YOU CAN GET  
FROM SLEEPING AROUND.**



# A BAD REPUTATION ISN'T ALL YOU CAN GET FROM SLEEPING AROUND.



Think about it. When you sleep with someone, you're sleeping with everyone he or she has slept with for the past eight years. And if someone along the line had the AIDS virus, you would have been exposed.

Unfortunately, there is no known cure for AIDS. Everyone who gets it dies.

But AIDS can be prevented. By saying

no to sex. And by saying no to needle drugs.

Don't let it embarrass you to death. Get all the facts about AIDS, and talk about them with your girlfriend or boyfriend. Then if you choose to have sex, stick to one partner. And use a condom, properly, every time.

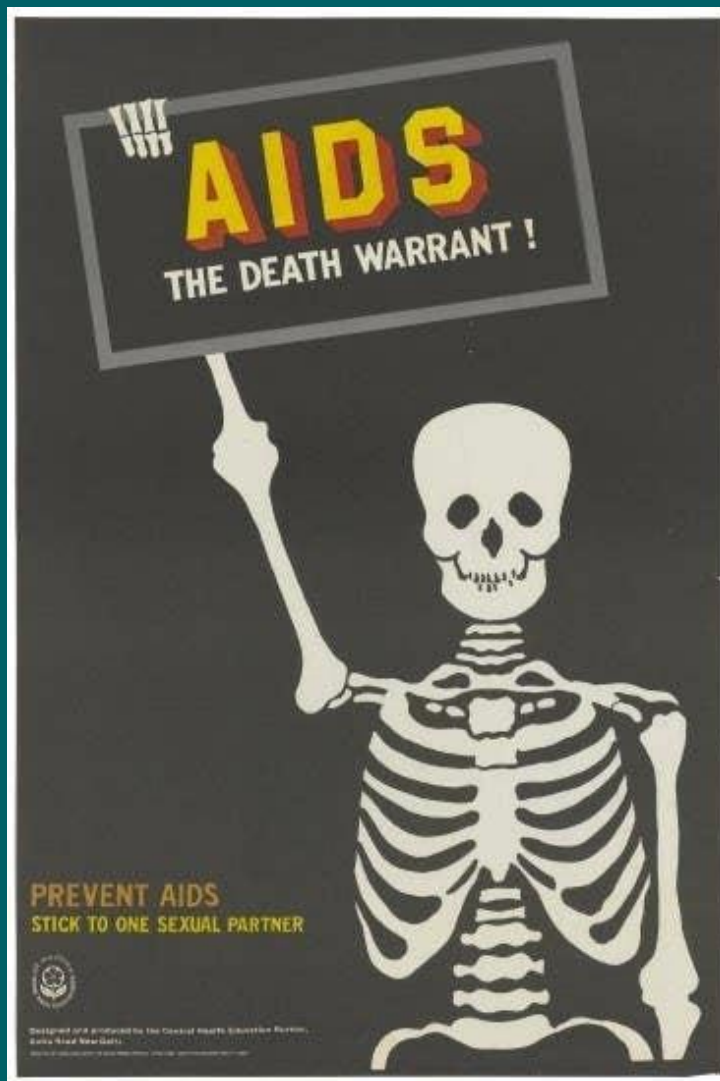
It's one of the best defenses against AIDS. The point is, if you're going to have sex,

you should do it responsibly.

Don't fool around with your life. Find out more about how AIDS is transmitted, and how you can protect yourself. Call the Dallas County Health Department, (214) 354-4335. All calls are strictly confidential.

**AIDS** is **NOT** a **CRIME**.  
It's just a deadly disease.





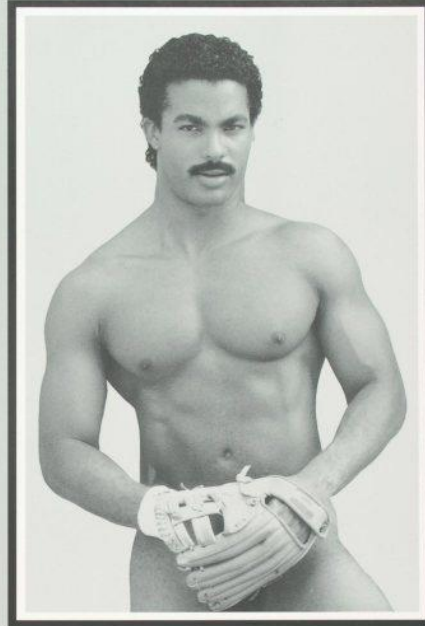


# True Love.

If you can let each other get into each other's life, please consider every day  
an opportunity to love again. All for one, doing without sex and  
drugs could be your life. But it's not your life. It's your life. That's why we're  
asking you to do it. AIDS is a disease. It's not a lifestyle. It's not a choice. It's not a  
way of life. It's a disease. It's not a lifestyle. It's not a choice. It's not a way of life.

**AIDS.**  
It's a choice.

© 1987 American Red Cross



**No Glove, No Love!**

**Rubbers – Every Time!**

"Rubbers – Every Time!" is a risk reduction guide series targeting Black gay men, produced in joint partnership with the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum and the National Task Force on AIDS. A member of the National Association of Black and White Men Together.  
1992 Fund Grant Recipients: Safe 1, San Francisco, CA 94107. (314) 464-1441.  
© 1992 Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum. All Rights Reserved.

# Goals of Status Neutral Health Communications

01

1. Reduce stigma

02

2. Encourage HIV testing

03

3. Foster conversations about HIV

prevention  
among  
partners

# 01. Reduce Stigma

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“Stigmatizing others enables people to achieve ends they desire. The key ends that are serviced by stigma are summarized by J. C.P. et al. as keeping people down (exploitation), keeping people in (norm enforcement), and keeping people away (disease avoidance).”

- Hatzenbuehler et al., 2013

# 01. Reduce Stigma

---

“Our findings provide conclusive evidence that the risk of HIV transmission through anal sex when HIV viral load is suppressed is **effectively zero**. Among the 782 serodifferent gay couples followed for almost 1600 eligible couple-years of follow-up, which included **more than 76 000 reports of condomless sex**, we found zero cases of within-couple HIV transmission.” (cont’d on next slide)

# 01. Reduce Stigma

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“In the absence of ART, on the basis of the frequency and type of sex, for receptive condomless anal sex acts alone approximately 472 transmissions (95% CI 83–714) would have been expected.”

- Rodgers et al., 2019 (PARTNER2)

## 02. Encourage Testing

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- Communicate power in knowing one's status
- Overcome information avoidance (next slide)
- Proactive messaging about HIV treatment, viral suppression
- Create “no wrong door” to enter through test counseling





## 03. Foster Conversations Among Partners

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- “Are you on PrEP?” is not enough
- To fully realize the potential of viral suppression, everybody must be aware and understand
- Who does the burden of education fall on?

