

FEBRUARY 7 2023

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN
ST. JOHNS COUNTY RECOGNIZES
NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS
AWARENESS DAY**



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ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla — February 7 is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD), an annual observance to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS prevention, care, and treatment specifically among Black communities nationwide. The Florida Department of Health encourages everyone around the state to join this conversation and take the opportunity to learn about HIV testing, treatment, and prevention options near you.

As a result of prevention and treatment expansion initiatives in Florida, the rate of HIV diagnoses among Black individuals aged 13 years and older has decreased by 17% over the past five years. However, 38% (1,773) of the 4,708 people who received an HIV diagnosis in Florida in 2021 were Black, with many still needing access to essential HIV care.

Prioritizing HIV care access is vital to Florida’s diverse communities, which includes antiretroviral therapy (ART) to suppress HIV in the body. This viral suppression leads to better health outcomes and important prevention benefits by supporting patients to achieve an undetectable viral load that cannot be transmitted to sexual partners. For those who do not have HIV but are at [higher risk](#), taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), getting tested, and using barrier methods reduces the risk of acquiring HIV.

“It’s really important to acknowledge the good work being done in the world of HIV/AIDS,” said State Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo. “HIV rates among Black Floridians have gone down, and until Florida has no more HIV transmission, we must keep talking, testing, and treating to ensure everyone has access to the best prevention methods.”

Finding the best prevention method starts with knowing your status, which means getting tested. All 67 Florida county health departments offer HIV testing and PrEP services. Visit [KnowYourHIVStatus.com](https://www.flhealth.gov/your-hiv-status) to learn more about testing options in your area or to order a free at-home HIV testing kit mailed directly to the address of your choice. You can also call the Florida HIV/AIDS Hotline at 1-800-FLA-AIDS, 1-800-545-SIDA (en Español) or 1-800-AIDS-101 (in Creole) for more information.