

# Timeline

## Pre-1980

HIV is believed to have originated in what is now Congo around 1920 when the disease crossed from chimpanzees to humans. Sporadic cases of AIDS were documented before 1970, but data suggests the epidemic began in the late 1970s.

## 1981 Confirmed U.S. deaths: 234

- June** The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that from 1980–81, five young gay men in Los Angeles were treated for a rare lung disease called pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, which often attacks those with weakened immune systems. A 35-year-old gay man is the first person with AIDS to be admitted into the Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health. He dies in October.
- July** The Bay Area Reporter, a newspaper for the gay and lesbian community in San Francisco, publishes its first mention of “Gay Men’s Pneumonia” and encourages gay men who are experiencing progressive shortness of breath to see their physicians. The CDC also reports that during the past 30 months, there were 26 cases of Kaposi’s Sarcoma (KS) reported among gay males. KS becomes one of the most common forms of cancer in people with HIV.
- Dec.** San Francisco nurse Bobbi Campbell, is the first KS patient to go public with his diagnosis. He calls himself the “KS Poster Boy” and writes a newspaper column for the San Francisco Sentinel about his experiences living with KS. Pediatric immunologist Dr. Arye Rubinstein treats infants exhibiting the same symptoms of illnesses affecting gay men. Three of the five are children of sex workers. His diagnoses are dismissed.

## 1982 Confirmed U.S. deaths: 853

- Jan.** Gay Men’s Health Crisis is founded in New York City, becoming the first community-based AIDS service provider.
- April** U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman convenes the first congressional hearings on AIDS at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center in Hollywood.
- May** The New York Times publishes the first mention of the term “GRID” (gay-related immune deficiency).
- June** A gay activist group in San Francisco publishes the first pamphlet on “safer sex” and distributes it at the International Lesbian & Gay Freedom Day Parade.
- Sept.** The CDC first uses the official term AIDS.
- Dec.** The CDC publishes a paper on immunodeficiency and opportunistic infections in infants, and says there have been 22 cases. It says it is possible these children have AIDS but does not make a definitive diagnosis.

## 1983 Confirmed U.S. deaths: 2,304

- Jan.** Ward 86, the first outpatient clinic for men with AIDS, opens in San Francisco.
- May** The Kaposi’s Sarcoma Foundation sponsors the first AIDS candlelight vigils in San Francisco and New York. It is the first time that people with AIDS come together publicly. Photos of the event are circulated worldwide. Dr. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and her colleagues at the Pasteur Institute in France report the discovery of a virus that could be the cause of AIDS. In 2008, she and her colleague, Dr. Luc Montagnie will be awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine for this discovery.
- Aug.** The U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Government Operations holds hearings on the federal response to AIDS.
- Nov.** The World Health Organization (WHO) holds its first meeting to assess AIDS globally.

## 1985 Confirmed U.S. deaths: 5,636

- March** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves the first HIV antibody test.
- July** The first AIDS Walk takes place in Los Angeles.
- Sept.** President Ronald Reagan uses the term “AIDS” for the first time publicly, calling it a “top priority” amid accusations his administration isn’t sufficiently funding AIDS research.
- Oct.** The U.S. Congress allocates nearly \$190 million for AIDS research.

## 1987 Confirmed U.S. deaths: 4,135

- March** AZT (zidovudine, Retrovir®) becomes the first anti-HIV drug approved by the FDA. ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), an organization committed to direct action in ending the AIDS crisis, is founded. It holds its first protest on Wall Street.

## 1988 Confirmed U.S. deaths: 4,855

- Dec.** The first World AIDS Day is observed.

## 1991 Confirmed U.S. deaths: 20,454

- Nov.** NBA player Earvin “Magic” Johnson tells the world he has HIV. Freddie Mercury, lead singer of Queen, dies of complications with AIDS.

## 1992–2002 Cumulative U.S. deaths through 2002: 501,669

- Research and activism continue. New medications and tests are approved. Thousands of deaths continue to occur each year.
- 1996** The Broadway musical “Rent,” by Johnathan Larson, opens in January. The musical is about young artists in New York’s Alphabet City struggling to survive through poverty and the HIV/AIDS crisis. It was wildly successful and even adapted into a movie in 2005.
- 2000** Feb 7 is the first National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the U.S.

2003

- Oct. Oct. 15 becomes the first annual National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day in the U.S.
- Jan. President George W. Bush announces President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in his State of the Union address, a five-year plan to combat AIDS worldwide.

2004

- Jan. Congress authorizes the first \$350 million for PEPFAR.
- March The FDA approves the use of oral fluid samples that give positive or negative HIV results within 20 minutes.

2005

- Jan. The World Economic Forum approves a set of new priorities, including focusing on HIV/AIDS in Africa and other hard-hit regions.
- May May 19 becomes the first National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the U.S.

2006: 25 years since the first cases were reported

- March March 10 becomes the first annual National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the U.S.

2007

- March March 20 is the first annual observance of National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the U.S.

2008

- Sept. Sept. 18 is the first National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day in the U.S.
- Sept. 27 is the first National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the U.S.

2009

- Feb. The District of Columbia Department of Health's HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD and TB Administration reports Washington has a higher rate of HIV (3%) than West Africa and describes it as a "severe and generalized epidemic."
- April The White House and CDC launch Act Against AIDS, a multiyear, multifaceted communication campaign to reduce HIV infection in the U.S. It is not called Let's Stop HIV Together.
- June June 8 is the first National Caribbean American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the U.S.

2010

- Jan. The U.S. government lifts the ban on travel and immigration on those with HIV.
- March President Barack Obama passes the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which benefits patients who have chronic illnesses like HIV.

2012

- During AIDS 2012, the AIDS Memorial Quilt memorializing those infected with AIDS is displayed in its entirety in Washington, D.C., for the first time since 1996. Volunteers rotate nearly 50,000 panels to ensure that the entire work is visible.
- July The FDA approves the use of Truvada PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), which can be taken regularly to prevent HIV in patients with a high risk of contracting the virus.

2013

- March NIH-funded scientists announce the first well-documented case of an HIV-infected child who appears to have been functionally cured of HIV infection, with no detectable levels of virus or signs of disease.
- April April 20 becomes the first National Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in the U.S.
- June The National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC) releases RISE Proud: Combating HIV Among Black Gay and Bisexual Men, a plan to reduce the impact of HIV on Black gay and bisexual men.
- Dec. UNAIDS also announces that new HIV infections have dropped more than 50% in 25 low- and middle-income countries and that the number of people receiving antiretroviral treatment has increased.

2016

- April April 18 becomes the first National Transgender HIV Testing Day in the U.S.
- May The NIH and partners announce they will launch a large-scale HIV vaccine trial in South Africa in November 2016.

2017

- Jan. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announces it will fund the development of implants that can deliver HIV-prevention medication continuously over a long period of time.

2019

- Feb. In his State of the Union address, President Donald Trump announces his goal to end the HIV epidemic in the United States in 10 years through prevention and treatment options.
- May NIH announces the launch of a trial to evaluate a long-acting form of ART for people who struggle to take ART daily in pill form.



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"The original Broadway cast of Rent from 1996," JessnKat, CC BY-SA 4.0.