SOUTHERN KNOW-HOW...
WHAT WILL IT TAKE?
HIV/AIDS IN THE SOUTH AND IN HOUSTON

The South has the highest death rates among those diagnosed with HIV.¹

52% of all US deaths attributed to HIV/AIDS occur in the South.¹

The South has one third of the US population but 44% of all U.S. citizens living with HIV/AIDS.¹

Southern states comprise eight of the ten states with the highest rates of new HIV diagnoses.¹

The 10 metropolitan areas with the highest rate of new HIV transmissions are in the South.¹

The South receives less than one fourth of all HIV-related philanthropy in the US each year.¹

Estimated number of Houstonians living with HIV in 2016: 25,252.³

Number of Houston residents diagnosed with HIV in 2016: 1,294³

Percentage of Houstonians diagnosed with HIV in 2016 who were women: 21.5%³

Almost a quarter of the people living with HIV in Houston in 2016 were women.³

Percentage of women living with HIV in Houston who acquired it through heterosexual contact: 53.3%³

Percentage of Houstonians living with HIV in 2016 who were black: 49.8%³

Percentage of Houstonians living with HIV in 2016 who were Latinx/Hispanic: 18.2%³

Number of transgendered Houstonians diagnosed with HIV in 2016: 190³

Roughly 21.4% of Houstonians diagnosed with HIV in 2016 were diagnosed with AIDS within 3 months³

Number of Houston residents with HIV who died in 2016: 388³

Factors related to high HIV rates in the South: poverty, discrimination, and HIV-related stigma.¹

Sources:
¹ Funders Concerned About AIDS (FCAA), FACC Data Spotlight Infographic, with data gathered from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Southern AIDS Strategy Initiative, and The World Health Organization.

Front Cover Image: HIV Rates in the Southern U.S.; map courtesy of AIDSVu.org
Inside Cover Image: HIV Rates in Harris County; map courtesy of AIDSVu.org
FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

WHAT WILL IT TAKE?

What will it take to reduce HIV transmission rates in Houston? It takes a commitment to address the barriers that have allowed this virus to continue to affect vulnerable populations.

These communities face stigma, lack economic and housing stability, and are disconnected from institutional health care. AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc. (AFH) continues to address these issues with the necessary commitment to get Houston to zero transmissions.

Stigma is the embodiment of fear and denial. It creates a climate that discourages seeking information and services that reduce the chances of HIV transmission. To overcome this fear, AFH’s Community Health Workers and Prevention Specialists act as trusted voices in the community to bring knowledge about HIV prevention. Their personal approach reduces stigma and, if necessary, creates paths around it.

Additionally, AFH provides Camp Hope for children with HIV. It is not just a camp. As the children become teenagers and young adults, AFH provides the information and skills for these young people to reduce both the internal and external stigma they will face.

Economic and housing stability creates the necessary environment for health and well-being. When HIV medication is taken regularly, the amount of HIV virus in a person’s body is reduced. This reduction in personal virus levels reduces transmissions in the community. AFH was the first organization in Houston to provide housing to indigent persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Today AFH provides support services and housing to over 200 men, women, and children each year. Being “housed” is not enough; therefore, AFH case managers support the residents in their goals to reach self-sufficiency, such as securing employment, going back to school or increasing the skills needed to live a healthy productive life.

Lastly, it is because of you and the Houston community’s commitment to AFH that we will push past being ranked 11th in the nation for new transmissions to being the first to achieve ZERO. Thank you.

Kelly Young, Chief Executive Officer

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AFH MISSION & GOALS

AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc. leads the innovative efforts in the prevention of new HIV transmissions and empowers individuals, families, and communities affected by HIV/AIDS to create and sustain healthy lives.

AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc. envisions a supportive community free of new HIV transmissions where individuals affected by HIV/AIDS lead healthy and productive lives without stigma and discrimination.
**IT TAKES SUPPORT SERVICES**

**nutrition**

Because HIV can alter the body’s metabolism, HIV-positive adults can require up to 30% more calories than the average adult. Children can require 50–100% more calories. Access to nutritionally rich foods is critical, strengthening the bodies’ ability to fight HIV and maximizing the effectiveness of anti-retroviral medications.

