

POINT SOURCE YOUTH PRESENTS:

# COVID-19: SUPPORTING YOUTH LIVING WITH HIV

- Gabriel Maldonado, MPH (he/him), CEO, TruEvolution

People living with HIV are historically familiar with government negligence, and thus are a key group to look to for guidance when it comes to ensuring the most marginalized in our communities are protected in the current COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, people living with HIV have special considerations for their own health in regards to COVID-19. This toolkit is designed to help providers, youth living with HIV, and youth at high risk of contracting HIV grapple with the pandemic and its effects on the community.



## KEY TAKEAWAY

COVID-19 disparities are the same as HIV disparities: Communities of color are being harder hit by the pandemic and we need to ensure that our interventions approach issues with a racial justice lens



## Q + A

**What should a person living with HIV do to access meds if they lose their health insurance?**

People who are seropositive should reach out to community-based organizations with HIV programs. If they can't provide healthcare services to that person, they will know how to connect them to a program that can.

**Are there currently any expanded funds or waivers to HIV/AIDS programming for youth providers?**

There have been waivers that help HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) grantees to ensure social distancing measures while still continuing their programs. Also, the Federal CARES act includes \$90 million for Ryan White HIV/AIDS program grantees and \$65 million in extra funding for HOPWA.

## IN-DEPTH



Many people living with HIV are feeling an awakening of old trauma as they see the US government fumble its response to another public health crisis. While maintaining treatment is often the first priority for people with HIV, the stress of ensuring adherence to, and delivery/attainment of meds in periods of instability can turn into trauma down the road. Providers should take steps to ensure that their clients with HIV have access to mental health services.

In addition, it's important to ensure that people with HIV have their housing needs met. The CARES Act has increased funding for HOPWA programs by \$65 million. Service providers can now move faster to ensure that people with HIV are housed with new HUD waivers to HOPWA programming as well.

Lastly, accessing meds is the same as before the COVID-19 pandemic, only with increased funding. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS program received a funding increase of \$90 million as a result of the CARES Act. This means that low-income people with HIV can still access services and medication. If you lose your employer-provided health insurance or want to start medication for HIV, make sure to sign up for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) [using this directory](#) to find a program near you.

**COVID-19 DISPARITIES ARE SHAPING UP TO BE THE SAME AS HIV/AIDS DISPARITIES. WE NEED TO CONTINUE ORGANIZING AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND ENSURE THAT AT EVERY DECISION POINT, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ARE PUT AT THE FOREFRONT.**  
**-GABRIEL MALDONADO, MPH**



## ACTIONS TO TAKE NOW

1. Maintain a racial justice lens in programming for folks living with HIV during the COVID-19 pandemic by centering the needs of people of color at all times.
2. Build mental health programming into your HIV/AIDS programming. Make sure that youth can access mental health services as well as maintain their physical health.



**PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV SHOULD KEEP AN AMPLE SUPPLY OF MEDS (AT LEAST A 30 DAY SUPPLY), ENSURE THEIR VACCINATIONS ARE UP TO DATE, AND CREATE A PLAN FOR TELEHEALTH SHOULD THEY EXPERIENCE ANY HEALTH ISSUES DURING THE PANDEMIC.**  
**-GABRIEL MALDONADO, MPH**

## RESOURCES & LINKS

- [New Data Showing Communities of Color are being harder hit by COVID-19](#)
- [Information on the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program response to COVID-19](#)
- [\\$155M in Federal COVID-19 Relief Funds goes to HIV Programs](#)
- [Understanding COVID-19 Outcomes in People Living with HIV](#)
- [Depression Remains Woefully Under-Addressed in People with HIV](#)
- [HUD Policies Impacting HOPWA Programs](#)
- [CARES Act Funding for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program](#)
- If you are a HOPWA grantee, you can access the waivers HUD released so that your programs can maintain social distancing [here](#).
- If you are a person living with HIV and need to gain access to meds, the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) has a [directory](#) where you can find information about how to get assistance in your state.