

BOARD OF HEALTH RESOLUTION

Effective Treatment of HIV/AIDS Prevents Sexual Transmission

WHEREAS, scientific advances have shown that antiretroviral therapy (ART) preserves the health of people living with HIV;

WHEREAS, in addition to some smaller studies done since 2000, three large studies of sexual HIV transmission in thousands of serodiscordant couples including thousands of acts of sex were done between 2007 and 2016, in which not a single case of sexual transmission of HIV from a virally suppressed HIV-positive person to his or her HIV negative partner was reported (1);

WHEREAS, persons on ART who have a sustained undetectable viral load (defined as <200 copies/mL for at least 6 months) have levels of virus that are untransmittable, even if having sex without condoms (2);

WHEREAS, the “Undetectable = Untransmittable” (“U=U”) slogan and Consensus Statement was launched in 2016 by the Prevention Access Campaign to promote this finding (2);

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention joined the U=U movement by endorsing the science in a “Dear Colleague” letter released on September 27, 2017 (3);

WHEREAS, the U=U is a simple but profound message that is already influencing public opinion and causing more people with HIV (and their friends and families) to comprehend that they can live long, healthy lives, have children, and never have to worry about passing on their infection to others through sexual activity (1);

WHEREAS, the clarity of the U=U message will make it easier to promote the undeniable benefits of HIV treatment, which will encourage more people with HIV to seek treatment and bring our community closer to achievement of the UNAIDS' 90-90-90 target by 2020 (4) (5);

WHEREAS, the U=U message helps eliminate some of the stigma still faced by many people living with HIV today and which can be a barrier to treatment (6);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Jefferson County Board of Health:

- 1) Endorses the Prevention Access Campaign’s Consensus Statement and Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) message, and affirms that a person living with HIV who takes antiretroviral therapy (ART) daily as prescribed and maintains an undetectable viral load for at least six months, has effectively no risk of sexually transmitting the virus to an HIV-negative partner;
- 2) Urges the Jefferson County Department of Health and its partners to spread the U=U message broadly, and especially to people living with HIV who may not be seeking or accessing antiretroviral treatment, or who are not remaining in treatment, due to stigma, fear, misinformation or other barriers;
- 3) Supports efforts to provide universal access to treatment and care for all people living with HIV;

- 4) Encourages interventions that increase retention in HIV care and sustained viral suppression, both as a means to improve the lives of individuals living with HIV and as a highly effective strategy for preventing the spread of HIV in the community;
- 5) Endorses efforts to remove stigma associated with HIV status or risk.



Joshua Miller, D.O., Acting Chair
Jefferson County Board of Health

References:

1. "U=U taking off in 2017," Lancet HIV, Volume 4, No. 11, e475, November 2017
2. Consensus Statement, Prevention Access Campaign. Available at <https://www.preventionaccess.org/consensus>
3. Eugene McCray, MD "Dear Colleague – Information from CDC's Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention," Centers for Disease Control, September 27, 2017. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/library/dcl/dcl/092717.html>
4. "90–90–90 - An ambitious treatment target to help end the AIDS epidemic: By 2020, 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status. By 2020, 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy. By 2020, 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression." UNAIDS (The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS), January 1, 2017. Available at <http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2017/90-90-90>
5. On August 3, 2017 Birmingham Mayor William Bell, along with representatives of Jefferson County HIV/AIDS Community Coalition and the Alabama Department of Public Health, signed the Paris Declaration on Fast-Track Cities Ending AIDS, making it a goal to achieve the "90-90-90" target by 2020. More Fast Track Cities information is available at <http://www.iapac.org/cities/>
6. "Activities Combating HIV Stigma and Discrimination," HIV.gov. Available at <https://www.hiv.gov/federal-response/federal-activities-agencies/activities-combating-hiv-stigma-and-discrimination>