

HIV/AIDS TIMELINE

Pre-1981

EARLY SIGNS. While 1981 is referred to as the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, several recent reports indicate HIV was present years earlier.

1981

AIDS DETECTED. On June 5, United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports first cases of rare pneumonia in young gay men.

1982

THE DISEASE IS NAMED. The CDC formally establishes the term Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, AIDS. CDC initially identifies four “risk factors”: male homosexuality, injection drug use, Haitian origin and hemophilia A.

AIDS IN AFRICA. The journal *The Lancet* reports an African disease known as “slim” is actually AIDS.

1983

NEW RISK GROUP. The CDC adds female sexual partners of men with AIDS as a fifth risk group.

ORGANIZING EFFORTS. In the United States, the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), National AIDS Network (NAN) and Federation of AIDS Related Organizations form.

THE VIRUS IS DISCOVERED. The virus that causes AIDS is first detected and named Lymphadenopathy-Associated Virus or LAV.

1984

THE VIRUS IS ISOLATED. Scientists Luc Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute in France and Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute in the United States isolate the human retrovirus that causes AIDS. It is renamed the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES. World’s first needle exchange program (NEP) begins in the Netherlands. It is designed, initially, to address Hepatitis-B among injection drug users (IDUs). Later expanded to address HIV transmission.

1985

FIRST INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE. It is sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and held in Atlanta, Georgia.

DETECTING THE VIRUS. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves the first HIV antibody test. Blood products begin to be tested in the U.S. and Japan.

MOTHER TO CHILD. The United States Public Health Service issues first recommendations for preventing transmission of HIV from mother to child.

1985 (continued)

AIDS AND U.S. MILITARY. The United States Department of Defense announces it will begin testing all new recruits for HIV infection and will reject those who are positive.

GLOBAL HIV. At least one case of HIV/AIDS is reported in every region of the world. One and a half million people worldwide are living with HIV, according to estimates by the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS).

1986

CALL TO ACTION. The United States Institute of Medicine calls for a national education campaign and creation of National Commission on AIDS.

ORGANIZING GLOBALLY. International Steering Committee for People with HIV/AIDS (ISC) is created. (In 1992, name changed to Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, or GNP+.)

1987

FIRST DRUG TREATMENT. The FDA approves the first antiretroviral agent for the treatment of AIDS. It is called Zidovudine or AZT.

VACCINE TESTING. The FDA sanctions first human testing of candidate vaccine against HIV.

REAGAN AND AIDS. United States President Ronald Reagan makes first public speech about AIDS and establishes Presidential Commission on HIV.

MANDATED TESTING. The United States adds HIV as a “dangerous contagious disease” to its immigration exclusion list. It mandates HIV testing of all immigration applicants.

GLOBAL EFFORTS BROADEN. WHO launches the Global Program on AIDS (GPA).

1988

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION. WHO declares first World AIDS day on December 1st.

ORGANIZING AROUND AIDS. The United States National Institutes of Health (NIH) establish the Office of AIDS Research and the AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG). The International AIDS Society, made up of professionals working on HIV/AIDS, is founded.

NEEDLE EXCHANGE. First comprehensive needle exchange program established in North America in Tacoma, Washington.

1990

CONFERENCE BOYCOTT. To protest U.S. immigration policy, domestic and international non-governmental groups boycott the VI Annual International AIDS conference in San Francisco, California.

TREATING CHILDREN. The FDA approves use of AZT for pediatric AIDS.

GLOBAL HIV. About eight million people are living with HIV worldwide, according to UNAIDS estimates.

1991

AIDS SYMBOL. Red ribbon is introduced as the international symbol of AIDS awareness and solidarity.

1992

AIDS DEATHS. AIDS becomes the number one cause of death among American men 25 to 44 years old and remains so through 1995.

1995

TREATMENTS ADVANCE. FDA approves first protease inhibitor—saquinavir—for use in combination with other HIV drugs. This ushers in a new era of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART).

UNAIDS CREATED. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS established to coordinate efforts of six different UN programs devoted to AIDS. It is known as UNAIDS and becomes operational in 1996.

RUSSIAN ACTIVISM. Russia enacts a federal AIDS law, guaranteeing free access to treatment for HIV-positive citizens.

GLOBAL HIV. About 18 million people worldwide are living with HIV, according to UNAIDS estimates.

1996

VACCINE DEVELOPMENT. A non-governmental organization forms to eliminate barriers to development of an HIV vaccine. It is called the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, IAVI.

BRAZILIAN ACTIVISM. Brazil manufactures generic antiretroviral drugs in a challenge to international patent laws. The drugs are free for those in need. Brazil becomes the first developing country to begin national ARV distribution.

1997

U.S. PROGRESS. AIDS-related deaths in the US decline by more than 40% compared to the prior year, largely due to HAART.

1998

VACCINE TRIALS. The first large scale human trial of an HIV vaccine begins in North America.

AFRICAN AMERICAN ACTIVISM. African American leaders declare a “state of emergency” in the African American community due to HIV/AIDS.

SOUTH AFRICAN ACTIVISM. Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) is formed in South Africa. The grassroots movement pushes for access to treatment.

1999

NEW U.S. FUNDING. The U.S. announces new funding for the global pandemic. It is administered through LIFE, the Leadership and Investment in Fighting Epidemic Initiative.

VACCINE TRIALS. The first human vaccine trial in a developing country begins in Thailand.

MBEKI ON AIDS. South African President Thabo Mbeki stirs worldwide controversy by questioning the link between HIV and AIDS.

2000

GLOBAL ATTENTION. U.S. and UN Security Council declare HIV/AIDS a security threat.

