10 Ways City Health Efforts Can Include People With HIV, TB and Hepatitis

Signed at a Fast-Track Cities conference, the Sevilla Declaration urges “the centrality of affected communities in urban HIV responses.”

November 4, 2022 By Trent Straube

People living with and affected by HIV must play a central role in individual cities’ efforts to end the epidemic. To ensure that this happens, global HIV leaders crafted and signed their names to the Sevilla Declaration on the Centrality of Communities in Urban HIV Responses.

Named after the Spanish city where the Fast-Track Cities 2022 conference took place in early October (the city is often spelled Seville in English), the Sevilla Declaration spells out 10 commitments that cities are asked to make. These commitments will help center the HIV community in local efforts to battle the epidemic.

The Fast-Track Cities initiative is a partnership including 450 cities around the world (more are joining all the time!) and global HIV organizations with the goal of advancing and coordinating efforts to end HIV in urban settings by 2030. The initiative was spearheaded by the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the City of Paris.

Courtesy of IAPAC

Launched on World AIDS Day 2014, the Fast-Track Cities initiative also includes efforts to end tuberculosis (TB) and viral hepatitis (hepatitis B and C).

“The Sevilla Declaration provides structure for communities of people living with HIV to more formally play a leadership role in HIV responses at city and municipal levels,” said Sbongile Nkosi, co–executive director of GNP+, in an IAPAC press release about the Sevilla Declaration. GNP+ formally endorsed the declaration at the Fast-Track Cities 2022 conference.

Nkosi added: “We talk a lot about ‘placing people at the center of the HIV response,’ but the Sevilla Declaration does more by articulating commitments local governments and institutions must make to create the space for and empower people living with HIV and their community-based organizations to lead urban HIV responses.”

Released and signed on October 11, 2022, the Sevilla Declaration asks cities and municipalities to commit to the following:

1. Safeguard the dignity and rights of communities affected by HIV, TB and viral hepatitis.
2. Meet the U.N. goals for community-led HIV, TB and viral hepatitis responses.
3. Include community representation at all stages of our HIV, TB and viral hepatitis responses.
4. Facilitate community-led monitoring of our HIV, TB and viral hepatitis responses.
5. Improve transparency and communication to facilitate community participation.
6. Develop outreach strategies to identify and reach all community stakeholders.

7. Support community health workers, peer leaders and others close to our communities.
8. Work to eliminate stigma and discrimination against and within our diverse communities.
9. Connect our local communities to the global HIV, TB and viral hepatitis networks.
10. Report annually on progress in relation to placing communities at the center of our work.

For more details about each commitment, read and download the full text of the Sevilla Declaration.

“An amorphous and overly malleable term such as ‘placing people at the center’ of the HIV response has little effect if it can be interpreted in a million different ways or, worse, actioned as mere tokenism that disenfranchises those whose voice at the table and leadership are critically needed,” said José M. Zuniga, president and CEO of IAPAC in the statement. “The 10 commitments that Fast-Track Cities are making in signing the Sevilla Declaration reflect an important step forward in clearly defining, operationalizing, and facilitating what we mean by ‘placing people at the center’ of urban HIV responses at a time when it is most critical to do so.”

You can watch the plenary speeches from the Fast-Track Cities 2022 Conference in Sevilla on IAPAC’s YouTube channel and below:

The Sevilla Declaration will supplement the Paris Declaration of Fast-Track Cities Ending the HIV Epidemic, a document released and signed with the launch of the Fast-Track Cities initiative. The Paris Declaration set the following targets, referred to as 90-90-90 goals, that cities aimed to reach:

- To get 90% of people living with HIV know their status;
- To get 90% of people who know their positive status on HIV treatment;
- To get 90% of people taking meds to attain an undetectable viral load.

Several cities in the United States participate in the Fast-Track Cities initiative, including Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Denver, Colorado; Minneapolis, Minnesota; New York City; and San Francisco. To see how these and cities across the world are doing in meeting their goals, visit the Fast-Track Cities Dashboard. You can learn more about the Fast-Track Cities initiative here, and you can read more in POZ by clicking #Fast Track.

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