

HIV/AIDS Through Time

Key milestones in research, treatment, and advocacy from 1981 to today

THE 1980s

A time of confusion. The virus is new, and scientists are still learning how it spreads. People start blaming each other and distancing themselves. There is fear and stigma. Activists mobilize to advocate for access to care and services.



1981 CDC reports the first cases of what will become known as AIDS.¹

1982 African Americans make up 20% of all cases reported by CDC.²

1985 President Ronald Reagan first publicly mentions AIDS.³



1986 The National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC) is formed in response to the American Public Health Association's decision not to invite anyone of color to participate on the panel of its first-ever AIDS workshop.⁴

1987 A team of researchers at ViiV Healthcare (formerly Burroughs-Wellcome) develops AZT, the first medicine for HIV/AIDS treatment, approved by the FDA in March 1987.⁵ ACT UP is founded, using nonviolent protests to bring attention to AIDS issues.⁶



1989 Activist Dazon Dixon Diallo founds SisterLove, the first women's HIV, Sexual and Reproductive Justice organization in the southeastern U.S.⁷ Eliana Martinez, who contracted HIV from a blood transfusion as an infant, dies at age 8.⁸

Demographic Shift (Late 1980s-Early 1990s)

The early years of the epidemic primarily affected White gay men, who accounted for up to 95% of early cases. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, HIV infections among Black Americans began to outpace those of other racial groups, marking a major shift in the epidemic's impact.

THE 1990s

A time of transition when scientists realize the virus is more widespread than they thought and they were learning how to treat it and prevent it from spreading.

1990 Former New York City Human Rights Commissioner Dennis DeLeon helps found the Latino Commission on AIDS.⁹ Ryan White dies at age 18 from AIDS-related pneumonia after acquiring HIV through a blood transfusion at age 13.¹⁰



1991 Basketball icon Magic Johnson announces he has HIV.¹¹

1992 AIDS becomes the number one cause of death for U.S. men aged 25-44.¹² Katrina Haslip, an AIDS educator and activist instrumental in expanding the government's definition of AIDS to reflect symptoms uniquely experienced by women, dies.¹³



1996 Highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) is introduced. AIDS-related deaths rapidly decline.¹⁴

1998 Black AIDS service organizations join with the Congressional Black Caucus to declare a state of emergency regarding HIV and AIDS.¹⁵ The U.S. Congress created the Minority AIDS Initiative to address the disproportionate impact of HIV and AIDS on racial and ethnic minority communities.¹⁶



1999 The Black AIDS Institute is founded as the only national HIV/AIDS think tank in the U.S. focused exclusively on Black people.¹⁷

THE 2000s

When things continue to develop and scientists continue to learn about how the virus impacts certain populations, particularly Black and brown people in the U.S.



- **2000** New diagnoses in Black and Hispanic men who have sex with men outpace their white counterparts.¹⁸
- **2002** FDA approves the first rapid HIV test for use in the U.S. It is 99% accurate.¹⁹
- **2004** CDC says Black women are 23 times more likely than white women to have AIDS.²⁰
- **2009** Formerly known as Burroughs-Wellcome, GSK, and Pfizer established ViiV Healthcare, the only pharmaceutical company solely focused on HIV.²¹

THE 2010s

There was a new discovery that people who are on treatment and who achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.



- **2010** The first National HIV/AIDS Strategy is published by the Obama Administration.²²
- **2012** FDA approves PrEP, a daily pill to prevent HIV.²³
- **2016** CDC reports that if current HIV diagnosis rates persist, ~1 in 2 Black MSM in the U.S. will be diagnosed with HIV during their lifetime.²⁴ The U=U campaign is launched to promote the fact that people with HIV with an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV.²⁵
- **2017** An estimated 14% of trans women are living with HIV or AIDS (including 44% of Black trans women, and 26% of Latino trans women).²⁶
- **2019** New diagnoses among young Latino men who have sex with men have jumped 68% in the past eight years.²⁷ The U.S. HIV treatment guidelines are updated to include people of transgender experience.²⁸

THE 2020s

We continue to move forward and have many effective prevention and long-acting treatment tools.



- **2021** The FDA approves the first long-acting injectable HIV treatment (Cabenuva) and prevention (Apretude) drugs, manufactured by ViiV Healthcare.²⁹
- **2022** U.S. Business Action to End HIV is formed - a new coalition of businesses committed to accelerating progress to end HIV in the U.S. by 2030.³⁰



- **2023** CDC releases data showing that 94% of white people eligible for PrEP were accessing it while only 24% of Latino people and 13% of Black people were.³¹
- **TODAY** HIV remains a public health crisis and disproportionately impacts many U.S. communities.³² People living with HIV who take medicine as prescribed and keep an undetectable viral load can live long and healthy lives and cannot pass the virus on to a sexual partner.³³