## **I am open to**

Relationships, Random Play/NSA, Dates

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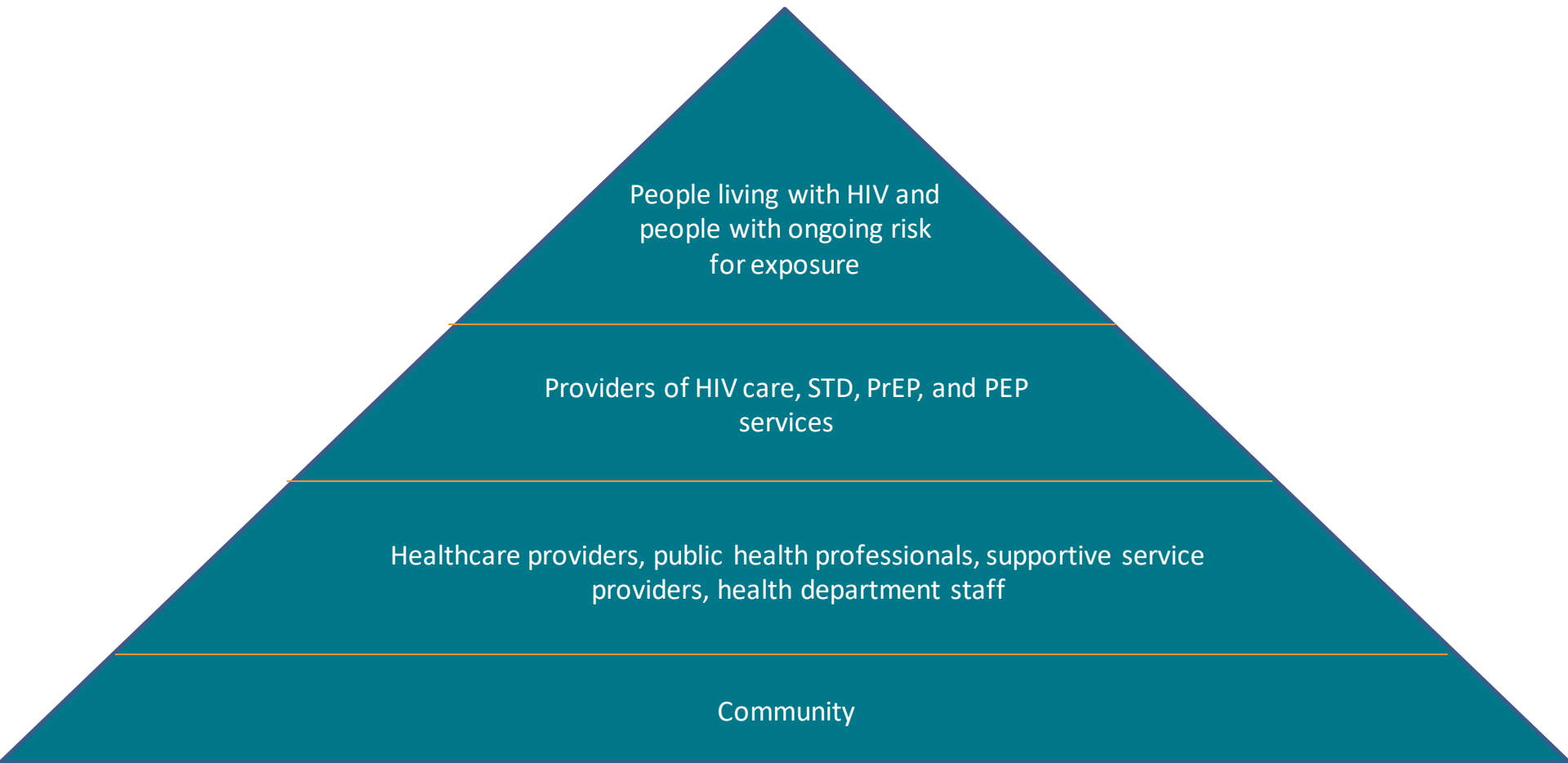
## **My sex preferences & safety practices**

Treatment as Prevention, I am taking PrEP

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## **What I do**

Aspiring Labatt Blue spokesmodel











My  
**PrEP**  
My partner's  
health.



My  
**PrEP**  
My future is healthy.



## HIV Treatment

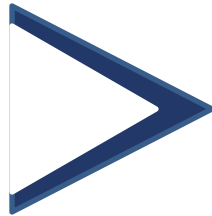
- Requires initial HIV test
- Patient must be HIV positive
- Daily medication
- Ongoing appointment required to monitor adherence and viral load
- Typically <45 days to viral suppression
- No onward transmission

## PrEP

- Requires initial HIV test
- Patient must be HIV negative
- Daily medication
- Ongoing appointment required to monitor adherence and confirm status
- Reaches full protection within 21 days
- No onward transmission

# What It All Comes Down To

Hope



Fear

# References

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Cambiano, Bruun, T., Degen, O., Geretti, A. M., Raben, D., Coll, P., Antinori, A., Weber, R., Van Eeden, A., Raffi, F., Wandeler, G., Gerstoft, J., Kitchen, M., Leon, A., Ristola, M., Lundgren, J., Coll, P., Meulbroek, M., Carrillo, A., ... Redondo, E. G. (2019). Risk of HIV transmission through condomless sex in serodifferent gay couples with the HIV-positive partner taking suppressive antiretroviral therapy (PARTNER): final results of a multicentre, prospective, observational study. *The Lancet (British Edition)*, 393(10189), 2428–2438. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)30418-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)30418-0)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *HIV/AIDS special surveillance report*. (2003). Dept. of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *ssociation*, 316(2), 171–181. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2016.5148>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2019*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2021.

Jonathan E. Volk, Julia L. Marcus, Tony Phengrasamy, Derek Blechinger, Dong Phuong Nguyen, Stephen Follansbee, C. Bradley Hare, No New HIV Infections With Increasing Use of HIV Preexposure Prophylaxis in a Clinical Practice Setting, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Volume 61, Issue 10, 15 November 2015, Pages 1601–1603, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/civ778>

Rodger, Cambiano, V., Bruun, T., Vernazza, P., Collins, S., van Lunzen, J., Corbelli, G. M., Estrada, V., Geretti, A. M., Beloukas, A., Asboe, D., Viciano, P., Gutiérrez, F., Clotet, B., Pradier, C., Gerstoft, J., Weber, R., Westling, K., Wandeler, G., ... Lundgren, J. (2016). Sexual Activity Without Condoms and Risk of HIV Transmission in Serodifferent Couples When the HIV-Positive Partner Is Using Suppressive Antiretroviral Therapy. *JAMA : the Journal of the American Medical A*



## Michael Canty

Senior Manager, Clinical Programs

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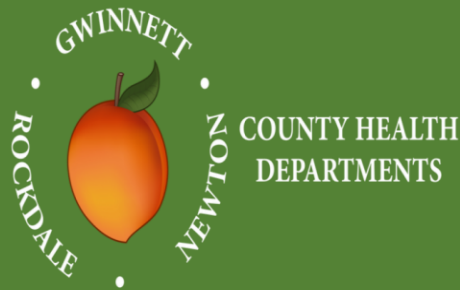
[Linkedin.com/in/mtcanty](https://www.linkedin.com/in/mtcanty)



[ncsddc.org](https://www.ncsddc.org)

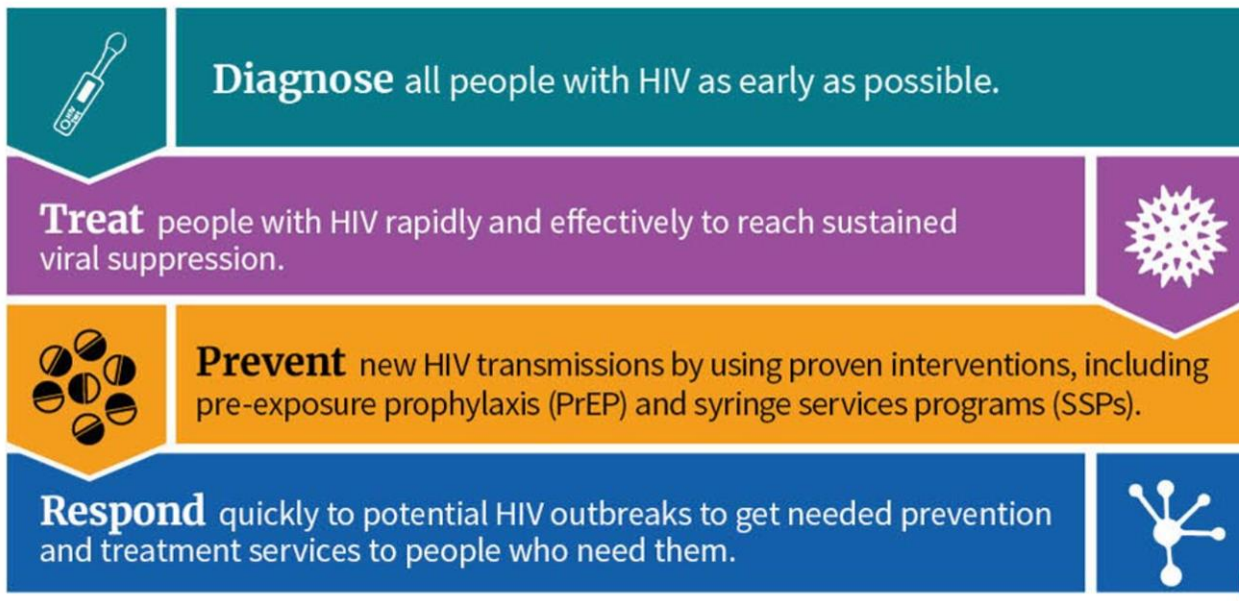
# STATUS-NEUTRAL APPROACHES FOR HIV PREVENTION AND CARE

*Ending the HIV Epidemic with Provider Engagement*





# ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC STRATEGIES



# EHE STRATEGIES: Diagnose

- Approximately 1 in 7 (nearly 15%) individuals with HIV are unaware of their status
- 40% of new HIV infections are transmitted by people undiagnosed and unaware they have HIV
  - Early detection coupled with rapid linkage to care is critical
  - Improved, more accessible, and routine testing
  - CDC recommends individuals between the ages of 13-64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care; those with risk factors get tested more frequently
- Primary care providers (PCPs) are the front line for detecting and preventing the spread of HIV

# MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

- Despite seeing a PCP, many people at high risk for HIV are not getting tested every year
- More than 75% of patients at high risk for HIV who saw a PCP in the last year weren't offered an HIV test during their visit
- Patients high risk for HIV should be screened at least annually:
  - PWID and their partners
  - People who exchange sex for money or drugs
  - Sex partners of people with HIV
  - Sexually active MSM (more frequent testing may be beneficial; every 3-6 months)
  - MSM or heterosexual persons who themselves or whose sex partners have had more than one sex partner since their most recent HIV test
  - People receiving treatment for hepatitis, tuberculosis, or a sexually transmitted disease

# EHE STRATEGIES

## DIAGNOSE:

- Routinize HIV testing – incorporate in annual testing
- Test more frequently when risk factors are identified
  - Requires discussing sexual health and risk factors with all patients
- Make testing options available outside or routine and episodic clinical care
  - Outreach based testing
  - Home testing options

## TREAT:

- Increasing the proportion of people with HIV who are virally suppressed is a key strategy to prevent new HIV transmission
- Rapid Linkage to Care Critical
- Goal: increase viral suppression to 90% nationally by 2030;
  - Currently, CDC estimates the overall viral suppression rate in the U.S. is 53%

# EHE STRATEGIES (cont.)

## **PREVENT:**

- Prevent new HIV transmission by using proven interventions:
  - Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)
  - Syringe services programs (SSPs)
- Of the estimated 1 million Americans at substantial risk of HIV who could benefit from PrEP
  - Fewer than 1 in 4 actually use it

## **RESPOND:**

- Respond quickly to potential HIV outbreaks to get needed prevention and treatment services to people who need them
- Use available data to identify where HIV is spreading most rapidly and guide decision making to address prevention, care and treatment needs at the local level

# IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDER ENGAGEMENT

- EHE goal: Reducing new HIV infection by 90% by 2030
- We recognize that a multi-prong approach is required to reach EHE goal
- Engaging the Healthcare Community and establishing partnerships of support and collaboration is vital
- Individuals access the Healthcare system through multiple routes (ERs, UC, Private practices, FQHCs, Public Health Centers, etc.)
- Need to ensure wherever encounter occurs patients are educated about HIV, prevention strategies, tested appropriately, and linked to care/prevention services

# ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- **Diagnose** - Ensure provider familiarity with HIV testing recommendations; Identify patients needing more frequent testing; Provide sexual history taking guidance
- **Treat** - Assist with linkage to care and ensure linkage process completion
- **Prevent** - Ensure providers are educated about HIV prevention tools (PrEP/nPEP), PrEP eligibility, PrEP/nPEP use, and prevention tools access/referral
- **Respond** – Monitor trends and new infection rates. Educate providers about increased HIV morbidity and the population most impacted (situational awareness)



# PROVIDER ENGAGEMENT STEPS:

## Mobile Engagement Nurse



- Identify high HIV incidence areas
- Contact Healthcare Providers
- 1<sup>st</sup> Engagement occurs usually by phone-
  - Discuss EHE initiative, vital role they play, and our desire to support services and provide guidance
  - Opportunity to learn about population served, provider practices, number of patients and service delivery
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Engagement is in person
  - Educate Staff and Provider(s): HIV Pre/post test counseling, sexual health interviewing skills, etc.
  - Provider folder provided with supporting documents
  - Opportunity to share GNR services and points of contact
- Follow-up in 1-2 weeks



# ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

- Establish rapport with providers, staff and healthcare community
- Partnership to support and enhance provider services
- Nurse acts as liaison between provider and patient
  - Soft hand off for patient
- Support HIV/STD reporting (provide training if necessary)
- Provide treatment guidance
- Access to the community through our Mobile Engagement Nurse and Community Health Worker collaboration
- True success requires community level input, collaboration, and communication

# COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER

## STEPS OF OUTREACH

- Identify Focused zip codes
- What do I want to know about the area prior to outreach
- Know your Priority area:
  - Any businesses? What about these businesses?
  - What race predominantly makes up this zip code?
- Know your priority population:
  - 1 on 1 engagements→ 1 on 1 education
  - Opens doors to community events→ Consistency→ Community relationships and trust

*\*As a result of this I am being referred within the community and even in my absence individuals are still coming back for questions and wanting to get enrolled in PrEP or get tested!*

# PROVIDER & COMMUNITY OUTREACH COLLABORATIONS



Why have these collaborations been so successful for us?

- Get feedback from the healthcare facilities on how to better serve the community
- Get insight of what provider to patient relationships look like
- Get a ground level view of the availability of care and services in the community
- Gain access to Events → Enhances access to our priority population and lets us establish relationships and trust within the community
- Collaboration success example : Patient waiting area education
  - **THE STAFF IS THE COMMUNITY!!** (Ex: HIV positive individual identified because of a Home Test we gave to a clinic staff member who took it home to one of her friends)



# References

- <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/group/gender/women/cdc-hiv-women-and-PrEP-discussion-series.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/statistics/overview/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/statistics.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/hiv-transmission/ways-people-get-hiv.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prevention.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/clinicians/screening/benefits.html>

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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# Status-Neutral Messaging for HIV Prevention and Care for LGBTQ Persons

Trans Equity Consulting

Mateo Belen, MSW

# Trans Equity Consulting



Trans Equity Consulting makes the world a better place for transgender and non-binary people by developing LGBTQ affirming services, establishing genuine equity in the workplace, and shepherding in new generations of change makers. Our work is committed to building the leadership of trans women of color, and to the centering of sex workers, immigrants and incarcerated peoples as experts in creating a more just world.

# Stigma

In a survey of 27,715 trans and nonbinary individuals in 2015<sup>3</sup>:

- **30 percent** reported being fired, denied a promotion, or experiencing some other form of mistreatment related to their gender identity or expression.
- **More than 26 percent** of those who experienced housing instability avoided staying in a shelter because they feared being mistreated as a transgender person.
- **20 percent** have participated in the underground economies<sup>4</sup>

# Language Matters

- Use the language people use for themselves.
- Ask yourself why you're asking this question
- Don't assume that every Trans person you meet is at risk for HIV
- Hire Trans people to not just be in the photos of your materials but to actually make them and run the programming



Art Credit: Anshika Khullar

## More than your status

- Trans people are people
- Needs go beyond HIV care
- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Community
- Safety



## Let community lead

- Trans people should be included in every aspect of program development through to implementation. This includes hiring trans people to lead the programming.
- Reallocate funding from traditional non profit organizations to go towards trans led organizations.



## Community led models continued

My Sistahs House located in Memphis Tennessee and was founded in 2016 by two Trans Women of color. They providing emergency housing, advocacy, and multipronged resource assistance delivered by and for gender non-conforming (TGNC) people of color.





# Let's Stop HIV Together

- We work with our partner organizations to disseminate the Let's Stop HIV Together materials through events both in person and virtual.
- One of our partners is Arianna Center in Florida who you can see in the banner on this slide.





# Let's Stop HIV Together



## Reach Out

Feel free to reach out to  
continue the conversation:

[mateo@transequityconsulting.com](mailto:mateo@transequityconsulting.com)

[www.transequityconsulting.com](http://www.transequityconsulting.com)







**TOGETHER  
WE ARE  
ENDING HIV**

Contact Us! @GreaterThanAIDS

**WE▶AIDS**  
**greaterthan.org**

**A Social Marketing Campaign  
on HIV Prevention, Testing  
and Treatment**

Presentation on “Status Neutral” Campaign  
by Robbyn Kistler, Social Impact Media Consultant  
For NASTAD and NCSD on March 8, 2022

**KFF**  
HENRY J. KAISER  
FAMILY FOUNDATION



# KFF (Kaiser Family Foundation)

A national non-profit organization focused on pressing health issues in the U.S. (no affiliation with Kaiser Permanente).

As an information-driven organization, we accomplish our mission through policy analysis, polling and survey research, journalism, and social impact media.

Our work in HIV spans all these areas.

**[www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)**

**A leading public information response focused on HIV in the U.S.  
from KFF, a non-profit organization focused on pressing health issues**

Through Greater Than AIDS, **KFF works with health departments and community partners across the nation** to reach those most affected with the **latest on testing, prevention and treatment.**

Our **public-private partnership** model helps extend the reach of limited resources in high need areas.



**ENDING HIV  
TOGETHER.**



**REAL PEOPLE. REAL STORIES.**

## **Inspiring Videos about Prevention, Testing and Treatment**

Greater Than AIDS uses storytelling to build community through shared experiences and convey critical health information in accessible, relatable terms.

