

Ending the Epidemic: Strategies to End HIV in New York City

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) coordinates NYC's response to the HIV epidemic. This includes HIV testing initiatives; prevention, care and treatment programming; surveillance; training and technical assistance; policy advocacy; community engagement; social marketing; and racial equity and social justice initiatives.

Building upon the [New York State Blueprint for Ending the Epidemic](#), the NYC Ending the Epidemic Plan includes five strategies to reduce the number of new HIV infections to nonepidemic levels and improve the health and well-being of New Yorkers with HIV.

Strategy 1

Increase the number of people who know their HIV status by diagnosing HIV infection as early as possible, promoting routine testing within health care facilities and scaling up testing options in nonclinical settings. Select initiatives include:

- [New York Knows](#), a partnership with community-based organizations (CBOs), community health centers, hospitals, colleges and universities, faith-based organizations and businesses to provide voluntary HIV testing to all New Yorkers, make HIV testing a routine part of health care, identify people with HIV who are undiagnosed and link them to care, and connect people at risk of HIV to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and other prevention services. In 2019, *New York Knows* expanded its focus to include other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and hepatitis C.
- Free HIV self-test giveaways, including online giveaways through dating applications and other digital media, and community-based giveaways in partnership with CBOs and clinics.
- Working with community partners to make HIV and STI testing available at community events, including Pride events and the NYC Health Department's RED Ball, to reach people with limited access to testing in clinical settings.

Strategy 2

Prevent new HIV infections by increasing access to effective prevention interventions, including PrEP, emergency post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), condoms, harm reduction and supportive services. Select initiatives include:

- [PlaySure Network](#), a citywide network of HIV testing sites, CBOs and clinics working together to promote patient-specific approaches to sexual health and HIV prevention, increase access to PrEP and emergency PEP, and link people who test positive for HIV to care.
- PEP Centers of Excellence, clinical sites utilizing an urgent care model to ensure timely initiation of emergency PEP, and a 24-hour emergency PEP hotline 844-3-PEP NYC (844-373-7692).
- Clinical sites engaging adolescents at risk for HIV in PrEP, emergency PEP, and supportive services.

- PrEP and emergency PEP public health detailing campaign involving highly trained teams conducting one-on-one educational visits with providers, with the latest cycle focused on women’s health care providers.
- [NYC Condom Availability Program](#), which provides access to free condoms and other safer sex products at over 3,500 locations citywide, with limited home delivery.

Strategy 3

Improve viral suppression and other health outcomes for people with HIV by optimizing medication adherence and access to care, improving coordination of clinical and supportive services, and increasing access to immediate antiretroviral treatment (iART). Select initiatives include:

- [The Undetectables](#), an antiretroviral treatment support program combining health marketing with a toolkit of evidence-based adherence supports, including client-centered care planning by providers and financial incentives for clients achieving viral suppression.
- Comprehensive technical assistance to scale iART citywide, including an iART public health detailing campaign for providers, a full-day in-person provider training, and an online continuing medical education (CME)-accredited training for clinical providers.
- Incentives for contracted providers to initiate iART following a client’s diagnosis or return to care.
- Community listening sessions and provider education promoting the evidence-based finding that people with HIV who maintain an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV through sex, also known as “[Undetectable = Untransmittable](#)” (U=U).

Strategy 4

Enhance methods to identify and intervene on HIV transmission networks to better support people and communities at increased risk of exposure. Our approach includes:

- Using citywide molecular HIV surveillance to identify HIV clusters and prioritize individuals most in need of critical services, including linkage to or reengagement in care, referrals for treatment adherence support, partner notification, and partner services, including HIV testing and linkage to HIV prevention, care and treatment services.
- Combining information on clusters with information compiled through case surveillance, partner services, and community feedback to deepen our understanding of HIV transmission within networks and in the broader community, allowing for more effective HIV prevention interventions.

Strategy 5

In all strategies, utilize an intersectional, strengths-based, anti-stigma and community-driven approach to mitigate racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and other systems of oppression that create and exacerbate HIV-related health inequities. Select initiatives include:

- Citywide sexual health marketing campaigns, including “[Living Sure](#),” which promotes PrEP among cisgender and transgender women; two installments of “*¡Listos!*,” the [first](#) promoting PrEP among Latinos and the [second](#) promoting HIV testing, prevention and

treatment among Latino men who have sex with men (MSM); and “[Made Equal](#),” which promotes U=U.

- Micro-contract initiative, which utilizes a microfinancing model to support grassroots CBOs to design and implement projects focused on building resilience, promoting sexual health as essential to HIV prevention, and developing community leaders.
- #OurStoriesNYC, which utilizes multimedia storytelling to reduce health- and identity-related stigmas, build resilience, increase effective community engagement, and create a safe and affirming space for LGBTQ people of color to come together and connect through shared experiences.
- New York City’s first-ever [LGBTQ Health Care Bill of Rights](#) to empower LGBTQ patients to seek optimal care.
- [Re-Charge](#), an HIV status neutral, sex-positive, and nonjudgmental harm reduction program for MSM and transgender people who have sex with men, and who use crystal methamphetamine.

NYC Ending the Epidemic Plan at the NYC Health Department’s Sexual Health Clinics

The NYC Health Department’s eight [Sexual Health Clinics](#) provide walk-in services to anyone age 12 or older, regardless of ability to pay, insurance coverage or immigration status. No parental consent is necessary. Following facility upgrades and service enhancements, the clinics now offer low- to no-cost state-of-the-art services, including:

- **STI services:** Testing and treatment for syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia and other common STIs, including express testing for asymptomatic patients, expedited partner therapy for chlamydia and partner services.
- **Quickie Lab at Chelsea Express:** Rapid chlamydia and gonorrhea testing with results available within hours.
- **HIV services:** Testing and same-day ART initiation through the JumpstART program, emergency PEP and PrEP initiation and referral, linkage to care and partner services.
- **Immunizations:** Human papilloma virus (HPV), hepatitis A, hepatitis B and meningococcal vaccines.
- **Behavioral health services:** Screening, brief interventions and referrals for substance use, and crisis and short-term counseling, assessment and referrals to social services.
- **Reproductive health services:** Emergency contraception with longer-term options available, including pills, patches, rings, Depo-Provera injections, intrauterine devices (IUDs) and implants.
- **Harm reduction services:** Naloxone and sterile syringes.
- **Other prevention services:** Cervical cancer screening (Pap test), and free safer sex products including condoms and lubricant.

For more information on the NYC Ending the Epidemic Plan, contact ETE@health.nyc.gov.