**Stone Soup Food Pantry**
Provides food assistance for HIV-positive clients
Is donation based and volunteer driven
Is a Houston Food Bank distribution point

**education**

Fifty-three percent of Houston women living with HIV acquired it through heterosexual contact, according to AIDSVu.org local data for Houston. People who do not perceive themselves to be at risk are highly unlikely to take steps to protect themselves against the virus.

**Community Health Workers**
Outreach to at-risk communities
Come from the communities they serve
Educate on HIV, testing, prevention, and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

**employment**

Employed Persons Living With HIV (PLWH) were 39 percent more likely to be medically adherent according to a review of 23 studies by the ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work (ILO/AIDS), an office of the United Nations. A paycheck covers basic needs and increases access to health care.

**Project C.O.R.E. (Coordination of Resources & Employment)**
Helps HIV-positive clients find housing, jobs, and access to medical care
Studies the effectiveness of these measures on client health outcomes

**youth**

There are more than 500 HIV-positive youth (19 and under) in Houston/Harris County according to the Houston Health Department. Young people with HIV need a stigma-free environment in which to be themselves and an understanding that they are not defined by their illness, so they can begin setting the groundwork for stable and fulfilling lives.

**Camp Hope**
Summer camp for HIV-positive youth aged 7–16 at an all-abilities camp
Campers enjoy a secure, non-judgmental setting with others like themselves
Campers also develop important skills for navigating life with HIV
IT TAKES PREVENTION

Last year, AFH’s testing team conducted 1,202 HIV tests of which 13 (or 1.0%) were positive for the virus. Additionally, the team identified 49 people living with HIV/AIDS who had fallen out of care and linked these individuals back into primary healthcare services. As noted, medical adherence is necessary for an individual’s viral load to become undetectable, and undetectable equals untransmittable. So linking HIV-positive individuals into care is part of an effective prevention strategy. AFH also embraced Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) last year with marketing campaigns and by opening a PrEP Clinic to provide access to the one-pill-a-day anti-HIV regimen. Outreach staff members also distributed 32,377 condoms to people at greatest risk of contracting the disease. Charlie’s story reveals the importance of overcoming stigma and bringing prevention education and resources to the communities where they are needed most.

“I’m so scared.”

Charlie* fidgeted in his seat as he waited to take his first HIV test. He did not know his HIV status or that of his partner. He met with Thea, an AFH Community Health Worker, who was providing outreach in his neighborhood outside a local community store. Charlie had several questions and concerns that Thea was able to address which helped calm him down.

Thea gave Charlie information cards to educate him on HIV/AIDS and teach him how to avoid transmission of the virus. She also shared information about Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). Charlie shook his head and said that he didn’t have medical insurance. Thea explained that the AFH PrEP Clinic could help him access programs that make PrEP affordable or even free depending on one’s financial circumstances. She also told him about the services and resources available to him through AFH’s affiliation with the National Institutes of Health’s National Library of Medicine.

When his HIV test came back negative, a flood of relief washed over Charlie. Since he was HIV-negative, Thea was able to refer him to an AFH PrEP Navigator who scheduled him for a clinic appointment. Charlie kept that appointment and soon had a prescription for PrEP. He expressed deep gratitude for the education and services he received from AFH and the Community Health Worker. Charlie is now encouraging his partner to come to AFH for the same services.

“I want everyone to know they don’t have to stress or worry, there are services and help. I will practice safer sex moving forward.”

*Name changed
“Get out!”

Liam didn’t have to be told twice. His father wanted him out of the house, so he went. The young man had been released from incarceration just a few days earlier, and had been diagnosed HIV-positive as well. His father had strong but uninformed opinions on both subjects.

Liam spent a few weeks sleeping on friends’ sofas while looking for a job, but getting a job isn’t easy when you have a criminal record. It wasn’t long before he was asked to move on. He ended up sleeping under a freeway overpass. Liam hadn’t seen a doctor since he left prison, and his last prescription for HIV meds had run out. Food was hard to come by and often came from dumpsters.

Liam heard he could apply for housing through another agency that, like AFH, is a partner in The Way Home, a program of the Houston Coalition for the Homeless. The Way Home provides coordinated access to housing resources across numerous agencies in the Harris County/Houston area. When Liam revealed his HIV status to the intake staff, he was afraid they would turn him away. Instead they told him about AFH and contacted us so we could get to work finding him a place in one of our housing programs.

