National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day 2021

Take daily actions to support #NAIRHHA. For example: Advocate for HIV and hepatitis programs to include African dialects.

September 9, 2021 By Trent Straube

Thursday, September 9, is National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA) 2021. The day aims to draw attention to the fact that HIV and hepatitis B are more prevalent among African-born people living in the United States.

The awareness day was launched in 2014 by advocates in Massachusetts, New York and Washington, DC. To learn about related events, campaigns and information, such as prevention and treatment, search the hashtag #NAIRHHA on social media. Several sample posts are embedded throughout this article.

This year, in the days leading up to September 9, the team behind NAIRHHA hosted a Zoom event titled “Eliminating HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Inequities Among African Immigrant Communities in the U.S.: A Conversation With Federal & Local Partners.” You can watch it on the NAIRHHA Facebook page or in the embedded post below.

NAIRHHA advocates have also been posting a series of actions people can take to support their effort, including:

- Learn more: Connect with the African immigrant communities in your local area.
- Call for disaggregated race and ethnicity data in all federally funded national data sets.
- Talk with elected officials about the impact of HIV and hepatitis on African immigrant communities.

- Help to build the capacity of African organizations to address HIV and viral hepatitis.
- Call for direct funding of African organizations to address HIV and viral hepatitis.
- Advocate for language access programs to include African dialects.
- Continue to support the establishment of NAIRHHA Day as a federally recognized awareness day.

If you or your parents were born in Africa, talk to your doctor about getting tested for hepatitis B.

Check out this fact sheet to learn more: https://t.co/tB1M4oXbK5#NAIRHHA pic.twitter.com/dUuqjuxGPc — CDC Hepatitis (@cdchep) September 8, 2021

"The purpose of NAIRHHA Day is to bring national and local attention to the HIV and viral hepatitis needs of African immigrants living in the U.S. in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner," write the supporters on the NAIRHHA Facebook page. "The creation of a national awareness day will also support the eradication of other epidemics fueling or related to HIV disparities among African immigrants, including tuberculosis, substance use and mental health. Please do Like [the NAIRHHA Facebook page] and share info on NAIRHHA Day with your given communities (i.e., other community organizations, health educators, family, friends etc.) in hopes of officially establishing NAIRHHA Day as a federally recognized day in the U.S. and beyond!"

The awareness day coincides with New York City's African Heritage Month.

William is an amazing person and a great Dad from

Tanzania, who now lives in the USA. This African immigrant’s moving story is hopeful as we approach #NAIRHHA Day. (National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV & Hepatitis Awareness Day) https://t.co/Fkxg02b7R8#NAIRHHADay pic.twitter.com/YgAHhnBhUx

— Hep B Foundation (@HepBFoundation) September 4, 2021

Hepatitis B virus is a disease of the liver. Currently, there is no cure, but hep B is manageable with medication and preventable with a vaccine. For more details, visit the Basics section of Hep magazine.

HIV is also a virus, but it attacks the immune system, making people vulnerable to other diseases. Like hep B, there is no cure for HIV, although today’s treatments are safe, easy to take and highly effective. There is no vaccine, but it is preventable. To learn more, see the POZ Basics on HIV/AIDS.

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