



December is AIDS Awareness Month

According to AIDS.gov, more than one million Americans are living with HIV, but one in five of them are not aware they are infected. While the total number of people with HIV in the United States has increased recently, the annual number of new infections has remained relatively stable.

World AIDS Day is important because it reminds us that HIV has not gone away – every 9.5 minutes someone in the U.S. is infected. There is still a vital need to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education. It also serves as a prime opportunity to remind people of how important it is to get tested and to know your results.

In the early 1980s when the AIDS epidemic began, people living with HIV were not likely to live more than a few years. However, since 1996, the use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) has dramatically improved the quality of life for people with HIV.

ART prevents the HIV virus from multiplying inside a person, helps the body's immune cells live longer, lowers a person's risk of developing a non-HIV-related illness, and reduces the chances of transmitting HIV to others.

[Taken from: <http://www.drexelmedicine.org/patient-services/infectious-diseases/more-about-infectious-disease-and-hiv-care/december-is-aids-awareness-month/>]

WORLD AIDS DAY IS DECEMBER 1, 2016

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 36.7 million people across the globe are living with HIV/AIDS. The illnesses claim more than 1 million lives each year, the agency said.

However, the World Health Organization noted that in 2015 the epidemic claimed fewer lives than it had at any point in nearly two decades. Health officials credited the expanded use of antiretroviral therapy, which has brought the number of HIV-related deaths down by 45 percent since 2005.

"With access to treatment, people living with HIV are living longer. Investing in treatment is paying off," said Michel Sidibe, executive director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAID), in a statement Thursday. "AIDS is not over, but it can be if we tailor the response to individual needs at particular times in life."

The agency is behind what's known as the "90-90-90" goals, which aim to raise the number of people who know their HIV status, get them treatment if needed and have that treatment be effective.

"The success we have achieved so far gives us hope for the future, but as we look ahead we must remember not to be complacent," Sidibe said. "We cannot stop now."

In America, health officials encouraged leaders to strengthen commitments to end HIV infections with the day's theme, "Leadership. Commitment. Impact."

"Thirty-five years ago the first documented cases of AIDS brought about an era of uncertainty, fear, and discrimination," President Barack Obama said Wednesday. "But in the decades since those first cases, with ingenuity, leadership, research, and historic investments in evidence-based practices, we have begun to move toward an era of resilience and hope -- and we are closer than ever to reaching an AIDS-free generation."

About 39,500 people were diagnosed with HIV infection in the United States last year, health officials said. More than 1.2 million people are living with HIV – and about one in eight don't realize it.

Between 2005 and 2014, new HIV diagnoses fell by 19 percent, according to the CDC.

"We are winning against the AIDS epidemic, but we are not seeing progress everywhere," Sidibe said.

Health officials estimate that 2.1 million people are newly infected by HIV annually, a majority of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the large number, the World Health Organization said the number of new infections was at its lowest point in the last 25 years.

Countries are working toward goals set by UNAIDS. By 2020, the health organization aims for 90 percent of all people living with HIV to know their status, 90 percent of all people diagnosed with HIV infection to receive antiretroviral therapy and 90 percent of all people who are getting antiretroviral therapy to have viral suppression.

The push is credited with revving up global efforts to fight HIV. As of June 2016, 18.2 million people were receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV infection, up from the 7.5 million receiving treatment at the end of 2010, according to the CDC.

World AIDS Day was the first-ever global health day recognized by officials. It was launched in 1988 and is held on Dec. 1 each year to increase awareness, show support to those living with HIV and remember those who have died.

[Taken from: <http://www.whio.com/lifestyles/health/world-aids-day-2016-officials-push-for-testing-awareness/vctiyDj7IKfgxka2R1foCI/>]

DID YOU KNOW?

St. Louis County and St. Louis City are teaming up to do free HIV screenings this week to mark World Aids Day. St. Louis Effort for AIDS is a local organization that provides education on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and comprehensive support services for those affected by the disease. More information can be found at www.stlefa.org.

The Missouri History Museum is recognizing World AIDS Day with a day featuring informational tables, educational workshops, and a special screening of the film Deep South. Free and confidential HIV testing, Marketplace enrollment, health resources, and screenings will be available for the duration of the event. More information can be found at do314.com/events/2016/12/1/world-aids-day-2016.

World AIDS Day is held on December 1 each year and, is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV/AIDS, show their support for people living with HIV/AIDS, and to commemorate people who have died from the illness. East St. Louis in collaboration with St. Louis City Health Department presents this annual event. The organization Writers, Planners, Trainers, Inc. ("WPT") pays homage and recognizes those individuals who are vigilant in their efforts to eradicate HIV/AIDS and who continue to empower the East St. Louis community by both their words, deeds, and resources.

This year's theme was Transcending Boundaries of Hope for the World AIDS Day Kick Off held November 30, 2016 at East St. Louis City Hall. More information can be found at <https://m.evensi.us/transcending-boundaries-of-hope-world-aids-day-kick-off/189386842>.

Madison County Health Department offered free HIV testing and Safe Sex Supplies at Sugar & Spice Boutique in East St. Louis, IL on December 1, 2016.

