



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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THE AIDS INSTITUTE COMMEMORATES NATIONAL HIV AND AGING AWARENESS DAY

*Advances in Treatment Make it Possible to Age
Healthily with HIV, but Barriers Remain*

Tampa, FL – The AIDS Institute is commemorating the 12th Annual National HIV and Aging Awareness Day (NHAAD) with the theme, “Living With HIV, Aging Like We’re Not.” As a result of innovations in treatment, HIV is now a manageable chronic condition. As people living with HIV age, their concerns will be virtually the same as anyone who is aging. We acknowledge a complete, holistic view of aging in which HIV is only one component and want to bring awareness to the fact that HIV doesn’t define us even as we grow older.

“It wasn’t that long ago that we thought aging with HIV wouldn’t be possible. Now we know so much more about how to fight back, and how to use treatments to reduce transmission and improve the length and quality of life. As a result, we are seeing a growing number of people over 50 living full lives and not letting HIV get in the way,” explained Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “We are doing everything we can to ensure equal access to prevention, care, and treatment free of stigma and discrimination. It’s important for all of us to stay engaged in care and it’s equally important for us to fight for those who don’t have equal access. Use this day to remind yourself to stand up and take note of your abilities and power to help others. Everyone has a right to grow older and age with the healthiest, best life possible.”

Maintaining access to treatment is crucial to physical health, and The AIDS Institute (TAI) has been at the forefront of work over the past year to ensure that people living with HIV can access prescription drugs. TAI successfully defeated a Trump Administration proposal that would have allowed insurance companies to institute step therapy and prior authorization requirements in Medicare Part D, fought to require insurance companies to count financial assistance toward enrollees’ deductibles, and worked to shape ongoing legislation that caps Medicare beneficiaries’ out-of-pocket costs.

HIV treatment is only one part of healthy aging with HIV, and this NHAAD, The AIDS Institute is bringing awareness to the other barriers to living a full and healthy life faced by people aging with HIV. Discrimination and attitudes based in fear are threats to the health and well-being of people living with HIV, and prevent us from being able to end the epidemic.

"I know all too well, by my own experiences throughout the last 29 years of living with HIV, that stigma and social isolation are still major issues faced by most people that are living with HIV today, which can have a huge effect on our aging process," commented Paula Delgado, PLWH and Member West Central Florida Ryan White Care Council. "By seeing HIV as one component of a larger picture, the hope is to break down the vicious cycle of internalized stigma and encourage all those living with HIV as well as the communities we live in to understand that you can still be very healthy while aging with HIV."

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The AIDS Institute is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes action for social change through public policy, research, advocacy and education. For more information and to become involved, visit www.TheAIDSInstitute.org or write to us at Info@theaidsinstitute.org, and follow The AIDS Institute on Twitter [@AIDSAdvocacy](https://twitter.com/AIDSAdvocacy) and Facebook at www.facebook.com/The-AIDS-Institute.