It can take time for space to become available, but while Liam waited, AFH gave him access to our Stone Soup food pantry and helped him get back on anti-HIV medications. Soon he was in an AFH apartment as well. Now healthy and feeling secure about his living situation, Liam has become focused on getting a much needed second chance. He is in therapy and participating in job skills programs designed to help him become a self-reliant, contributing member of society.

*Name changed*
Youth are especially at risk for HIV. Medical science has come far in being able to prevent transmission of the virus to infants at birth, but a few are still born with the virus. Meanwhile, new diagnoses of HIV by other means of transmission are among the highest in those aged 13 and 24. Last year Camp Hope gave 99 youth aged 7-16 the opportunity to have fun with others who share their struggles. More importantly, 29 of the older campers took HIV classes to learn about the disease, how to maintain their health, and how to address issues such as disclosure of their status to others. Michelle’s story reveals how giving young people with HIV the confidence and life skills they need prepares them to grow into healthy and growth-oriented adults.

“I was bullied.”

“I was in the first grade and the teacher was like, ‘Tell us a secret.’ So I told the class I had HIV, and I was bullied so I had to switch schools.”

Michelle* is a teenager now, and growing up with HIV hasn’t been easy. She was born with the virus and has never known a life without it. Not long after being forced to change schools, her mother died from complications of the disease.

The young lady remembers her first summer at Camp Hope. “It was kind of scary, but it was fun at the same time.” It was at camp where Michelle discovered she wasn’t alone. “I used to think I was the only kid who had HIV.” Helping to ease her nervousness was the presence of Dr. Holly Maples, ACH Director of Antimicrobial Stewardship at Arkansas Children’s Hospital. Dr. Maples is also a key member of the Camp Hope Multi-Disciplinary Team. Michelle is one of many children the doctor works with at the hospital. A number of her young patients are regulars at camp every summer.

Camp Hope offers these children a chance to have fun with others like themselves—to swim, make art, go horseback riding, and participate in many other activities they might not ordinarily get to experience. It also teaches them life skills critical to helping them manage life with HIV. Taking her three-pill-a-day antiretroviral regimen was a challenge for Michelle when she was younger. The staff at Camp Hope helped her learn to be medically adherent and why it’s important. Today she says, “It’s easy, just gotta take your medicine.” When she became a teenager, Michelle begin attending “Teen Talk” sessions at camp where she learned how and when to disclose her status, and how to protect herself and others in sexual situations.

Michelle has aged-out of camp now, but she is going forward with the knowledge that she can build a healthy and fulfilling life for herself. She also takes with her a number of life-long friendships made at Camp Hope. Michelle plans to become an HIV advocate to help others rise above the challenges the disease presents—just as she has.

*Name changed
What is the ultimate goal of ensuring medical treatment for people living with HIV? It is to reduce or eliminate the barriers that stand in the way of good health and engaged, fulfilling lives. It is to reduce the transmission rate of HIV by helping all reach undetectable status. It is to take lives impacted by a destructive and life-threatening disease and transform them through actual outcomes—both for their own sake and that of the community at large.

Charlie came to us to find out his HIV status and, when he discovered he was HIV-negative, to learn about and ultimately start taking PrEP to protect himself in the future. He is one of 1,202 individuals we tested for HIV last year. Of those, 13 (1.1%) turned out to be positive. All who came to be tested were educated about PrEP and 87 percent of those who tested positive were successfully linked into medical care. In its first 10 months of operation, our PrEP Clinic introduced 81 men and women to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, and 51 of them went on to start a prescription for the preventative medication.

The AFH housing program provided Liam and 318 other individuals affected by HIV with stable housing last year. Among our housing program clients, 81 percent had income of less than $10,000, and the remaining 19 percent brought in between $10,000 and $19,999. Every single housing program client was linked to care, significantly reducing the transmission rate in the Houston area. Among clients who “graduated” from the program last year, 79 percent did so to move into permanent stable housing. Between 2010 and 2017, 82 percent of all housing clients left the program to move to permanent housing of their own.

