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Sussex Pride Marks National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Work is needed to improve the quality of HIV treatment and care in Black communities in Delaware.

Although incredible progress has been made over the past 4 decades, the HIV epidemic is far from over. Nowhere is this more true than in Black communities across the United States. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that although Black people make up 13% of the American population, 42% of new HIV diagnoses in 2019 were Black.

In Delaware, the inequity is more pronounced, as 58% of all Delawareans living with HIV are Black. A 2020 CDC report also notes that 62% of Black transgender women are HIV positive. Structural racism, the foundation for HIV and other health inequities in Black communities, has led to mistrust in the American medical system, poverty, lack of education, decreased HIV prevention and testing efforts, and increased sickness and death.

State Representative DeShanna Neal, RD13, has seen this first hand: "I lost two family members to AIDS and saw the disparity in my community from education to care. My nonprofit organization, Intersections of Pride Foundation, works to provide educational resources for these communities as much as possible."

First observed in 1999, National HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD), is a day to acknowledge how HIV disproportionately affects Black communities.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has painfully exposed the incredible depth of health inequity and structural racism in the American health care system. In Black communities, inequities in HIV prevention, diagnosis, and treatment remain stark. Acknowledgement is the first step towards action. The National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day remains pivotal in highlighting the plight of Black communities in the ongoing HIV epidemic." commented health equity thought leader and Sussex Pride Board Member Kameryn J. Lee, MD, MSPH.

Sussex Pride Executive Director David Mariner stated: "Today is an important day to discuss HIV/AIDS in Black Communities. We have a responsibility to highlight and address all health disparities that impact Delawareans. Racism, homophobia, and transphobia are public health issues."

Join Sussex Pride in recognizing the National HIV/AIDS Awareness Day - then take action!

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Sussex Pride is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to celebrating, strengthening, and supporting the LGBTQ community in Sussex County and the state of Delaware. Sussex Pride is a proud member of DANA, the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement. Sussex Pride is a proud member of CenterLink, the National Association of LGBT Community Centers.