

Zero HIV Stigma Day 2026

This year's #ZeroHIVStigmaDay theme is "United Towards Zero." Here's why that message is more essential than ever.

July 20, 2026 By [Trent Straube](#)

Tuesday, July 21, marks [Zero HIV Stigma Day](#) 2026. It's a global effort to challenge the stereotypes around HIV and promote the welfare and dignity of people [living with HIV](#), including their ability to [access care](#) and maintain [adherence to treatment](#).

The 2026 theme is United Towards Zero. It reflects a renewed call to collective action at a time when unity is not just aspirational but essential, [write the event's organizers on the Zero HIV Stigma blog on POZ.com](#).



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To learn about events and find sharable infographics, search the hashtag #ZeroHIVStigmaDay on social media. Sample posts are embedded throughout.

Here's a film, Love Ends Stigma, the organizers created for last year's events, [which you can also watch on YouTube](#):

Zero HIV Stigma Day was launched by the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC), the organization that's also behind the Fast-Track Cities Institute. They further explain the importance of this year's theme:

Against a backdrop of political polarization, misinformation, regressive policies and widening inequities, the work of dismantling stigma demands greater urgency, clarity, and solidarity than ever before. Undoubtedly, the fight against HIV stigma matters more than ever in these turbulent times of politically motivated shocks to the communities most vulnerable to HIV.

Stigma has always been a formidable barrier, but today it manifests in ways that are both familiar and newly complex. Social hostility, moral judgment, discrimination in health care settings, and structural barriers remain deeply embedded, but the current landscape adds layers of digital misinformation, the rollback of civil and human rights protections, and rising hostility toward marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ people, transgender and gender diverse individuals, migrants, people who use drugs, and Black and Brown communities. These dynamics not only threaten individual well-being but weaken public health systems, drive people away from services, and endanger the progress made over four decades of work.

In this environment, the concept of ZERO stigma carries even greater weight. It is both a moral imperative and a measurable public health goal. Stigma is not simply an attitude; it is a determinant of health. It affects whether a person seeks testing, initiates and remains on treatment, trusts providers, discloses their status, or feels safe accessing prevention tools like PrEP. Research consistently shows that stigma leads to delayed diagnosis, lower viral suppression rates, and reduced utilization of services. In other words: stigma kills. Declaring a commitment to zero is a declaration that no one should be harmed or die because of judgment, prejudice, or dehumanization.

Zero HIV Stigma Day's organizers chose July 21 because it is the birthday of HIV advocate Prudence Nobantu Mabele (1971–2017). She “was one of the first women in South Africa to disclose her HIV status,” according to Zero HIV Stigma' Day's promotional materials.

“Prudence set a precedent to encourage other women with HIV to discuss their status with loved ones, to live without shame, to seek treatment and to lead happy and fulfilled lives,” explains the campaign. “We chose Prudence's birthday to honor her work and tireless activism to end HIV

stigma.”

To find digital assets you can download, including a children’s book about Prudence, [visit ZeroHIVStigmaDay.com](#).

[Click here to learn more about 2026 HIV and AIDS awareness days](#) and for a printable poster.



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