Liam and a multitude of others received food through the Stone Soup food pantry last year. Among these were thousands impacted by Hurricane Harvey. The pantry became a distribution point for the Houston Food Bank, thus enabling it to serve those in need regardless of HIV status. The result is that well over 3,300 clients received over 100 tons of food. Among other supportive services, 143 individuals were assisted in enrolling for the Harris County Gold Card. The Gold Card provides fewer benefits than private insurance plans but nonetheless provides access to care for critical needs and prescription medications. Additionally, public transportation vouchers were provided to 520 clients allowing them to keep appointments for medical care, make grocery runs, and go on job interviews.

AFH trained 436 new prison peer educators last year, bringing the current total to 1,000 inside 100 Texas state prisons. These educators trained more than 83,000 of their fellow inmates about HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and prison safety. Some of those released from incarceration in the past year were among the 780 AFH clients who were provided assistance in getting their General Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs), making them more likely to obtain employment.

When Michelle first came to Camp Hope, she was a kid who knew little about the virus within her. As she learned how it made her different from other children, she also learned that there were others like her with whom she could forge lifelong friendships. She also learned that her future was up to her. She didn’t have to let HIV control her life because she had the power to control the virus and set her own course. After attending HIV education courses at Camp Hope last year, 83 percent of our campers understood the importance of T-cell counts and had committed themselves to being medically adherent for life.
AFH Programs That Create Healthy Lives

Getting Houston’s HIV viral load to undetectable is the goal. Getting individuals who are living with the HIV virus, to take their medication regularly is step one. Getting individuals tested and, if needed, into medical care is the second step. Ensuring individuals who would benefit from PrEP have the information needed and access to the medication is the last step. All of AFH’s programs ensure we create healthy outcomes for individuals living with HIV/AIDS and that the Houston community is healthy.

Living in Affordable Housing

Housing | Chronic illnesses like HIV/AIDS can disrupt stable housing and employment. Having minimal income or experiencing homelessness puts one’s health in jeopardy. AFH ensures the HIV/AIDS community, families, men and women (whether cisgender, transgender, or gender-fluid), and youth, have access to affordable housing and supportive case management. To address any barrier that may stop someone from having a full and healthy life, all of the housing programs provide transportation, employment services, education opportunities, and mental health and substance abuse services. For families, additional services—including childcare, afterschool, and enrichment programs—are provided for children.

Growing Up Without Stigma

Camp Hope | HIV/AIDS is one of the most stigmatized chronic illnesses, and it does not spare children. Camp Hope was started to give children 7–16 years of age, who might not outlive their childhood a chance to have fun, make friends, and literally to stomach HIV medications. Now as these children become adults they are the generation that manages the virus and the stigma that comes with HIV. Camp Hope gives young people the tools needed to disclose, to remain medically stable, and prepare for a successful happy life.

Removing Other Barriers

Support Services | For individuals who need support who are without housing, or who have stopped taking care of their health, who have additional barriers such as mental health and/or substance abuse concerns, or are struggling to keep food in the house, AFH provides access to case management every day.

Reach Everyone

Prison Initiatives | By educating everyone, we can reduce transmission rates. Incarcerated populations and HIV/AIDS is one area that AFH has fundamentally changed in the state of Texas. AFH increased education while individuals are in prison and linkage into care after they leave. Wall Talk: A Peer-to-Peer Education program trains inmates to provide education on HIV/STIs and prison safety in Texas prisons. Somebody Cares is a pre- and post-release counseling program for HIV+ individuals to increase medical engagement and adherence.

Testing, Testing, Testing

Prevention & Education Services | HIV/STI testing and education are the most effective tools in reducing transmissions and are the front line defense against HIV, Syphilis, and other STIs. AFH testing and prevention professionals provide testing at our main office, in the community, and via our mobile clinic. Testing is free, confidential, and provided without judgment. Testing is always provided with follow-up, case management, and all other AFH services available.