An extensive video library is available for broadcast and digital distribution, client education and community events.

**WE**▶**AIDS**  
**greaterthan.org**

**KFF**  
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FAMILY FOUNDATION



**ENDING HIV  
TOGETHER.**



**MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY GREATER!**

## **Media Ready Assets, Community Tools, Events and More**

Greater Than AIDS media and community assets are available to support your public information needs.

Media messaging including digital ads and videos as well as outdoor, TV and radio can be localized for your city, state or region. Available in English and Spanish. All content rights-free.

Printed community materials – including brochures, palm cards, posters, T-shirts, buttons, stickers and more – can be ordered to support your community engagement and outreach.

**WE▶AIDS**  
**greaterthan.org**

**KFF**  
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# ENDING HIV TOGETHER.

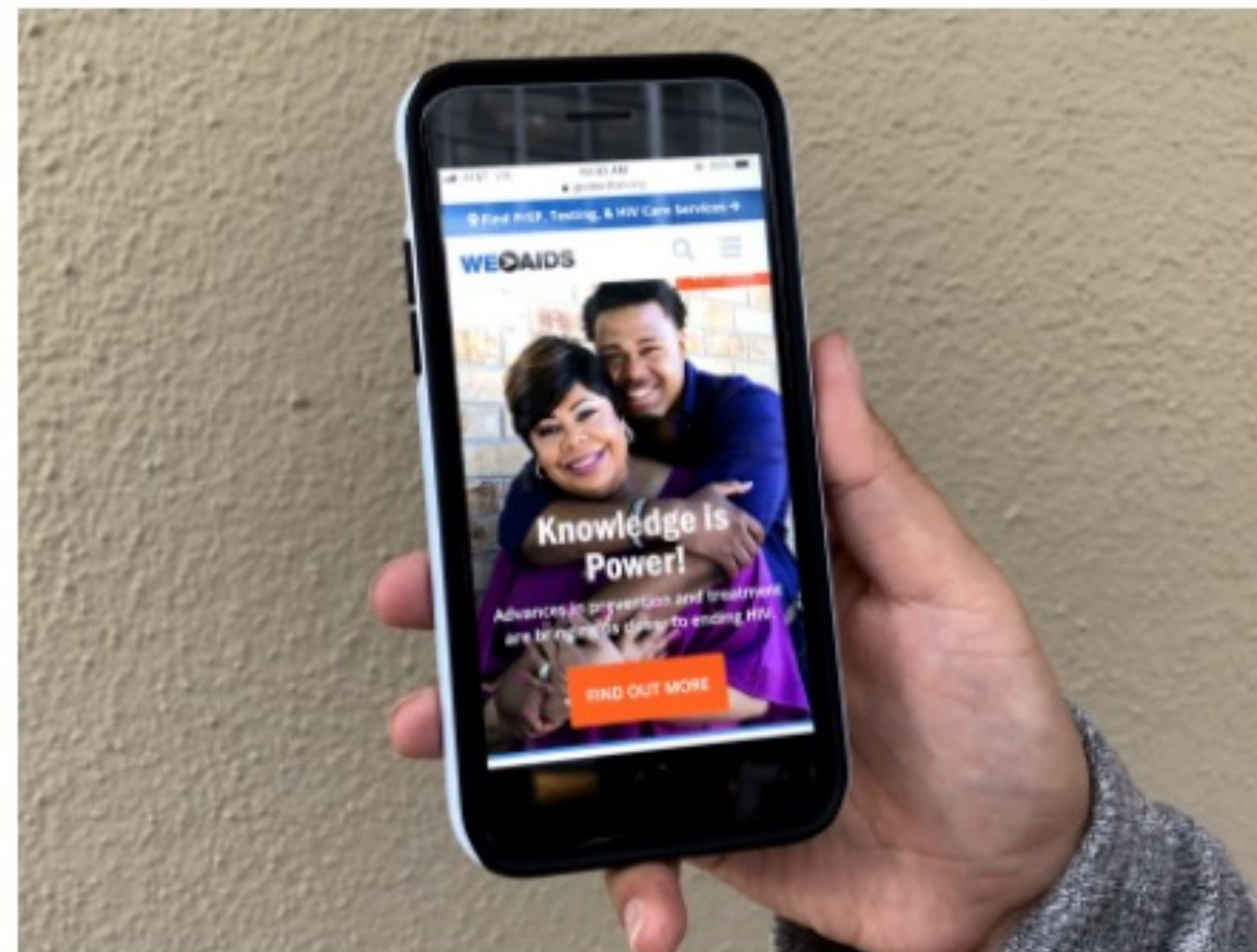
**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!**

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## Accessible, Mobile-Friendly Online HIV Resources

GreaterThan.org offers more than 100 FAQs – available in English and Spanish – covering HIV basics, testing, prevention, care and treatment. The easy-to-use site also includes informational videos, easy-to-use ZIP Code locators to find local care and other support services, and more.

Link to [GreaterThan.org](https://www.greaterthan.org) to support your social and online messaging and for additional resources. Content may be available to embed directly on your site.





# Knowledge is Power!

Advances in prevention and treatment are bringing us closer to ending HIV.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

## Test

HIV testing is recommended as part of routine health care. FREE, confidential, and fast HIV testing is available across the U.S. Most places also offer other STD testing.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## PrEP

For those who do not have HIV, PrEP, a once daily pill available by prescription, offers another powerful means of protection. Most people pay little or nothing for PrEP.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## Treat


Treatment offers significant health AND preventative benefits for people living with HIV. The amount of virus in the body can be reduced to very low, even undetectable levels.

[LEARN MORE](#)



# HIV AND STD TESTING

## Sample Media Assets



### Why I Get Tested

HIV testing is recommended as part of routine healthcare. But that doesn't mean it automatically happens. To know for sure, ask to be tested!

Real people share their HIV testing experiences.

[WATCH NOW](#)



**STDs often show no symptoms.**  
All are treatable. Many, like syphilis, are curable.



**Ask to be tested for syphilis & HIV!**

**Don't have a regular doctor?**

**No problem!**

**MORE PLACES FOR FAST, FREE HIV TESTING.**



**Find an HIV test near you!**

[TexasGetsTested.org](https://TexasGetsTested.org) → **TEXAS AIDS**

**Get FREE STI tests to take at home.**

**Find out more →**

 **Stay Connected. Stay Healthy.**

**Autopruebas del VIH**

Pruebas rápidas del VIH para hacer en casa o donde sea conveniente.



Mantente Conectado. Mantente Sano. 

**Got Questions about HIV, STDs, or viral hepatitis?**

**VDH** VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH | HIV/STD Hotline


**TOLL FREE 1-800-533-4148**

**WEAIDS**  
greaterthan.org

**KFF**  
HENRY J KAISER  
FAMILY FOUNDATION




Sample Media Assets



### Powered by PrEP

Real people share why they are taking the pill to prevent HIV and how it has helped them take charge of their health.

[WATCH NOW](#)






"PrEP is about being proactive about your health care."


**When taken as prescribed, PrEP prevents HIV.**

\* The New England Journal of Medicine, 2010, 2012.

**Most health insurance covers PrEP.**


**No insurance? There are options.**

**Greater Than AIDS** 

Sponsored · 

Did you know there is a pill to prevent HIV? Find out if it's right for you.


**PrEP IS FOR PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE HIV WHO WANT ADDED PROTECTION.**





ENDINGHIV.ORG/TEXAS

**5 Things to Know About PrEP!**

[LEARN MORE](#)

 Like


 Comment

 Share



# HIV TREATMENT


## Sample Media Assets




### Living Well with HIV

From diagnosis to care and treatment, real people share their journeys living with HIV. How they overcame the struggles they faced and went from surviving to thriving.

