



National Black Justice Coalition

**NBJC**.org

June 8th is Caribbean-American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (CAHAAD). CAHAAD is an opportunity to increase conversations about and action around HIV/AIDS, including advocacy, testing, treatment, and care for Caribbean people impacted by HIV/AIDS.

### WHAT WE KNOW:

The HIV/AIDS epidemic hit the Caribbean in the late 70s. By 2001, the Caribbean had become the second-most affected region globally, with higher HIV rates than any region outside of sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> An estimated 420,000 people – more than two percent of the adult population – were living with HIV, according to a UNAIDS/WHO report.<sup>2</sup>

In 2020, an estimated 330,000 people in the Caribbean were living with HIV<sup>3</sup>. In the same year, there were 13,000 new infections in the Caribbean, and 6,000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses in the region. There has been moderate progress made in both prevention and treatment in the Caribbean.<sup>4</sup>

1. HIV infections have gone down in the Caribbean by 28% since 2010.<sup>5</sup>
2. The HIV infection rate in the Dominican Republic declined by 73%, and 50% in Haiti.<sup>6</sup>
3. The percentage of people in the Caribbean with suppressed viral loads is well below the global average.<sup>7</sup>
4. There has been moderate progress made in both the prevention and treatment of HIV, however, in 2009, AIDS was the leading cause of death among people between the ages of 24 and 44 in the Caribbean.<sup>8</sup>
5. 270,000 or 82% of people in the Caribbean who are living with HIV know their status, 220,000 people are on antiretroviral therapy (ART), and 190,000 living with HIV have suppressed viral loads.<sup>9</sup>

These statistics represent diverse communities of African descendants, siblings, parents, and loved ones whose lives can be enhanced if each of us does the work required to disrupt stigma and increase HIV/ AIDS advocacy, prevention, treatment, and support. There are unique things about the diversity of experiences within and across the Caribbean that must be considered when having important conversations and engaging in this work.

We hope that you will find this resource helpful in facilitating conversations, producing events, and moving in ways that ensure the negative impact of HIV/AIDS is reduced in the Caribbean and Caribbean American communities. Doing this work together is how we all get free!

In Love and Continued Struggle,



David J. Johns  
Executive Director, The National Black Justice Coalition

1 <https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/latin-america/overview>

2 [http://data.unaids.org/publications/irc-pub06/epiupdate01\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/publications/irc-pub06/epiupdate01_en.pdf)

3 <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>

4 <https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/latin-america/overview>

5 <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>

6 <https://www.hiv.gov/blog/caribbean-american-hivaids-awareness-day-hiv-in-the-caribbean-region>

7 <https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/latin-america/overview>

8 [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pdacu642.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdacu642.pdf)

9 <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>



# CALL TO ACTION!

## KNOW YOUR STATUS.

- Don't wait until you are about to get intimate to start talking about HIV. To end the HIV epidemic, you must know your status. Get tested for HIV, STIs, and hepatitis every three to six months. Ensure your partners know their status and get tested regularly, too.
- Find a free testing site near you using the testing locator at [www.nbjc.org](http://www.nbjc.org). Use the HIV prevention services locator to find a free testing site and other HIV support programs. Order a free at-home HIV testing kit with TakeMeHome.

## CONNECT TO CARE.

- If you're HIV-negative, ensure you're engaging in practices to minimize risk.
- If you're HIV positive, start HIV treatment, continue treatment and regular appointments with your doctors, and keep the virus under control. Learn more [HERE](#).

## STIGMA KILLS.

- A combination of fear of contamination, homophobia, religious beliefs, and ignorance creates a unique combination of factors that influence HIV stigma for Caribbean people.
- Many people remain ignorant and fearful of HIV/AIDS, and myths about HIV and how its transmitted persist throughout the Caribbean. For example, in Jamaica, 71% of people said they would not buy vegetables from a vendor living with HIV, as did 58% of people in Haiti and 49% of people in the Dominican Republic.
- A predominant view is HIV is a punishment for immoral behavior and people avoid getting tested for disclosing their status for fear of losing family, friends, jobs, and housing.
- Several Caribbean countries are working to disrupt stigma by making condoms and other forms of prevention more accessible and treating related factors that may contribute to testing positive for HIV/AIDS. These efforts can be accelerated by each of us doing our part to disrupt stigma by using facts and asset-based language.