Preventing HIV Transmissions

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) | PrEP has made preventing HIV easier than ever. It’s a one-pill-a-day prescription medication that prevents transmission of HIV more than 92 percent of the time. AFH’s low barrier PrEP Clinic improves the accessibility of PrEP to those who are interested in this preventative medication. The agency also provides PrEP-related information and resources through its PrEPToPreventHIV.org and WhyPrEP.org websites.
GETTING TO ZERO

What will it take to get to ZERO? It will take an ongoing commitment to overcoming the barriers that are keeping transmission rates higher than they should be. It will take support to help those most at risk avoid HIV whether due to stigma, homelessness, economic factors, or a lack of knowledge or resources. It will take all of us working together to give people living with HIV access to the medical care and economic resources they need to achieve an undetectable viral load and plot a new and better course for their futures. These are the outcomes we seek, and we must all commit to staying the course until they are achieved. AFH is grateful to all of you who have joined us in realizing this vision.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS! Donor levels calculated using cash donations between October 3, 2017 and October 2, 2018.

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AFH PROGRAMS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

HOUSING

A FRIENDLY HAVEN | Housing and supportive services for families affected by HIV and experiencing housing and financial instability

BURRESS STREET APARTMENTS | Community residence for homeless or low-income HIV+ women who have additional barriers (trauma, incarceration, economic instability)

FIRST RESPONDERS | Permanent housing for chronically homeless individuals with disabilities who may be HIV+

HELP HOUSE | Housing and supportive services to individuals who are HIV+ and experiencing housing and financial instability

T.E.X.T.M.S.G. | Permanent housing and supportive services for HIV+ homeless youth ages 18–24

PRISON PROGRAMS

SOMEBODY CARES | Pre- and post-release counseling for HIV+ individuals to increase medical engagement and adherence

WALL TALK | Education program focused on providing peer-based HIV/communicable diseases prevention in Texas prisons

YOUTH PROGRAMS

CAMP HOPE | All-abilities summer camp for HIV+ children 7–16

YOUTH ENRICHMENT CENTER | Provides education, personal development, community, and socialization skills to youth living at A Friendly Haven to support success in school and increase parent competence in working with the school system

PREVENTION & EDUCATION

HIV/STI TESTING | Testing for HIV, Syphilis, and other STIs

HIV AND STI CLASSES | Educational presentations on HIV/STIs to the community

PREPTOPREVENTHIV.ORG | Educational website targeting heterosexual men and women for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

WHYPREP.ORG | Educational website targeting gay and bi-sexual men for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

SUPPORT SERVICES

PROJECT C.O.R.E. | Helps HIV+ individuals who are recently homeless to find housing, get into care, and get back into the workforce

COUNSELING | Mental health and substance abuse counseling

LINKAGE TO MEDICAL CARE | Guidance in signing up for assistance programs including Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

STONE SOUP FOOD PANTRY | Food assistance and referral system for HIV positive and HIV negative individuals who experience economic and housing instability and, in 2017, for those affected by flooding from Hurricane Harvey

TRANSPORTATION | Public transportation vouchers for those living in AFH housing

TESTING

1,202 tested
13 (1.0%) HIV positive
87% linked to care
100% educated about PrEP

FOOD PANTRY*

3,337+ clients
200,470 lbs. of food (5X increase due to Hurricane Harvey)

PRISON PEER EDUCATION

100 Texas prisons/jails
436 newly trained Peer Educators
1,000 peer educators inside prisons
83,002 inmates educated on HIV/AIDS

YOUTH

1 camp
99 participants
29 took HIV class
83% understood HIV meds
83% plan lifelong medication adherence

HOUSING

5 housing facilities
100% linked to care
81% income < $10K
19% income < $20K
35 “graduated” to their own home

AIDS FOUNDATION HOUSTON
AFH CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Race – Black or African American: 85%; White: 12%; Mixed Race & Other: 3%
Income – $0 - $9,999: 81%; $10,000-$19,999: 19%
Gender – Male: 56.9%; Female: 39.5%, Transgender M-F: 3.3%; Transgender F-M: 0.3%
Sexual Orientation – Gay/Bisexual Male: 42.62%; Heterosexual: 51.05%; Unsure/Questioning: 2.11%; Unknown: 4.22%

FINANCIALS

Total Income: $5,673,832
Fundraising Expenses: $387,291
Administrative Expenses: $519,752
Program Expenses: $4,500,958
Net Assets: $3,324,922

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AFH is an accredited Better Business Bureau charity and meets all 20 standards for charity accountability. Visit AIDShelp.org to review our federal income tax return (form 990) and most recent audit.

79.3% of all AIDS Foundation Houston revenue goes to programs.

To see a complete report: www.bbbhouston.org