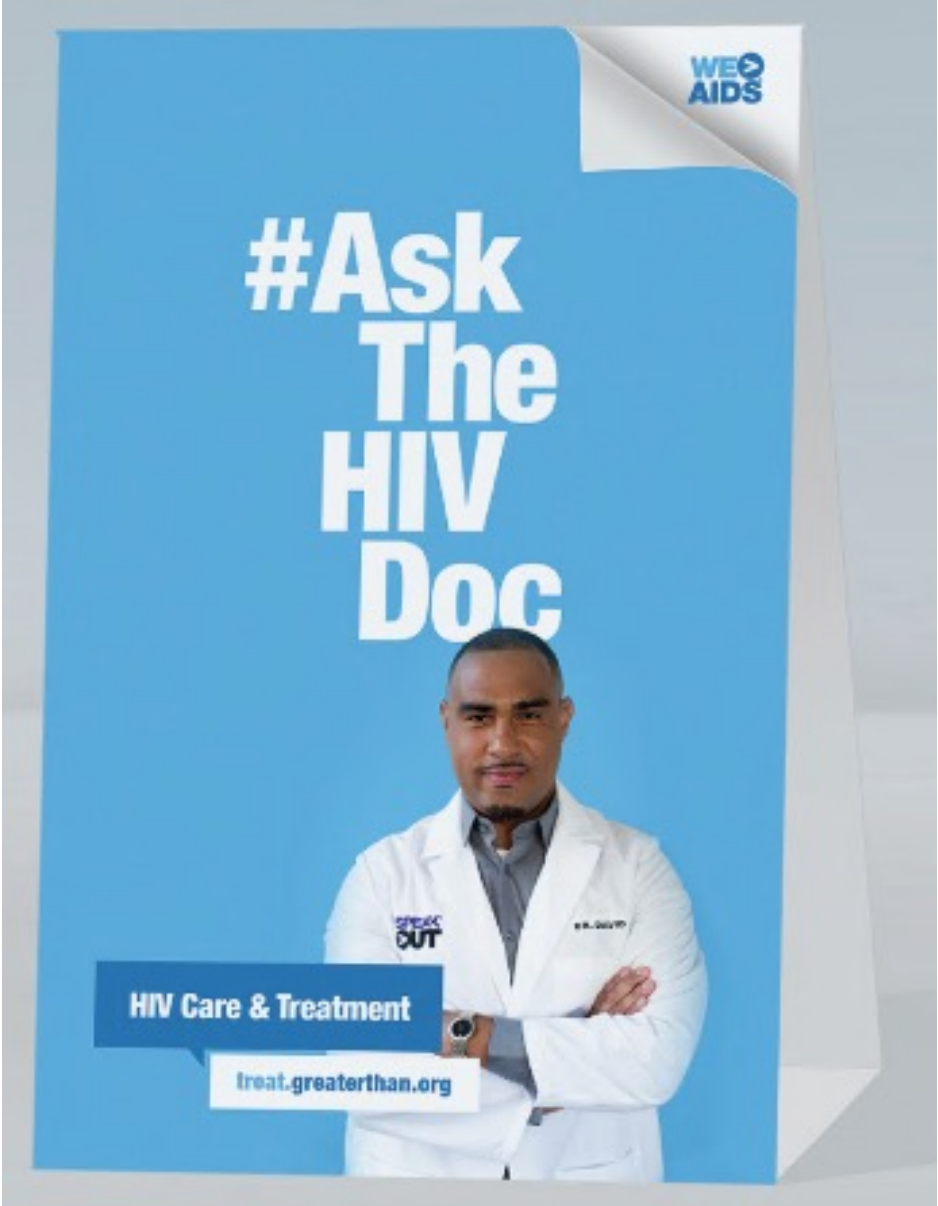
[WATCH NOW](#)



"I am ready to stand in my entire truth."





"There are services that can help you stay healthy and support you."



**When HIV is undetectable it is not transmitted sexually.**


[Learn more →](#)

**WEAIDS**

**Greater Than AIDS**  
Sponsored · 


Taking HIV medications every day as prescribed is the best way to get and stay undetectable. When HIV is undetectable, it is not passed through sex. #UequalsU


**HIV UNDETECTABLE!**




ENDINGHIV.ORG/TEXAS  
HIV Undetectable!

[LEARN MORE](#)

 Like

 Comment

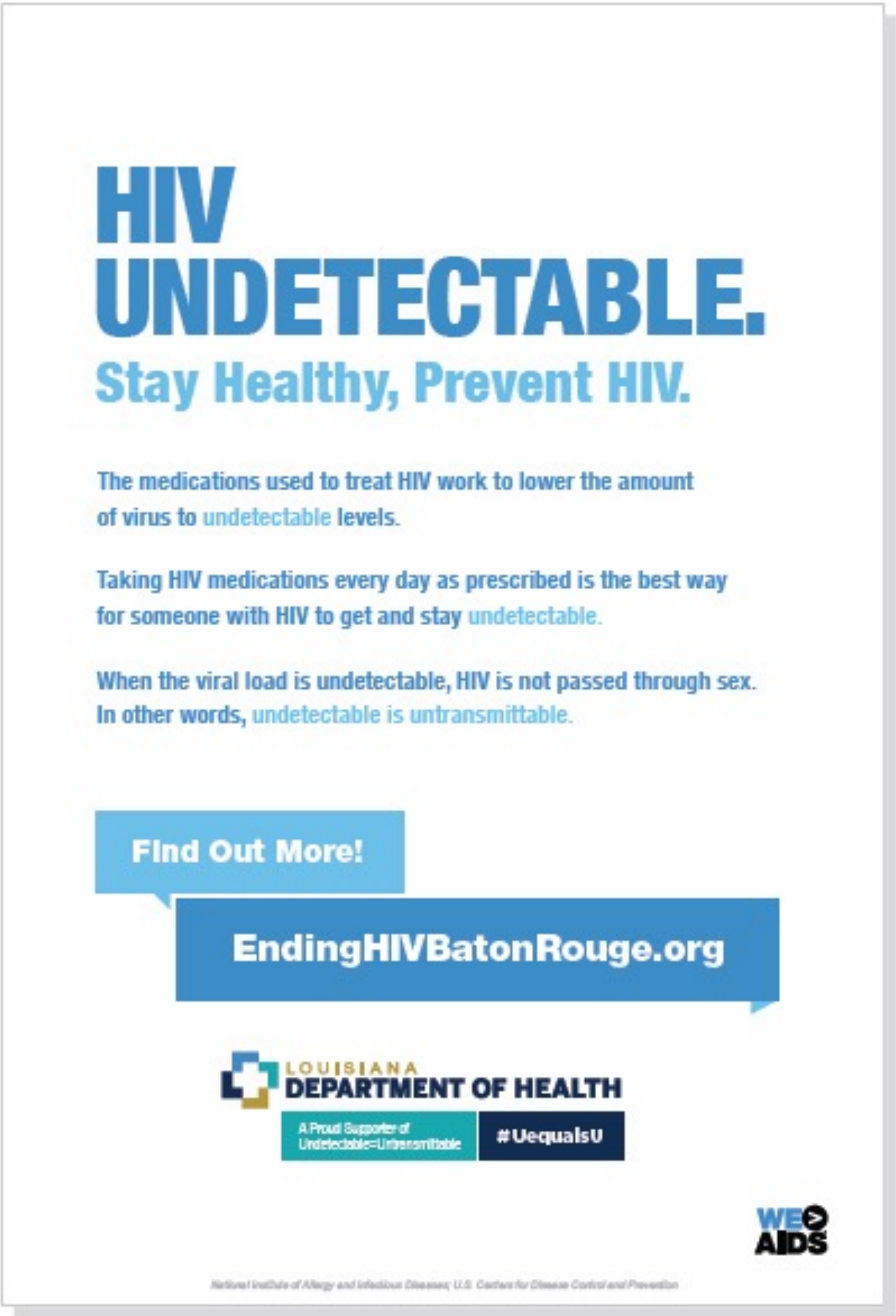
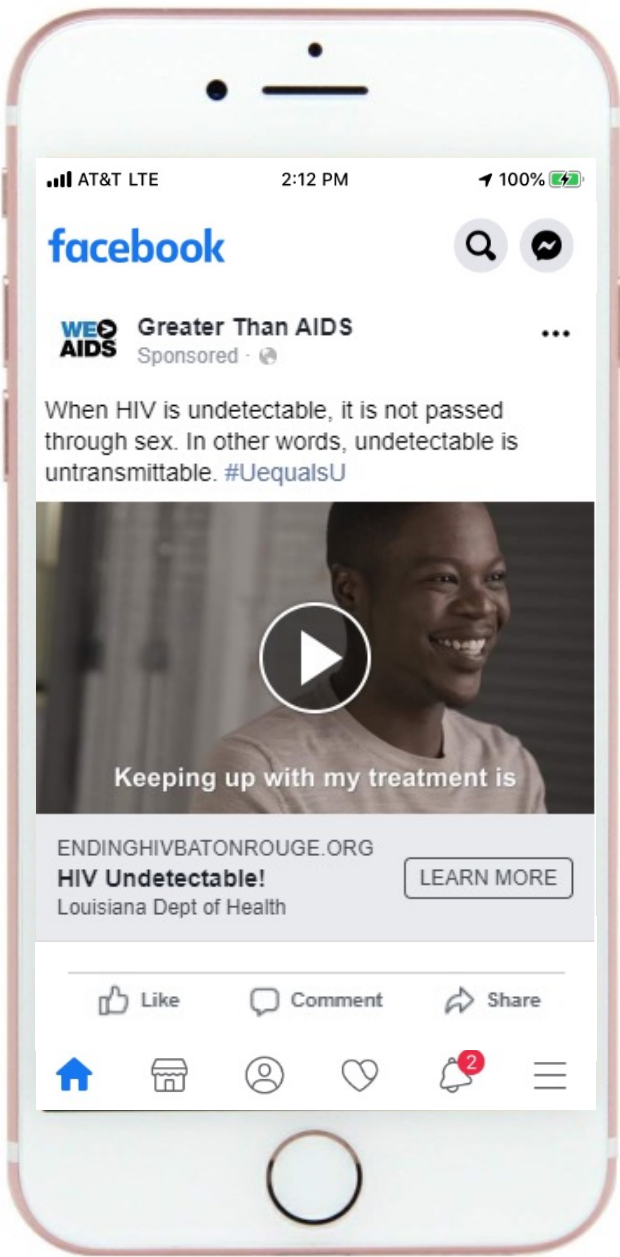
 Share

