

Seattle ER Team Honored as “Ending the HIV Epidemic Heroes”

Emergency rooms can provide vital access to HIV services. Just ask the Swedish Ballard Emergency Department in King County, Washington.

July 27, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

For many people at high risk for HIV, [emergency departments may be their sole source](#) of health care, which makes emergency rooms critical locations for HIV testing, linkage to care and access to PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to prevent HIV.

The [Swedish Ballard Emergency Department \(SBED\)](#) in Seattle has developed HIV-related training for staff members and educational materials for patients. In fact, SBED increased HIV testing in its emergency room from 0.4% to 8.4%.

For its successful efforts, SBED received the inaugural Ending the HIV Epidemic Heroes Award, reports [The Public Health Insider](#). The honor was created by partners in King County’s Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) Plan to elevate the work of collaborators contributing to EHE goals.

The county EHE plan, now in its fourth year, is based on the national plan launched in 2019 by President Donald Trump. The 10-year initiative titled Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America aims to lower new HIV rates by 75% by 2025 and by 90% by 2030. This would amount to fewer than 3,000 HIV cases a year. “Reducing new infections to this level,” according to the initiative, “would essentially mean that HIV transmissions would be rare and meet the definition of ending the epidemic.”

The strategy for reaching these benchmarks involves investing federal funding and resources in programs such as Rapid Start and PrEP in the 57 key states, counties and cities (referred to as jurisdictions) that together account for 50% of new HIV cases. What’s more, the national EHE initiative is built upon four pillars: diagnose, treat, prevent, and respond (to HIV).

To complement the national plan, King County launched a local EHE initiative and over 25 strategies based on EHE’s four pillars, according to Public Health Insider. For more details, visit kingcounty.gov/EHE.

To learn more about the national EHE, click [#Ending the Epidemic](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[HIV Survivors Look Back and Explore the Meaning of ‘Getting to Zero’](#),” “[Yes, We Can End](#)

[AIDS by 2030. A New UNAIDS Report Shows How](#)” and “[National HIV Testing Day 2023.](#)”

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