Tamar Braxton Wants Black Folks to Talk About HIV and Mental Health

Singer Tamar Braxton was on a panel about mental health, sexual wellness and HIV at a Black journalists convention.

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Singer and reality TV star Tamar Braxton has a gift for grabbing national headlines, often about her shenanigans and health issues. But earlier this month, the “All the Way Home” singer used her voice and celebrity wattage to raise awareness in the African American community about the intersection of mental health, sexual wellness and HIV.

Braxton was on the keynote panel at the National Association for Black Journalists (NABJ) convention and career fair in Cleveland. Titled “Breaking the Silence: The Intersection of Mental Health, Sexual Wellness and HIV in the Black Community,” the panel was presented by ViiV Healthcare, an HIV pharmaceutical company.

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A post shared by Alftan Dyson (@drpharmaceu2ikal)

In addition to educating about the disproportionate impact of HIV in the Black community and the potential of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV, panelists stressed the impact of authentic storytelling—which can be elevated by journalists—and community-based initiatives.

“We often hear statistics about HIV in Black communities—but behind every number is a family, a story and a history often left untold,” said panelist Alftan Dyson, PharmD, of ViiV, “These are the lived realities that demand our attention and action—and journalists can play a lifesaving role by telling these stories.”

Indeed, both everyday people and headline-grabbing celebrities can raise awareness by sharing their stories. Earlier this year, Braxton drew national attention to PrEP when she posted a video on her social channels telling the world that, after a year of not dating, she is taking PrEP because “outside is CRAZY.” The Braxton Family Values star added: “I’d tell everyone to get on PrEP…prepare yourself.”

The video sparked a conversation online, with one fan writing: “You’re the first celebrity Black woman I’ve heard mention PrEP. I support you queen.”

According to ViiV, the “Breaking the Silence” panelists were:

- Justin Carter (Moderator): At The Shade Room, his powerful investigative stories have reached over 600 million viewers and earned national accolades, including an Edward R. Murrow Award. From exposing child fatalities to interviewing Vice-President Kamala Harris aboard Air Force Two, Justin continues to shape conversations across the nation.

- Tamar Braxton: She’s a Grammy- and Emmy-nominated artist, actress and TV personality known for Braxton Family Values, The Real and Kingdom Business. As a “Boss Mom,” she continues to shine in music, TV and podcasting with no signs of slowing down.

- Yolo Aliki Robinson: A nonbinary award-winning writer, healing justice worker, yogi and the founder and executive director of BEAM (Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective). Robinson is also visionary in the field of mental health. BEAM builds a robust and sustainable ecosystem of care that challenges the structural barriers to emotional and mental well-being for

communities across the U.S.

- Bianca Ordoñez: A passionate advocate for people living with HIV, Ordoñez uses her social media platform as a conduit for healing. Bianca's mission is to create a safe space for others to share their stories.

- Dr. Alftan Dyson: As the head of strategic medical partnerships at ViiV Healthcare, Dyson leads and manages ViiV's strategic alliances and partnerships with health professional associations, medical institutions and other key stakeholders in the health care ecosystem.

Tamar Braxton, center, shares her perspective on the need for HIV prevention during a panel discussion on the intersection of mental health, sexual wellness and HIV at the National Association of Black Journalists' convention in August 2025.Courtesy of ViiV Healthcare

To date, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved four forms of PrEP: Truvada and Descovy are daily pills; Apretude is a shot given every two months; Yeztugo is a twice-yearly injectable. Due to insufficient evidence, Descovy is not yet indicated as PrEP for cisgender women

and trans men. Generic (and much cheaper) versions of Truvada are available. To learn more about PrEP, see the POZ Basics on HIV Prevention: Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).

In 2022, Black Americans represented about 12% of the U.S. population but accounted for 39% of people living with HIV and 38% of new diagnoses, while young Black people accounted for half of all new HIV diagnoses among youth.

To learn more about HIV and AIDS, check out the POZ Basics. For more about the HIV epidemic in the African American community, read about the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2025, which was marked February 7.

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