**WEAIDS**  
greaterthan.org

**KFF**  
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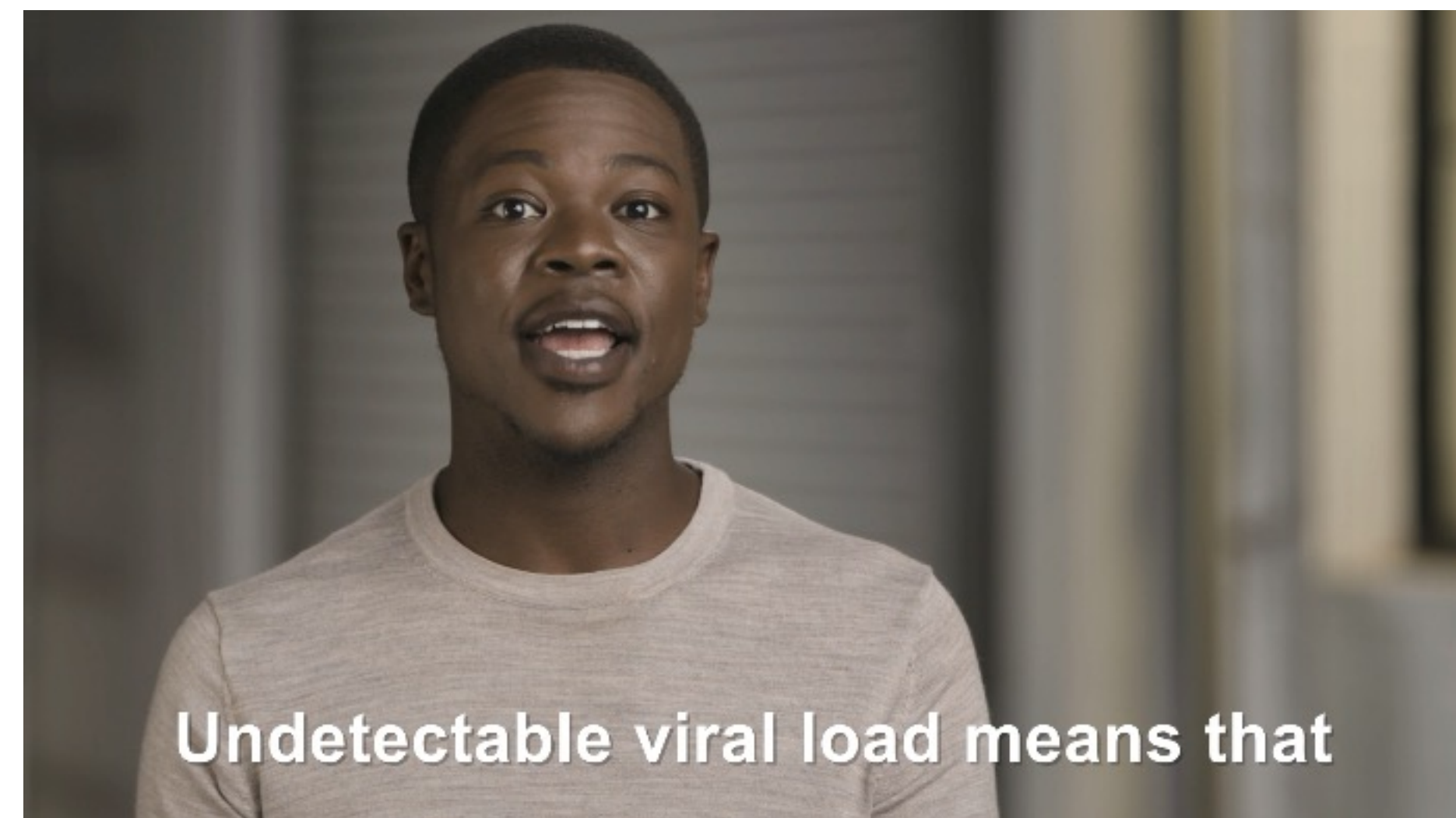
# Baton Rouge EHE Campaign (2019)





**There are  
more options  
than ever  
to stay healthy**

Watch on [YouTube](#)

