Georgia Advocates Fight for HIV Care for Black Trans Men

Health disparities among Black HIV-positive transgender Georgians may widen amid tightened resources in healthcare and housing.

August 14, 2026 By Eva Lorenz

Advocates across Georgia are drawing attention to HIV and gender-affirming care disparities among Black transgender men, as reported by Capital B News. The tightening of resources for transgender men in Atlanta has left many without affordable housing, health insurance and access to HIV prevention and treatment.

Game Changing Men, an Atlanta-based nonprofit supporting Black transmasculine people, and Positively Trans (T+), a program within the Transgender Law Center designed to fight stigma and discrimination, are among the groups advocating for trans men.

“We’re seeing a lot of folks don’t have insurance now,” Quinton Reynolds, founder and executive director of Game Changing Men, told Capital B News. “But I think insurance and housing are some of those key things, and the rollback of services. A few years ago, people were able to have money for HIV testing for free. Now, some people aren’t able to offer free HIV testing.”

Nearly 1 million people, or 0.3% of the population, identify as transgender in the United States, but they account for a disproportionate share of new HIV diagnoses. In 2022, 2% of the nation’s new HIV diagnoses were among trans people, according to AIDSVu.org. Trans women accounted for 89% of new diagnoses in 2021. In the same year, Black and Latino transgender men represented 57% of trans men and 78% of trans women newly diagnosed with HIV.

Despite trans people making up only 0.6% of Georgia’s population, they accounted for 2% of new HIV diagnoses in 2022, mirroring national data.

Check out POZ’s basics on HIV and Transgender People to learn more.

Despite gender-affirming care being linked to better health outcomes among trans people, a recent executive order prohibited incarcerated trans inmates from accessing gender-affirming care. As a result, a class action lawsuit, Kingdom v. Trump, was filed on behalf of roughly 2,000 transgender people in federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) custody. The lawsuit resulted in a preliminary injunction from Judge Royce Lamberth, who has renewed the injunction multiple times while the Trump administration continues to restrict care with new policies.

"People of all backgrounds, races and genders know that we all deserve the right to live as our most authentic selves," said Shawn Meerkamper, managing attorney at the Transgender Law Center, in a statement. "This executive order endangers lives and is an attack on the rights and dignity of transgender people everywhere. Denying access to the lifesaving healthcare prescribed by BOP doctors is yet another cruel attempt at further harming and discriminating against transgender people."

Changes to Medicaid requirements and the removal of enhanced premium tax credits for the Affordable Care Act marketplace have compounded preexisting inequities and racism, impacting access to HIV care.

Since President Donald Trump assumed office for his second term, federally funded HIV public health programs—such as at the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, which distributes funding for state and local HIV services and treatment across the United States, and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which supports efforts abroad—have seen unprecedented budget cuts as have the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Agency for International Development. Transgender, gender-nonconforming and nonbinary people may be less likely to access prevention services, medical care and antiretroviral treatment amid these budget changes and political shifts.

To learn more about HIV care and health disparities among trans people, click #transgender, where you can find RH and POZ items such as:

- "New Insights on Transgender Women and HIV,"
- "How to Improve Safety and HIV Care for Trans and Gender-Nonconforming People,"
- "Even in Blue States, Hospitals Have Continued to Drop Gender-Affirming Care for Youths,"
- "Doctors Sue to Stop White House From Restricting Care to Transgender People with HIV" and
- "Study Finds Racial Disparities in HIV Rates Among Transgender Women."

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