



June 5, 2024

Dear Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Colleagues,

Today, the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB) recognizes HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day (HLTSAD). On this day, we celebrate the remarkable resilience of HIV long-term survivors and remember those who have lost their lives to HIV.

For nearly 34 years, HRSA's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) has provided people with HIV the care, treatment, medication, and essential support services needed to reach viral suppression and live longer and healthier lives. Many members of the RWHAP are part of the growing community of HIV long-term survivors. RWHAP clients aged 50 and older now represent nearly half (48.2%) of all RWHAP clients, a significant increase from 2010 (31.7%). In addition, 92.9% of RWHAP clients aged 50 years and older are virally suppressed, exceeding the national RWHAP average, which means they cannot sexually transmit HIV and can live longer and healthier lives.

Among HIV long-term survivors are a unique group often referred to as "**dandelions**" – individuals who have lived with HIV since birth or early childhood. This term honors the late [Mary Bowman](#), whose poem "[Dandelions](#)" emotionally details her experience being born with HIV and losing a parent to AIDS complications. Many of these tenacious survivors have weathered the storm of the early AIDS epidemic before the emergence of antiretroviral therapies (ART) available today. Their stories are a testament to the power of perseverance and the incredible progress made in HIV treatment.

In HRSA's RWHAP, we are committed to optimizing HIV care for people aging with HIV. We recognize how important it is for health care team members to understand the needs of older adults with HIV. We have several [reference guides](#) to support health care professionals in providing care to people aging with HIV. In addition, the RWHAP Part F Special Projects of National Significance (SPNS) Program [Aging with HIV](#) Initiative provides strategies and interventions to improve the well-being of older adults with HIV. The RWHAP Part F AIDS Education and Training Center (AETC) Program also offers trainings on [HIV in Older Adults](#), and resources including [HIV & Aging: Thriving in the New Normal](#).

**HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day serves as a crucial reminder of the diverse community of people with HIV.** It's a day to acknowledge the unique experiences and challenges faced by long-term survivors. Today, and every day, we honor their strength, [share their stories](#), and celebrate their contributions to the fight against HIV.

Thank you for your continued dedication to improving the lives of people with HIV.

Sincerely,

/Laura W. Cheever/

Laura Cheever, MD, ScM  
Associate Administrator