



30 Years of HIV in African American Communities: A Timeline

1981 – CDC reports first known cases of what we now call AIDS in its *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. In that first month, 26 cases are described, 1 of whom is African American*

July 1982 – By the following year, CDC reports more than 86 cases of AIDS have occurred among African Americans – 20 percent of all cases reported for that year*

1984 – Dr. Robert Gallo identifies HIV as the cause of AIDS

June 1984 – CDC reports that 50% of all pediatric AIDS cases are among African Americans

1986 – A special *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* on “AIDS Among Blacks and Hispanics,” finds that African Americans account for 51% of all AIDS cases among women and have an overall AIDS rate three times higher than whites*

1987 – CDC launches the Black Faith Initiative to reach African American faith based organizations with HIV prevention information

1988-1990 – For the first time, the number of new infections among African Americans exceeds the number of infections in whites and remains that way ever since*

1989 – Dancer and choreographer Alvin Ailey dies of AIDS

1990 – The Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act of 1990 is enacted by Congress, providing federal funds for care and treatment

1991 – NBA legend Earvin “Magic” Johnson announces that he is HIV-positive

1992 – Tennis star Arthur Ashe announces he has AIDS

November 1993 – HIV becomes the leading cause of death for African American men, ages 25-44, and the second leading cause of death for African American women in the same age range*

1994 – AIDS becomes the leading cause of death for all Americans ages 25-44; remains so through 1995

December 1994 – Rae Lewis Thornton becomes the first HIV-positive African American woman to tell her story for a national publication in *Essence Magazine*

1994 – CDC publishes recommendations on the use of AZT to reduce mother-to-child transmission

1995 – The following year, the agency reports that the number of children with perinatally acquired AIDS declines 27% between 1992 and 1995, with the most dramatic drop in cases occurring in 1994 and 1995

1995 – First protease inhibitor approved by the US FDA, ushering in a new era of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART)

1996 – HIV no longer leading cause of death for all Americans ages 25-44; remains leading cause of death of African Americans in this age group

1998 – African American community leaders join with the Congressional Black Caucus to declare a “state of emergency” and create the Minority AIDS Initiative to fund HIV prevention in black communities. Through the initiative, CDC launches a range of new HIV prevention efforts in black communities

1999 – Reggie Williams, founder of the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention, and one of the black community’s first and most vocal black gay HIV activists, dies of AIDS

2000 – HIV cases among Black and Latino men who have sex with men exceed those among their white counterparts*

2001 – First Annual National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

March 2006 – CDC joins public health partners and African American leaders to launch the Heightened National Response to the HIV/AIDS Crisis among African Americans. More than 200 leaders join the effort

June 2006 – CDC recommends routine HIV testing in health care settings for all adults, aged 13-64

2007 – CDC launches its expanded HIV testing initiative to increase HIV testing opportunities, primarily among African Americans

2008 – New HIV incidence estimates show the number of new infections among African Americans, though unacceptably high, has remained stable for more than a decade*

2008 – The Black AIDS Institute reports that if Black America were its own country it would rank 16th in the world in terms of number of people with HIV—ahead of Ethiopia, Botswana and Haiti

2008 – Data show that 1 in 16 Black men will diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime, as will 1 in 32 black women

April 2009 – The White House partners with CDC to launch Act Against AIDS, the first national HIV awareness campaign in two decades, and the Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative – a partnership of leading black organizations working together to fight HIV in their communities

April 2009 – At the White House unveiling of the Act Against AIDS campaign, civil rights pioneer Dorothy Height urges African Americans to “talk about HIV, as we talk about jobs, as we talk about housing, as we talk about civil rights.”

July 2010 – Obama Administration releases first National HIV/AIDS strategy for the United States which calls on the nation to focus HIV prevention efforts on those at greatest risk, including African Americans

November 2010 – NIH announces the results of its iPrEx trial, which shows that giving a once-daily pill containing drugs used to treat HIV to HIV-negative, high-risk men who have sex with men (MSM) reduces their risk of acquiring HIV by 44%

2011 – NIH publishes the results of the HPTN 052 study which shows that taking antiretroviral drugs at the onset of HIV leads to a dramatic reduction in HIV transmission to an uninfected heterosexual partner

Today – African Americans, more than any other race, have the highest rates of HIV infection in the nation. Although just 14% of the U.S. population, blacks account for nearly half of those living and dying with HIV and AIDS. Among African Americans, gay and bisexual men are the most affected, followed by heterosexual women. AIDS is the third leading cause of death among black women aged 25–34 and 35–44 and among black men aged 35–44*

*CDC Data