## DISRUPT STIGMA.

- Avoid stigmatizing language or otherwise prevent conversation about HIV/AIDS and sexual health and wellness. You can do this in at least two powerful ways:
- Raise awareness: write an OpEd, blog post, or article to promote conversations about and action around HIV/AIDS awareness, advocacy, prevention, and treatment in your communities. You could also record a video or post for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, or any of the platforms used by your networks.
- Go Live. Share videos and images of you and those you love talking about, and take steps to encourage positive, asset-based conversations about HIV/AIDS in Black communities. Broadcast live from your CAHAAD awareness day event.
- Tag and share your article/video with [@NBJContheMove](#) so we can help amplify your message.



# CALL TO ACTION!

## DISRUPT STIGMA.

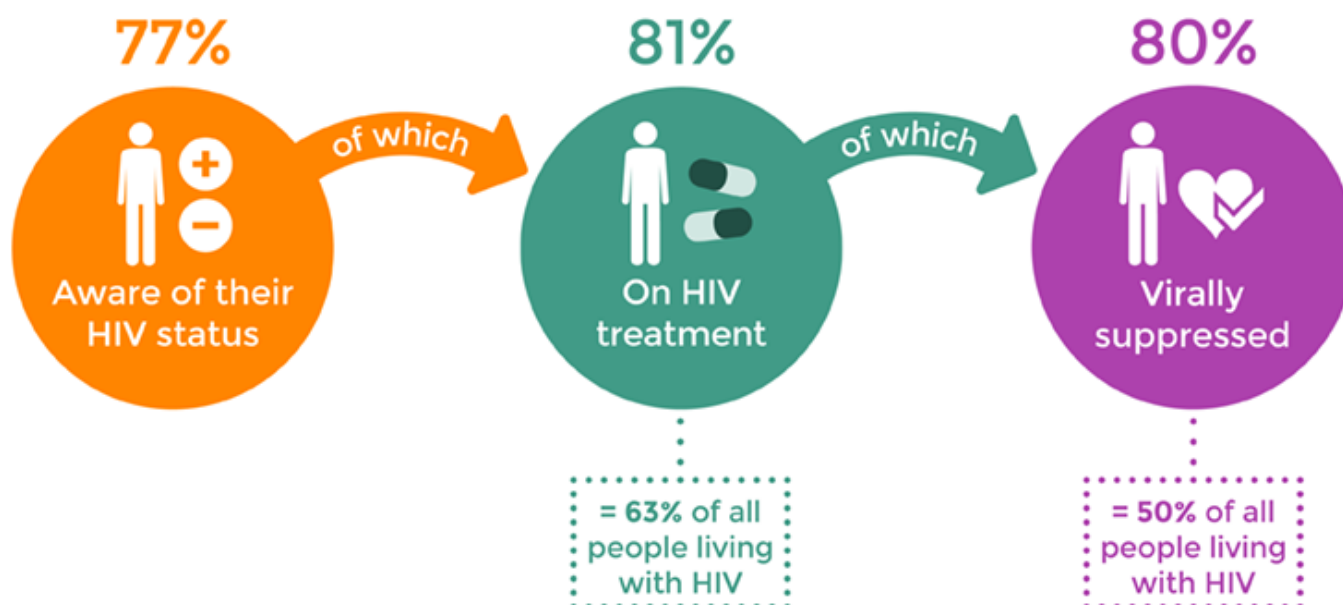
- Avoid stigmatizing language or otherwise prevent conversation about HIV/AIDS and sexual health and wellness. You can do this in at least two powerful ways:
- Raise awareness: write an OpEd, blog post, or article to promote conversations about and action around HIV/AIDS awareness, advocacy, prevention, and treatment in your communities. You could also record a video or post for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, or any of the platforms used by your networks.
- Go Live. Share videos and images of you and those you love talking about, and take steps to encourage positive, asset-based conversations about HIV/AIDS in Black communities. Broadcast live from your CAHAAD awareness day event.
- Tag and share your article/video with @NBJCOntheMove so we can help amplify your message.

## TALK ABOUT IT.

- Create space to have important conversations. Schedule time to talk or initiate conversation in a setting where you are comfortable.
- Consider regular check-ins or 'talkaversaries'. The key to a healthy relationship is open dialogue. Finding the right time to bring these things up can be challenging. If you agree to schedule them in advance, no one has to wonder about the timing of the conversation.
- Use the NBJC Words Matter HIV toolkit to facilitate stigma-free, fact-based conversation, engage in activities to reduce stigma, and encourage loved ones to stay healthy by taking medicine if they live with HIV or are on PrEP.

