

CONNECTION TO HIV TESTING & LINKAGE TO CARE (TLC) ACT



Representative Kelly Cassidy
HB5417

Senator Lakesia Collins
SB3711

Ensuring that everyone gets tested for HIV is a core strategy of the Getting to Zero Illinois (GTZ-IL) plan to end the HIV epidemic by 2030. Testing, linkage to care, and HIV treatment are widely recognized as the three critical arms of HIV prevention, especially when prioritized among the Black, Latine, and LGBTQ+ communities disproportionately impacted by HIV.

THE ISSUES

TESTING

According to the CDC, 13.3% of the total U.S. population of people living with HIV are undiagnosed. CDC recommends that all adolescents and adults aged 13–64 years be tested for HIV at least once. There are 42,942 Illinoisans living with HIV, including the estimated 5,711 people who are undiagnosed. It is thought that 38% of all new HIV transmissions occur from those who are undiagnosed.

STIGMA

Studies have shown that people with greater HIV-related prejudice and stigma are associated with decreased HIV testing rates and may cause people at risk for HIV or living with the disease to delay or fail to access care.

RACIAL DISPARITIES AND BARRIERS TO CARE

People with HIV who are not engaged in care are more likely to be Black, young, and have unmet needs across several areas (e.g., finances, mental health, and more) than those in care, according to the O'Neill Institute.

SURVEILLANCE DATA | IDPH, 2022

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN IL

44%

22%

PEOPLE NEWLY DIAGNOSED WITH HIV IN IL

41%

29%

BLACK
LATINE

To end the HIV epidemic in Illinois, we must prioritize ending the epidemic in Black and Latine communities. Ending the HIV epidemic is a health equity and racial justice issue.

THE SOLUTIONS

The Connection to HIV TLC Act will support:



TESTING

Mandate insurers and Medicaid provide coverage for home test kits for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, without cost-sharing.



EDUCATION

Ensure that all county jails provide HIV/AIDS education to incarcerated individuals and visitors and link them to HIV testing as mandated by Illinois' County Jail Act, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Corrections and Illinois Department of Public Health.



TREATMENT

Create eight Rapid Start for HIV Treatment pilot sites that will initiate antiretroviral therapy within 7 days of initial diagnosis or within 7 days of referral to HIV medical care.

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ENDORSEMENTS



The following organizations are in support:

- Above and Beyond Family Recovery Center
- ACA Consumer Advocacy
- AIDS Foundation Chicago
- ALMA Chicago
- Brave Space Alliance
- Cannabis Equity IL Coalition
- Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus
- Chicago House and Social Service Agency
- CHOICES Center for Reproductive Health
- Citizen Action/Illinois
- Equality Illinois
- Illinois National Organization for Women
- Iowa Harm Reduction Coalition- Quad Cities
- Legal Council for Health Justice
- Life is Work
- Midwest Access Coalition
- Mother and Child Alliance
- Neelyx Labs
- Open Door Health Center of Illinois
- Planned Parenthood Illinois Action
- Rainbow Cafe LGBTQ Center
- Reassemble Education & Training, Inc.
- Reproductive Health Access Project
- She Votes Illinois
- Shriver Center on Poverty Law
- SisterReach Illinois
- Southern Illinois Harm Reduction NFP
- The Puerto Rico Project
- Thresholds
- Vivent Health/TPAN
- Wolf Pack

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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