



San Francisco Department of Public Health

Grant Colfax, MD
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco
London N. Breed
Mayor

For Immediate Release

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San Francisco commemorates World AIDS Day and continues to aim for zero new HIV infections

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (November 27, 2019) – December 1 marks the annual observance of World AIDS Day. This day serves as a reminder to all that we are getting closer and closer to closing the gap between people who have access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services and people who are being left behind. San Francisco continues to lead the fight against the HIV epidemic since the condition was widely recognized in the early 1980s.

“Due to the hard work of so many, San Francisco has gone from ground zero of the epidemic to the realistic goal of getting to zero new HIV infections,” said Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Health. “We want to continue that progress. We still have a lot more to do, particularly with regard to the ongoing disparities in the epidemic.”

During [September](#), Mayor London N. Breed and the San Francisco Department of Public Health announced a record low number of new HIV diagnoses along with additional results of the most recent [2018 Annual HIV Epidemiology Report](#). In 2018, new diagnoses dropped to 197, a decrease from 2017, which saw 227 new diagnoses. This marks a 58% reduction over the past 6 years (compared with a 7% national decline over the same time.) The report also revealed the encouraging trends on many fronts and identifies some continuing disparities and areas for targeted improvements.

In addition, the annual HIV report showed that disparities by race and ethnicity, age, gender, housing status, and risk group remain. The number of new HIV diagnoses increased among four populations: people who inject drugs, people experiencing homelessness, African Americans, and Latinx people. There are several initiatives aimed at closing the gaps among populations that have more new infections, poorer access to care, and lower rates of viral suppression. Click [here](#) to read more about how the health department will address the disparities.

Since the epidemic began in 1981, San Francisco has prioritized the fight against HIV/AIDS. In 2014, a free-standing consortium of individuals, organizations, and San Francisco City agencies came together in a collective impact initiative known as Getting to Zero SF. This initiative brings together people and resources from throughout the city with



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three goals in mind: zero new HIV infections, zero HIV-related deaths, and zero HIV stigma and discrimination. In 2018, in response to continued disparities among African American men, San Francisco launched a campaign in the fight against HIV to accelerate access and uptake for HIV prevention. The effort is focused on increasing the use of PrEP (preexposure prophylaxis) to prevent HIV infection. PrEP is a once-daily pill for people who are HIV negative that is more than 90 percent effective in preventing HIV. In January 2019, Ward 86 at Zuckerberg General, the first dedicated HIV clinic in the world, started the POP-UP clinic program. The program aims to meet the needs of those who are unstably housed by better adapting their HIV primary care visits and wrap around services to their needs and availability. About 65 patients to date have been enrolled into POP-UP since the program started.

In San Francisco, due to widespread testing programs, 94% of people living with HIV are aware of their status. San Francisco continues to move more quickly than ever to connect people to care after their diagnosis. In 2018, 91% of people newly diagnosed were linked to care within one month of diagnosis, many on the same day, thanks to the expansion of the RAPID initiation of HIV treatment program. Through the success of the RAPID program and our network of HIV providers, people living with HIV are starting therapy faster after entering care— many on the same day.

In 2020, San Francisco and Oakland will be hosting the [2020 International AIDS Conference](#) from July 6-July 10. It is the world's largest annual AIDS conference and it's estimated that 15,000 participants will visit the Bay Area.

To learn more about PrEP, visit <https://askaboutprep.org>.

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About San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)

The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans. SFDPH strives to achieve its mission through the work of two main divisions – the San Francisco Health Network and the Population Health Division. The San Francisco Health Network is a community of top-rated clinics, hospitals and programs that serves more than 100,000 people annually at sites such as Castro Mission, Chinatown, and Southeast health centers, Zuckerberg San Francisco General and Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center. With a broad community focus, the goal of the Population Health Division is to ensure that San Franciscans have optimal health and wellness at every stage of life. To achieve this, the Division is comprised of branches dedicated to core public health services, such as health protection and promotion, disease and injury prevention, disaster preparedness and response, and environmental health services.

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