



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2018

CONTACT:

Melaney Arnold – 217-558-0500

melaney.arnold@illinois.gov

Black HIV Infections Cut Almost In Half In Illinois

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

SPRINGFIELD – In observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, February 7, 2018, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is joining organizations, partners, advocates, and individuals around the state to promote HIV education, testing, community involvement, and treatment in black communities. From 2000 to 2015, the rate of HIV infection among blacks decreased by 46 percent. However, as new HIV infections in Illinois plateaued in 2015, for every 100,000 black people in the state, 40 were still diagnosed with HIV (compared to 3.6 per 100,000 among whites) and more troubling, among young black gay men. Of the 224 deaths from HIV/AIDS in Illinois in 2015, 140 were among blacks.

“While we have made great strides in reducing HIV infection in Illinois, African Americans continue to be disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “Echoing this year’s theme, ‘*Stay the Course, the Fight is Not Over!*’ Illinois will continue working with communities around the state to eliminate these disparities and encourage people to get educated, get involved, get tested, and get treated.”

In response to the burden of HIV among Illinois’ black communities, IDPH is partnering in *Getting To Zero*, Illinois’ framework to eliminate HIV in Illinois. Strategies include:

1. Increasing statewide access to PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis). PrEP is a way for people who do not have HIV to prevent HIV infection by taking a prescribed medication every day. www.PrEP4Illinois.com is a one-stop resource for education, access, and enrollment into PrEP services, regardless of ability to pay.
2. Promoting *Undetectable = Untransmittable*, which confirms the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s declaration that “people who take HIV medications daily as prescribed and achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting their virus to an HIV-negative partner.”
3. Ensuring those living with HIV and AIDS are in comprehensive, quality treatment, and receive the support they need to live healthy, quality lives.

To learn more about *Getting to Zero* and PrEP, visit <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/hiv-aids/getting-zero>, and www.PrEP4Illinois.com, or call the Illinois PrEP Assistance Hotline at 1-800-825-3518. For organizing free HIV screening events in your location contact the Center for Minority Health Services at 217-785-4311 or via email dph.cmhs@illinois.gov.

###

Find us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/IDPH.Illinois](https://www.facebook.com/IDPH.Illinois) or follow us on Twitter @IDPH

Nationally Accredited by PHAB