CONFERENCE LANDMARK. Under the slogan, “Breaking the Silence,” the XIII International AIDS conference is held in a developing nation—South Africa. It heightens awareness of the global pandemic and its impact in hard-hit regions.

CHEAPER DRUGS. UNAIDS, WHO and other global health groups announce initiative with five major drug makers to negotiate lower prices for AIDS drugs in developing countries.

KAUNDA ON AIDS. Former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda announces his son’s death in 1986 was from an AIDS-related illness. Pledges commitment to fight AIDS.

AFRICAN TEENS. UNAIDS predicts up to half of teens in the most severely affected nations of southern Africa will die prematurely because of AIDS.

GLOBAL HIV. More than 27 million people worldwide are living with HIV, according to UNAIDS estimates.

2001

GLOBAL ATTENTION. UN General Assembly convenes first-ever special session on HIV/AIDS.

GLOBAL ACTIVISM. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan calls for creation of a Global Fund at the African summit on HIV/AIDS in Abuja. U.S. offers first pledge to support The Global Fund.

CHEAPER DRUGS. The World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Doha, Qatar, agrees that despite patent laws, developing countries can buy or manufacture cheaper generic drugs to meet public health crises, such as HIV/AIDS.

DRUG MAKERS RESPOND. Generic drug manufacturers offer to produce discounted, generic forms of HIV/AIDS drugs. Several brand name drug makers agree to offer further reduced drug prices in developing world.

AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA. The government’s Department of Health reports 4.74 million South Africans are HIV-positive.

DEATH IN AFRICA. AIDS is the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa, according to UNAIDS and the WHO.

2002

GLOBAL FUND. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria becomes operational and awards its first round of grants.

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT ACTS. The government commits to intensifying campaign to prevent HIV infection. Campaign rests on premise that HIV causes AIDS.

DRUG ACCESS. U.S. President George W. Bush issues Executive Order to help developing countries import or produce less expensive generic forms of HIV drugs. UNAIDS, WHO and other global health groups announce initiative with five major drug manufacturers to negotiate reduced prices for AIDS drugs in developing countries.

DEATHS WORLDWIDE. HIV becomes leading cause of death worldwide among those 15 to 59 years of age.

WOMEN AND HIV. UNAIDS reports that women comprise half of all adults living with HIV worldwide.

2003

WHO CAMPAIGN. WHO launches the 3x5 Initiative, the campaign to provide antiretroviral treatment to 3 million people by 2005.

VACCINE TRIAL IN SOUTH AFRICA. Phase I of a human vaccine trial launched in South Africa in partnership with U.S.

PUTIN SPEAKS. Russian President Vladimir Putin, in his Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, describes declining life expectancy as a serious threat to Russia's future. He says "AIDS is making it worse."

BUSH PLAN. United States President George W. Bush announces PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a five-year, US\$15 billion initiative to address HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria primarily in hard-hit countries.

DRUG ACCESS. The William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation secures price reductions for AIDS drugs from generic manufacturers. Thirteen developing nations will benefit.

2004

CONFERENCE LANDMARK. The XV International Conference on AIDS is held in Bangkok, Thailand. First conference held in Southeast Asia.

GMAI CREATED. Global media leaders meet at the United Nations and form the Global Media AIDS Initiative. The GMAI leverages the power of media to prevent the spread of HIV.

BUSH PLAN BEGINS. PEPFAR, President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, begins first round of funding.

WOMEN AND AIDS. UNAIDS launches The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS to raise the visibility of the epidemic's impact on women and girls around the world.

2005

ECONOMIC PRIORITY. At World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, priorities include a focus on addressing HIV/AIDS in Africa and other hard hit regions of the world.

HISTORIC ANNOUNCEMENT. At an historic and unprecedented joint press conference, the World Health Organization, UNAIDS, the United States Government and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria announce results of joint efforts to increase the availability of antiretroviral drugs in developing countries.

GLOBAL HIV. More than 32 million people worldwide are living with HIV, according to UNAIDS estimates.

2006

GLOBAL ATTENTION. The United Nations convenes a follow-up meeting to assess progress related to the historic 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.

EURASIA MEETING. The first Eastern European and Central Asian AIDS conference (EECAAC) is held in Moscow.

AIDS CONFERENCE. The XVI International AIDS Conference is held in Toronto, Canada. The conference's theme, "Time to Deliver," underscores the continued threat of HIV/AIDS and the need for nations to honor financial, programmatic and political commitments to prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

AIDS MILESTONE. June 5, 2006, marks a quarter-century since the U.S. government issued its first warning about a disease that would become known as AIDS.

2007

MALE CIRCUMCISION. The WHO and UNAIDS recommend male circumcision “always be considered as part of a comprehensive HIV prevention package.”

HIV TESTING. The WHO and UNAIDS issue guidance that health care providers recommend HIV testing and counseling to all patients in countries with generalized epidemics.

GLOBAL HIV. More than 33 million people worldwide are living with HIV, according to UNAIDS estimates.

2008

AIDS CONFERENCE. The XVII International AIDS Conference is held in Mexico City, Mexico. The conference theme is “Universal Action Now.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A more extensive version of the HIV/AIDS timeline can be found on The Kaiser Family Foundation website: www.kff.org/hiv/aids/timeline/index.cfm.

UNAIDS. *25 Years of AIDS: A Timeline*, <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2006/issue2/0206p06.htm>

AVERT. *History of AIDS*, <http://www.avert.org/historyi.htm>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Milestones in the U.S. HIV Epidemic*, <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/other/PDF/TimeLine%202006.pdf>