

FIGHTING HIV/AIDS IN MISSISSIPPI

Facts about HIV/AIDS

- HIV is the human immunodeficiency virus that can lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS.
- HIV can be transmitted through sexual contact, from a mother to a child during childbirth and breastfeeding, and through blood contact.
- An estimated 1.1 million people live with HIV in the United States.
- HIV/AIDS is now a manageable chronic illness; people infected with HIV/AIDS who take medications can live long, healthy lives.
- People living with HIV/AIDS have higher rates of other chronic illnesses like diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

Facts about the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Mississippi

- Mississippi has the 9th highest rates of HIV infection of any state in the country.
- 76% of new infections are among African Americans.
- The HIV/AIDS mortality rate for African Americans is nearly 9 times that of Whites.
- Nearly half of people who test positive believe that they are not at risk for HIV.
- Jackson, Mississippi has among the highest prevalence of HIV infection in African American men ages 14-24 of any city in the country.



UNITING FOR ACTION

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO FIGHT HIV/AIDS

Be aware

- Know the facts: understand how HIV is transmitted.
- Know your status: 20% of HIV infections are transmitted by people who don't know their status, often because they don't think they are at risk.
- In Mississippi, where you live can put you at greater risk for contracting HIV. People living in communities with higher rates of HIV are more likely to come in contact with the virus even if they do not engage in high-risk behavior.
- HIV/AIDS is not a gay disease! Mississippi has a heterosexual AIDS epidemic.

Take action

- Get tested for HIV. Ask your doctor or healthcare provider for an HIV test, and get tested at least once a year. If you test positive, take your medications regularly. Encourage those you love and your community members to get tested.
- Get involved! To find out more about Mississippi Faith in Action, visit our website www.MississippiFaithinAction.org or call (601) 342-0795.

Fight stigma

- Silence around HIV/AIDS in our communities contributes to high infection rates.
Fight stereotypes! Members of the faith community can inspire hope by breaking the silence. Many of us may know someone who has been affected or infected with HIV. Show love, compassion, and support for those who have been affected.