



GETTING TO ZERO; ENDING AIDS BY 2030

World AIDS Day is a day to both reflect and to challenge ourselves, a day to remember and a day to reinvigorate. Today, especially, we think more about what we could have done to help those who we've lost to HIV, and what we can still do to help those at high risk for HIV or who are struggling to manage their disease. Looking back on more than 34 years of AIDS, it is important to reflect on the incremental but critical progress we've already made against this scourge:

- The development of remarkable drug regimens that, for almost half of the persons on treatment in Los Angeles County, means one pill a day;
- State of the art HIV testing technology that allows for HIV detection within days of infection;
- Near elimination of mother-to-child HIV transmission;
- Dramatic reduction of HIV rates among injection drug users because of syringe exchange programs;
- The full mapping of HIV burden throughout Los Angeles County to ensure that services and resources are targeted to the areas that need them most; and
- The creation of 40 patient-centered medical homes for persons with HIV that provide the most comprehensive set of services we have ever seen.

However, we must not dwell on these accomplishments for too long, and certainly not at the expense of continuing to identify and respond to areas of challenge and opportunity.

**This year, the theme of World AIDS Day is
“Getting to Zero; Ending AIDS by 2030”**

Ending AIDS didn't seem possible just a few years ago, but with pharmaceutical research came rapid advances in bio-medical prevention, and implementation of the Affordable Care Act helps millions of people nationwide access lifesaving medical treatment and prevention services. Still, it is a bold challenge and a very ambitious goal. It is a challenge for us to understand why a higher proportion of new HIV infections are occurring among people who are 29 and younger. And it is a challenge to confront decades and generations of homophobia, transphobia and shame that isolates and demoralizes transgenders and young gay men of color who continue to experience outrageously high and unacceptable rates of HIV infection.

As we reflect on WAD 2015 and challenge ourselves for the next year:

- We must focus on finding and linking the thousands of Los Angeles County residents who know they have HIV but are still not in care;
- We must focus on the thousands of Los Angeles County residents who are on treatment, but are still not virally suppressed;
- We must focus on the complex HIV prevention needs of young Latino and African-American gay men and transgender women, including ensuring broader access to biomedical interventions like PEP and PrEP; and
- We must forge and strengthen partnerships that continue to lead the way with innovative, comprehensive, high-quality patient care as we work to eliminate disparities in health care access and outcomes in underserved communities by advancing culturally competent and innovative programming that is responsive to community needs.

In the era of the Affordable Care Act, there are immense opportunities to give people access to a medical home, to holistically address sexual health needs, to improve HIV case-finding and linkage to care rates, and to make a significant impact in the lives of people living with HIV by expanding access to treatment and

other services. For the sake of the public's health, we must ensure that all Los Angeles County residents have access to these services.

I thank each and every one of you for your strong and ongoing dedication to protecting health, preventing disease, and promoting the health and well-being of our communities throughout Los Angeles County – for now, one day at a time, and until we recognize that every day should be World AIDS Day.

Respectfully,

Mario