

GUMC Health Awareness Initiative November 2024

December 2024 National Health Observances: HIV/AIDS Awareness and Flu Vaccination

World AIDS Day - Every year on December 1, we observe World AIDS Day to show support for people living with HIV/AIDS and work toward our goal of ending stigma and increasing HIV testing. Two World Health Organization (WHO) public information officers started World AIDS Day in 1988 as an international day for global health. Since the first cases of HIV were reported more than 35 years ago, 78 million people have become infected with HIV and 35 million have died from AIDS-related illnesses.¹

The observance is also reserved as a day to bridge new and effective programs and policies across different sectors around HIV/AIDS.

In 2023, an estimated 39.9 million people were living with HIV globally. Approximately 630,000 people died from HIV-related causes in 2023. An estimated 1.3 million people acquired HIV in 2023. The world can end AIDS – if everyone’s rights are protected. With human rights at the center, with communities in the lead, the world can end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

While great strides have been made since the first known cases of AIDS were reported in 1981, the disease remains a public health challenge. World AIDS Day remains as relevant today as it’s always been, reminding people and governments that HIV has not gone away. There is still a critical need for increased funding for the AIDS response, to increase awareness of the impact of HIV on people’s lives, to end stigma and discrimination and to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV.

Show support for people living with HIV by wearing a red ribbon. World AIDS Day is for everyone. The iconic red ribbon is an enduring symbol of support for anyone who has been affected by HIV and AIDS. Wear the Red Ribbon online: You can spread awareness far and wide this World AIDS Day with a virtual red ribbon. Add the ribbon to your profile picture, email signature or post it on social media to show others that you stand alongside people living with HIV.

Four (4) HIV Basics: 1) HIV Testing – Everyone ages 13 - 64 should get tested for HIV at least once, and some more often; 2) PrEP - PrEP is daily medicine that can reduce your chance of getting HIV; 3) Viral Suppression - Taking HIV medicine daily as prescribed helps you achieve viral suppression to keep you healthy and prevent passing HIV to others; and, 4) Treatment as Prevention - HIV treatment with medication is recommended for all people living with HIV.

Ending AIDS, stopping COVID-19, mpox, and Ebola virus disease, and preparing for the next pandemic require expanded PPR infrastructure. Community-led and government-led efforts are combined, and both are indispensable parts of preparedness. When the next virus hits,

community infrastructure can save many more lives if that is what governments and the global community set goals for, what we measure, and what we finance.

National Influenza Vaccination Week

December 4–8 marks National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW)² — an opportunity to highlight the importance of flu vaccination; it is an annual observance in December to remind everyone 6 months and older that there's still time to get vaccinated against flu. Vaccination is particularly important for people who are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications, including pregnant people and young children. Millions of children get sick with flu every year, and thousands will be hospitalized as a result. Pregnant people also are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications.

Since flu viruses are constantly changing and protection from vaccination decreases over time, getting a flu vaccine every year is the best way to reduce your risk from flu. A flu vaccine is the only vaccine that protects against flu and has been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization, and death.

Together, we can use NIVW as a nationwide call to action to encourage everyone 6 months and older to get their annual flu vaccine, especially pregnant people, young children, and others at higher risk. The more people vaccinated against flu, the more people are protected from flu. A flu vaccine can take flu from wild to mild.

National Influenza Vaccination Week #NIVW! Is the perfect time for families to focus on protection from the flu. Tips to Consider: Talk to a doctor about a flu shot; Get your flu shot if you haven't yet; Avoid people who are sick; Cover coughs; Talk to your child's doctor about a flu vaccine;

Have you gotten your annual flu vaccine yet? There's still time! A flu vaccine is the best way to help protect yourself and your loved ones against flu and its potentially serious outcomes.

¹ CDC/World AIDS Day

² CDC/Flu Resource Center

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this document is not intended to diagnose, treat, or to be misrepresented as a solution for HIV/AIDS or Influenza. It is "intended to be used and must be used for informational purposes only" and readers should "take independent professional advice from their own independent professionals, if needed."