

New HIV Awareness Day for African Immigrants and Refugees

#NAIRHHA Day is now officially recognized by the federal government.

November 13, 2023 By [Trent Straube](#)

It's official! National African Immigrant & Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day has been recognized by the federal government. Advocates began promoting the awareness day in 2014 via citywide events in Boston. Now, thanks to the Department of Health and Human Services, their efforts can help raise awareness of HIV and hepatitis among African immigrants and refugees nationwide each September 9.

NAIRHHA Day is led by the Hepatitis B Foundation, the Africans For Improved Access program at the Multicultural AIDS Coalition and the Coalition Against Hepatitis for People of African Origin.

According to an NAIRHHADay.org fact sheet, HIV and hepatitis B among African immigrants in the United States is a “hidden epidemic.”

In fact: 40% to 70% of people living in the United States with hep B are foreign born, and African immigrants have among the highest chronic hepatitis B rates in the United States.

What's more, HIV diagnosis rates among African-born people in the United States are six times higher than those of the general population.

The awareness day takes place in September, explains NAIRHHADAY.org, because the month had already been designated as National African Immigrant Heritage Month to celebrate the diverse and remarkable contributions—in spheres ranging from sports to writing to politics —through which African immigrants have enriched the United States.

Advocates say they “aim to bring both national and local attention to the highly prevalent health issues of HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis in the African immigrant and refugee population in the United

States, in a way that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. NAIRHHA Day provides a way for communities, families and individuals to:

- Raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and viral hepatitis to eliminate stigma;
- Learn about ways to protect against HIV, viral hepatitis and other related diseases;
- Take control by encouraging screenings and treatment, including hepatitis B vaccination;
- Advocate for policies and practices that promote healthy African immigrant communities, families and individuals.”

Visit NAIRHHADay.org for more, including fact sheets, resources and downloadable, sharable graphics in English, Kinyarwanda, Swahili, Somali, Amharic and French.