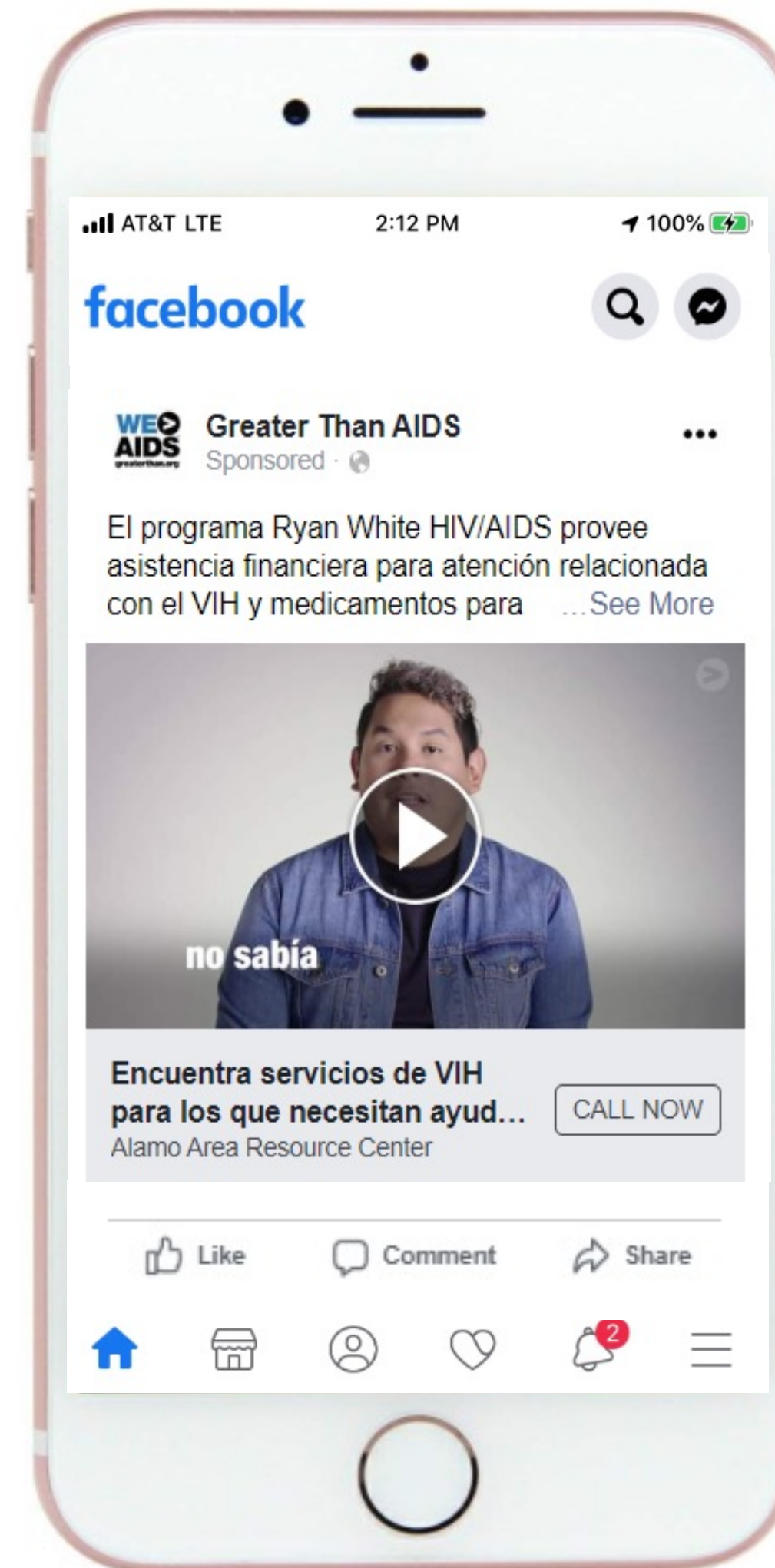
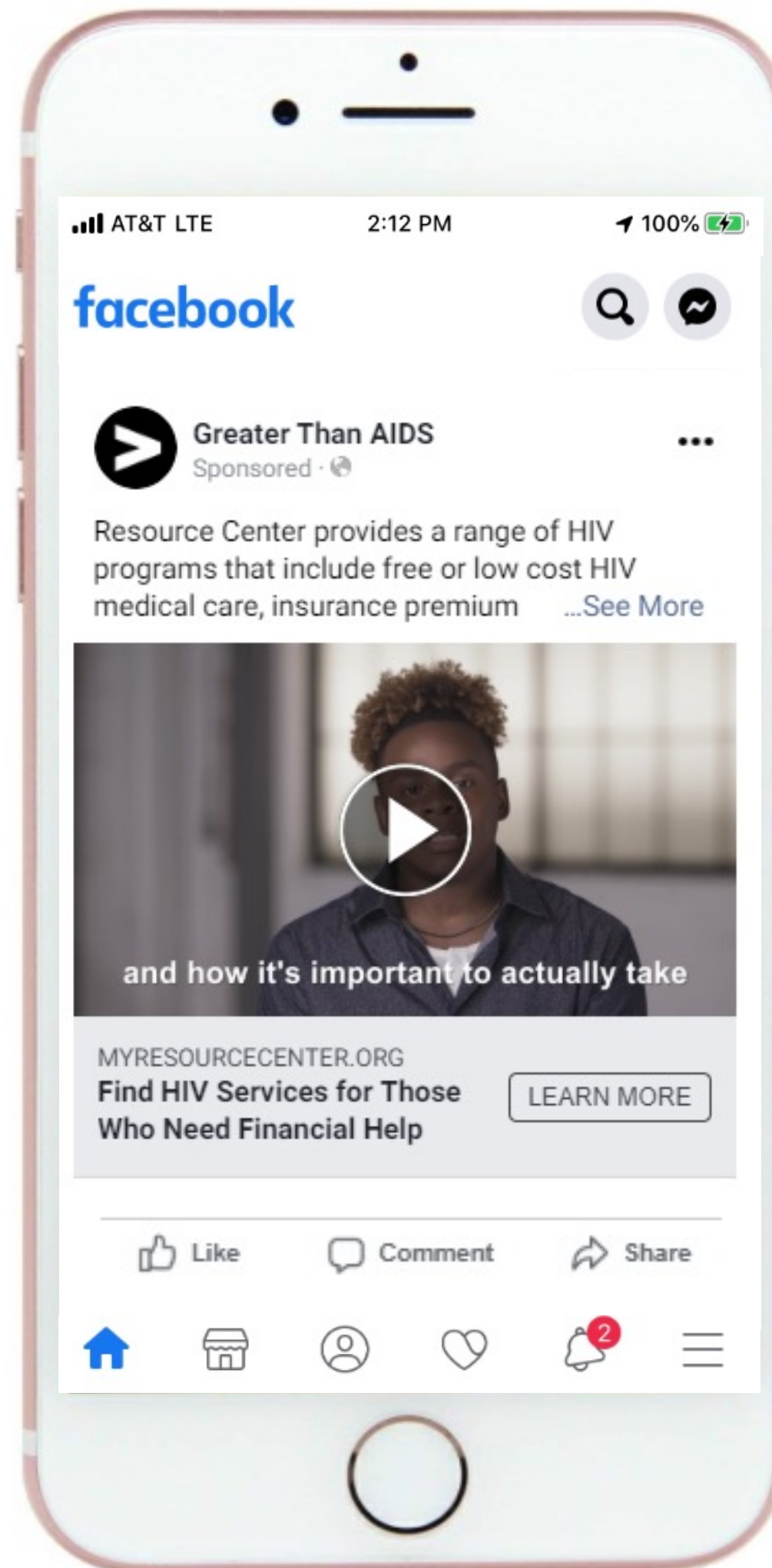
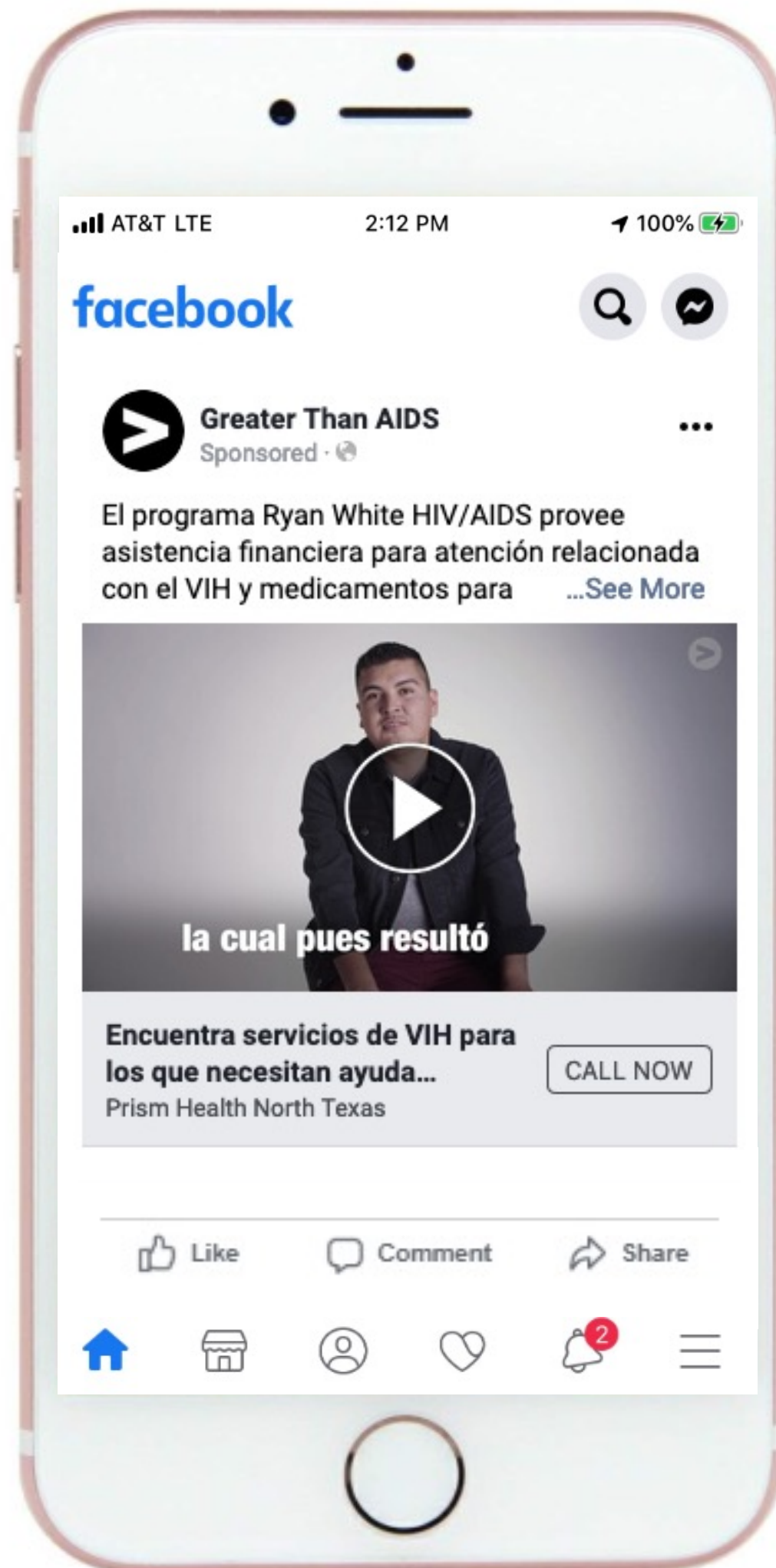


Watch on [YouTube](#)



