



Delaware Advocacy Coalition Launches Campaign to Address Rising HIV Infections and Critical Funding Gaps

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wilmington, Delaware (Wednesday, January 29, 2025) — Delaware is experiencing a significant public health challenge as new HIV infections surge and vital health services face unprecedented funding cuts. In 2024, the state witnessed a 10% year over year increase in new HIV diagnoses, coupled with a 64% reduction in federal HIV prevention funding. These compounding crises have left prevention services severely underfunded, putting Delawareans at increased risk and straining public health systems statewide.

In response, the Delaware HIV Advocacy Coalition, a diverse group of public health leaders, service providers, and community advocates, has launched the *Invest in Health: Fund HIV Prevention DE* campaign. **This statewide initiative seeks immediate and sustained state-level investment within the state's general budget, to combat the growing HIV crisis while promoting equitable access to healthcare for all residents.**

Key Campaign Messages:

- **Rising Infection Rates Require Urgent Action:** Delaware's HIV incidence rate is 11.1 per 100,000 people, making it the 16th highest in the nation. Recent trends indicate a sustained increase in new infections, underscoring the need for swift intervention.
- **Funding Cuts Jeopardize Prevention Efforts:** Federal HIV prevention funding has dropped to \$450,000 annually—a staggering 64% decrease. This reduction has severely impacted essential services such as free testing, PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) navigation, and condom distribution. Additionally, utilization of state-funded HIV counseling and testing services have declined by 50% since pre-COVID levels, leaving gaps in early detection and prevention.
- **Prevention is Cost-Effective and Life-Saving:** Every dollar invested in HIV prevention not only saves lives but also reduces healthcare costs. Preventing a single HIV infection saves approximately \$500,000 in lifetime medical expenses.



Call to Action:

The coalition is urging Delaware legislators to prioritize public health by allocating **new and recurring funding from the State's general budget** for HIV prevention. Investments in prevention will ensure:

- Expanded access to HIV and STI testing across all three counties.
- Increased availability of PrEP, a 98% effective daily medication for preventing HIV.
- Culturally responsive, community-based programs that address the unique needs of marginalized and high-risk populations.

Why Now?

Delaware stands at a pivotal moment in the fight against HIV. Marginalized communities—including LGBTQ+ individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, and those facing healthcare access barriers—are disproportionately affected by these funding cuts.

Furthermore, anticipated threats to federal funding and regressive policies at the national level make it clear that Delaware must take proactive steps to protect its residents. This is an opportunity for the state to lead by example, demonstrating its commitment to health equity and preventing a worsening public health crisis.

Get Involved:

The *Invest in Health: Fund HIV Prevention DE* campaign invites all Delawareans to join the effort:

- **Contact Your Legislators:** Advocate for **increased state funding for HIV prevention** programs. Sharing personal stories can help policymakers understand the real-world impact of these services.
- **Spread Awareness:** Use the hashtag #FundHIVPreventionDE on social media to amplify the campaign's message.



- **Participate in Community Events:** Attend upcoming town halls and forums to learn more and lend your support.

About the Campaign:

Invest in Health: Fund HIV Prevention DE is spearheaded by the Delaware Advocacy Coalition, a partnership of public health and community-based organizations. Members include the Delaware HIV Consortium, AIDS Delaware, Beautiful Gate Outreach Center, Brandywine Counseling, CAMP Rehoboth, Sussex Pride, and Planned Parenthood of Delaware. Together, we are dedicated to ensuring accessible, equitable, and effective HIV prevention resources for **all Delawareans.**

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