How Connecticut Hopes to Get to Zero New HIV Cases [VIDEO]

A “Getting to Zero CT” commission offers six recommendations.

December 26, 2018 By Trent Straube

Last year in Connecticut, a commission was formed to address the state’s specific HIV challenges. This month, the group released its findings in a report that spells out six recommendations for getting to zero new infections, zero HIV-related deaths and zero stigma. (It also released a related video, which you can watch above.)

The cover of the G2Z reportCourtesy of the Connecticut Getting to Zero Commission

The commission was assembled as part of the state’s “Getting to Zero,” or G2Z, initiative. In

recent years, many states and cities have launched similar initiatives, geared toward their own localized epidemic.

According to the group's report, "Connecticut Getting to Zero," overall HIV rates have decreased among many populations across the state, but the rates are increasing among three groups: Black women, transgender women and men who have sex with men (MSM) of color. This is particularly true in five cities: Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven, Bridgeport and Stamford.

To address this situation, the G2Z commission held 18 listening sessions with the affected populations. The resulting six recommendations are:

- Form a working group to implement the G2Z recommendations across the state.
- Form a working group in each of the five cities to implement the recommendations.
- Increase PrEP education and access, including among educating health care workers (PrEP refers to pre-exposure prophylaxis, a daily pill to keep HIV-negative people from contracting the virus).
- Develop HIV training and education campaigns specific to each population as well as providers. Efforts would include LGBT sensitivity training and education regarding the fact that people with HIV who maintain an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV sexually, known as "U=U."
- Make HIV testing more routine for everyone, ages 15 to 64.
- Implement and enforce a standard of medical care for people living with HIV.

You can download and read the 28-page report here.

Jovany Rolon, a medical case manager for CRT, in the G2Z video.Courtesy of YouTube/Jeff Mackler/Getting to Zero CT

As the CT Mirror reports, the listening sessions showed that HIV-related needs varied from city to city and from group to group. For example, Black women in New Haven showed a high awareness about HIV but reported a lack of communication with their partners. Black women in Waterbury and Stamford reported a need for more acceptance and support from their churches. Meanwhile, MSM expressed concerns about low condom use and a need for promoting PrEP.

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