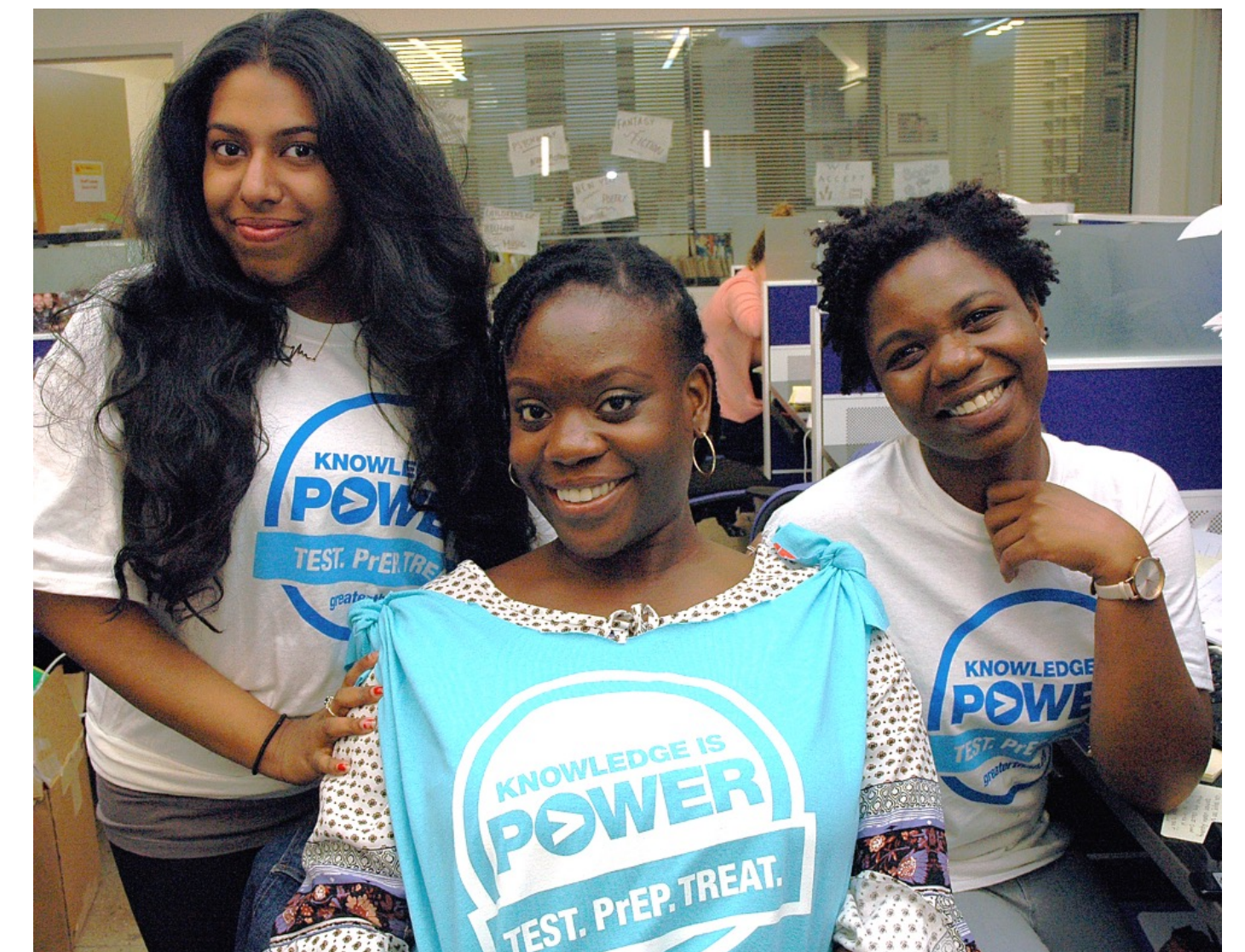
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# NATIONAL HIV COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP





I GOT TESTED: What's Next? (Brochure Cover)



I GOT TESTED: What's Next? (Brochure Inside)





# I GOT TESTED: What's Next? (Brochure Fully Open)

### Let's Talk about HIV Testing!

HIV testing is recommended as a part of routine health care.

**Talk with your health care provider about how often you should be tested for HIV.** They can also advise about tests for other common STDs. For some, that may mean getting tested once a year. For others, it may be more often depending on risk.

HIV, like other STDs, often does not show symptoms right away. Left untreated, HIV and other STDs cause serious health problems and also increase the chance of transmitting to others.

**The good news is all STDs, including HIV, are treatable and many common STDs are curable.**

**It's fast and easy.**

Don't like needles? Ask about oral swab or finger stick HIV tests. Rapid HIV tests, depending on the manufacturer, can provide results in under 20 minutes with some as fast as one minute.

HIV self-tests that you can do yourself at home are also available from some health clinics, or you can buy one at most drug stores. A positive HIV self-test requires confirmation by a test done within a healthcare setting.

HIV and other STD testing is covered by most insurance, including Medicaid and Medicare. If you do not have insurance, or prefer to go out of plan, **free or low-cost testing is available in most places.**

### Let's Talk about PrEP!

**PrEP is a pill for people who do not have HIV and want added protection.** It is taken every day – like birth control, but for HIV prevention. When taken as prescribed, PrEP is more than 99 percent effective.

If you are interested in taking PrEP, you will need to get a prescription. You will take an HIV test to make sure you are negative before starting PrEP.

As long as you are taking PrEP, you will have **regular check-ins with a health care provider**, typically every three months. You will be re-tested for HIV, and possibly other STDs, at these visits.

While very effective in preventing HIV, **PrEP does not protect against other STDs.** Condoms offer effective prevention against most STDs, including HIV, as well as pregnancy.

**Getting PrEP.**

PrEP is covered by most insurance, including Medicaid and Medicare. Financial assistance is available for those with and without insurance. PrEP navigators at health clinics and community organizations can help you through the process of getting on PrEP, including with financial assistance.

Any medical professional who can prescribe, including doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants, can write prescriptions for PrEP, but not all are familiar with it. **The PrEP locator on GreaterThan.org can help you find knowledgeable providers in your area.**

### Let's Talk about HIV Treatment!

While there is no cure, HIV is a manageable health condition.

With treatment, it is possible to reduce the amount of HIV to very low levels. This keeps you from getting sick and prevents passing the virus to others.

**Stay healthy, prevent HIV.**

Left untreated, HIV attacks the body's immune system, specifically the CD4 cells, which fight off infections. Antiretrovirals (ARVs), the prescription medications that treat HIV, keep the immune system working as it is supposed to.

When lab tests indicate your viral load is below 200 copies, this is referred to as being **virally suppressed, or undetectable.** Your HIV test will still be positive, but when the virus is undetectable it is not transmitted sexually.

Most people with HIV who take ARVs as prescribed will get and stay undetectable.

There are **many different ARVs** available today, including some that are combined into a single pill. All require a prescription from a health care provider, who can advise on the best one for you.

Missing doses or otherwise not taking ARVs as prescribed reduces effectiveness, both for health and prevention, and may result in the virus becoming drug resistant.

If you are having difficulty keeping up with your care, or are experiencing issues with your current medication, **talk with your health care provider.** They can work with you to get you back on track, including trying different ARVs if needed.

Many HIV service organizations offer educational and support programs for individuals living with HIV and loved ones.

### Get connected to care.

If you do not have insurance, or need financial assistance with your HIV care and insurance costs, there are programs that can help.

The **Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program** works with health departments and community-based organizations to provide HIV-related medical care, access to prescription drugs, and insurance for people living with HIV. The program also provides other essential services for people living with HIV, such as transportation, housing assistance, dental, mental health, and substance abuse programs.

Through the **Affordable Care Act (ACA)**, individuals can buy their own insurance through [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) or state-run programs. You cannot be denied coverage or charged more because of your HIV status in these plans. Financial assistance may be available. In some states, coverage may be provided through Medicaid.

**As a critical part of your health care team, Walgreens pharmacists offer expert advice on everything from managing medication to navigating your insurance benefits.**

- HIV/AIDS trained pharmacists in more than 1,000 locations
- One-on-one medication counseling via phone or online chat\*
- Medication support services available at no additional cost
- Guidance on copay assistance programs for PrEP and other medications

\*Availability varies with heavy usage.

For free confidential conversations regarding prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, pricing inquiries, and more, **call 800-573-3602 or visit [HIV.walgreens.com](http://HIV.walgreens.com)**

*Walgreens*



GreaterThan.org offers more than 100 FAQs – in English and Spanish – covering HIV basics, testing, prevention, and treatment.

Find HIV testing and care providers, including PrEP services, near you using ZIP Code based locators.



**Ready, Set, PrEP** is a program from the Department of Health and Human Services that provides PrEP at no cost for people who do not have prescription drug coverage.

For more details, including eligibility, go to: [GetYourPrEP.com](http://GetYourPrEP.com)





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# Q&A





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**To Learn More or Request CDC CBA/TA services on this content area and other TA needs:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/programresources/capacitybuilding/>

