National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2026

#NBHAAD amplifies the facts that Black Americans are more likely than others to be affected by HIV as well as HIV criminalization.

February 6, 2026 By Trent Straube

Saturday, February 7, marks National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD) 2026. It's a time to recognize that Black Americans, notably those living in the South, face higher rates of HIV diagnoses than any other race or ethnic group.

The awareness day also amplifies efforts around HIV education, prevention, care and treatment. For example, the Williams Institute released a report on the disproportionate effects of HIV criminalization on Black Americans.

Black Americans are 3x as likely as the general U.S. population to be diagnosed with HIV. That's unacceptable. Our members are committed to ensuring federal HIV prevention, care, and research programs remain funded and do not leave Black Americans behind. #NBHAAD

[image or embed]

— Congressional Equality Caucus (@equality.house.gov)

February 7, 2026 at 10:32 AM

This #NBHAAD, ANEA and TAG uplift the truth: Black people are disproportionately impacted by HIV, and equity-driven solutions are essential. Ending the epidemic requires confronting racism, expanding access, and ensuring that Black communities are centered, visible, and supported.

[image or embed]

— TAG - Treatment Action Group (@treatmentactiongroup.org) February 6, 2026 at 12:49 PM

But first, some basic background: Black Americans make up about 12% of the U.S. population, but in 2023, they accounted for 39% of people living with HIV and 38% of those newly diagnosed with HIV. What's more, among those newly diagnosed in 2023, Black women had the highest rate of new diagnoses compared with women of all other races and ethnicities, and Black youth accounted for nearly half all new diagnoses among youth.

Search #NBHAAD on social media for events, infographics and more. Several examples are included throughout this article.

AIDSVu.com offers infographics and sharable HIV data regarding NBHAAD. AIDSVu also includes information about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV among Black communities as well as facts regarding social determinants of health—such as poverty, stigma and food insecurity—that impact the epidemic.

HIV criminalization isn't about public health—it's about

policing, surveillance, and punishment. Black communities are targeted at every turn. Abolition is not abstract for us. It’s necessary. This report names why. Thanks @williamsinstitute.bsky.social for this research. #Abolition #NBHAAD

[image or embed]

— CHLP: Center for HIV Law & Policy (@hivlawandpolicy.bsky.social) February 6, 2026 at 3:04 PM

In its report on HIV criminalization, the Williams Institute notes that Black Americans are more likely than their white counterparts to be arrested for and convicted of HIV-related allegations.

HIV criminalization refers to the use of unfair laws to target people who have HIV—notably, African-American, Latino and LGBTQ people and women—and to punish them because of their HIV status, not because of their actions. Under outdated laws, people with HIV can be sentenced to prison in cases where HIV was not transmitted and their only crime was allegedly not disclosing their status.

It should be noted that repealing HIV laws does not mean that people can’t be held accountable for intentionally transmitting HIV. Other laws may apply to the situation.

On IDSA’s & @HIVMA’s Science Speaks blog: To mark #NBHAAD, Alecia Muwonge, PharmD, MS, CPh, AAHIVP; Meshka Robinson, BSN, RN; Denise Maxwell, peer specialist; & Jean-Raymond Alexandre, MBA, highlight

the need for advancing health equity in #HIV.

https://bit.ly/4azMxta

[image or embed]

— HIVMA (@hivma.bsky.social) February 5, 2026 at 8:14 PM

Many HIV laws were passed in the early days of the epidemic, when fear and lack of scientific knowledge about the virus reigned. Fast-forward four decades, and today we know, for instance, that people with HIV who take their meds and maintain an undetectable viral load do not transmit the virus sexually, a fact referred to as Undetectable Equals Untransmittable, or U=U.

Regarding its findings about HIV criminalization and Black Americans, the Williams researchers write:

- Across every state for which we have data—16 in total—Black Americans were arrested for HIV crimes at higher rates than their overall share of the state population. In 64% of states analyzed, Black Americans were arrested at higher rates than their share of people living with HIV (PLWH) in the state.

- For example, in California, Black people were 6% of the state population and 18% of people living with HIV, but 39% of HIV-related arrests. In Maryland, Black people were 30% of the state population but 71% of people living with HIV and 82% of HIV-related arrests in the state.

- Across all 16 states analyzed, Black Americans were convicted at higher rates than their overall share of the state population. In 75% of states analyzed, Black Americans were convicted at higher rates than their share of people living with HIV in the state.

- For example, in Nevada, Black people were 10% of the state's population and 28% of people

living with HIV in the state, but 43% of HIV-related convictions. In Virginia, Black men accounted for about 18% of the state's population but 68% of HIV-related convictions.

- In all states for which we have data, Black Americans are more likely to be placed on a sex offender registry for an HIV-related conviction.

  --For example, in Louisiana, Black people were 32% of the state's population and 67% of people living with HIV, but 74% of people on the registry with an HIV-related conviction.

  --Likewise, in Tennessee, Black people were 17% of the state's population and 55% of people living with HIV, but 74% of people on the sex offender registry with an HIV-related conviction.

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sculptures.

Click here to learn more about 2026 HIV and AIDS awareness days and for a printable poster.

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