### CARIBBEAN

Progress towards 90 90 90 targets (all ages)



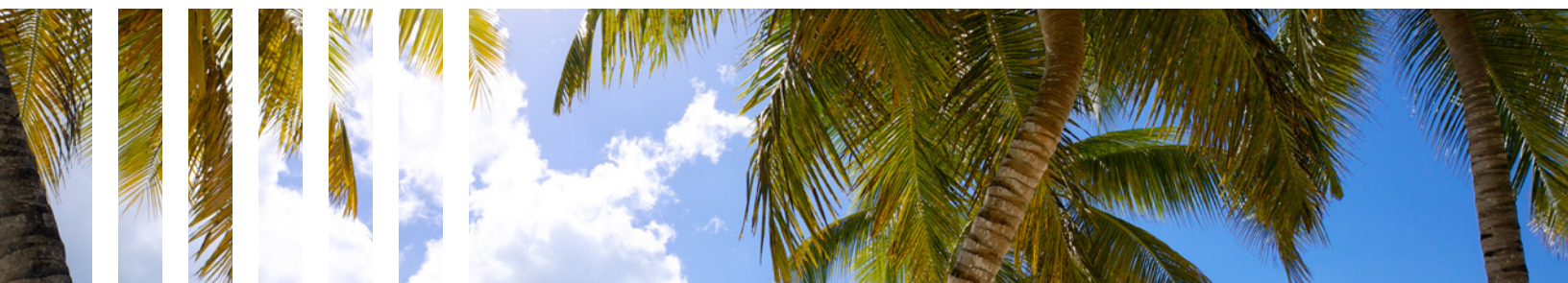
Source: UNAIDS Data 2020





# RESOURCES!

1. Host a screening and discussion of the digital dark comedy series **POZ ROZ**, which explores the life of 20-something Rozzlyn "Roz" Mayweather after a positive HIV diagnosis rocks her already shaky world. Watch the 9 episode series for free on YouTube, and discuss what you learned and how it made you feel.
2. Host a screening and discussion of **90-Days The Film**. 90 Days explores a beautiful couple's relationship and their life-altering decision after 90 days of dating. The themes presented in the film, life, love, and the power of compassion, are universal and sure to spark discussion. It also shares essential information about HIV in an accessible and hopeful way. Watch the film and then have a conversation about the themes reflected in the movie and the feelings that emerged while watching.
3. Join events and support the work of Caribbean LGBTQ+/SGL organizations such as **Sexuality, Health, and Empowerment (S.H.E)** and the **Caribbean Equality Project's Sexual Health** and Wellness program.



## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MEDICAL & SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENTS, AS APPROPRIATE.

Medications such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (or PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (or PEP) exist to reduce the risk of becoming HIV positive.

### PrEP

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a daily pill taken to lower the chances of getting infected. When taken as prescribed, PrEP is highly effective in preventing HIV. Truvada as PrEP is approved for use by adolescents, women, and other people who have receptive vaginal sex. Learn more [HERE](#).

### Apretude

Apretude is the first injectable PrEP treatment recently approved by the FDA. The drug is approved for HIV-negative adults and adolescents weighing at least 77 pounds. Unlike the PrEP pill, which is taken daily, Apretude is delivered through two initial injections one month apart and then every two months. Learn more [HERE](#).

### PEP

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is a medicine taken to prevent HIV after a possible exposure. PEP should be used only in emergencies and must be started within 72 hours after recent potential exposure to HIV. Learn more [HERE](#).

To obtain PrEP or PEP, contact your healthcare provider, an emergency room, or visit your local or state Health Department. If eligible, the Gilead Advancing Access® co-pay coupon card may help you save on your co-pays for PrEP and PEP. Learn more [HERE](#).



## DIGITAL RESOURCES (WE ENCOURAGE SHARING)

Make sure to use the following hashtags when sharing your information about HIV prevention

**#CAHAAD #StopHIVTogether #PACT4HIV**

1. [Condoms, masks, and the tale of two viruses – COVID and HIV/AIDS – harming the Black community](#)
2. [Smarter in Seconds: HIV & AIDS by Blair Imani](#)
3. [National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is an opportunity for all Black people to get free](#)
4. [National Black Justice Coalition Partners with Twitter for World AIDS Day](#)
5. [The National Black Justice Coalition Endorses House Resolution Commemorating 40th Anniversary of HIV/AIDS Epidemic - NBJC](#)





Whatever you do in recognition of Caribbean-American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, do something to reduce stigma, facilitate testing, or otherwise ensure we address the impact that HIV/AIDS continues to have in Black communities throughout the Caribbean. We hope that this toolkit serves as a source of both inspiration and support. Thank you in advance for all that you will do.

