

# 2021 ILLINOIS STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



## ILLINOIS HEALTHY YOUTH ACT

The goal of this bill is to have inclusive and affirming sexual health education that provides youth the full toolbox of knowledge and skills needed to support responsible and informed decisions about their health and overall well-being throughout their entire lives.

**The Illinois Healthy Youth Act removes outdated, stigmatizing language and builds on current standards for health and sexual health education courses. It also expands the current requirement that instruction be medically accurate, developmentally and age appropriate and include instruction that is also culturally and linguistically appropriate and adapted for students with disabilities and non-English speaking students.** AFC is honored to work with the ACLU Illinois and other partners on this important legislation.

## REDUCE AND LIMIT OUT-OF-POCKET PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Across Illinois, patients facing extremely high out-of-pocket prescription costs are often forced to go deep into debt just to access the medication they desperately need, or even worse, forgo medication because they simply cannot afford it. The goal of this bill is to address these burdens felt by patients by offering more prescription drug coverage choices for Illinoisans.

**Specifically, this legislation would enact the following reforms:**

- **Require all health insurers to offer at least some plans that use only flat dollar/predictable copays for prescription drugs, or**
- **Require that some plans have a flat dollar copay cap.**
- **Enable patients to financially plan for their medications and, as a result, have a better chance of sticking to treatment plans and improving health outcomes.**

AFC, a member and leading partner organization in the [Protect Our Care Illinois \(POCIL\) Coalition](#), is thrilled to work with POCIL, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and other partners on this important legislation.

## DECRIMINILIZE HIV IN ILLINOIS

**AFC, a member and leading partner organization in the [Illinois HIV Action Alliance \(IHAA\)](#) coalition, will advance legislation to address the criminalization of people living with HIV in Illinois by pursuing a repeal of Illinois' "Criminal Transmission of HIV" law ([720 ILCS 5/12-5.01](#)).** AFC and IHAA coalition partners will continue to conduct outreach, education and engagement activities with priority populations, stakeholders and decision-makers on the need to repeal this highly stigmatizing and overly harsh law that runs contrary to the priorities of the statewide [Getting to Zero Illinois \(GTZ-IL\) plan](#) to end HIV by 2030.

## PRESERVE ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY OF TELEHEALTH

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor JB Pritzker issued an [executive order](#) that allowed for the expansion of telehealth services for all Illinoisans. These expanded services allow all Illinoisans to continue to receive necessary medical, mental health, substance use care and case management services even amid a global pandemic. AFC is proud to partner with the statewide Coalition to Protect Telehealth, the Illinois Health and Hospital Association and other community partners to advance legislation that would make the temporary changes enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic related to telehealth permanent.

**Specifically, this legislation would ensure the following reforms:**

- **Provide flexibility in where patients can receive telehealth services (i.e., geographic location, type of health site);**

- **Grant payment and coverage parity between telehealth and in-person care;**
- **Provide flexibility in the types of technology used to access telehealth services including any non-public facing remote communication products (i.e. Apple FaceTime, Facebook Messenger video chat, Google Hangouts video, WhatsApp video chat, Zoom, or Skype). Public-facing communication products like Facebook Live, Twitch, TikTok, and similar video communication applications would not be allowable modes of access for telehealth services.**

## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION/GENDER IDENTITY (SOGI) DATA COLLECTION**

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community is diverse with unique and significant health disparities and barriers to health care that often lead to poor outcomes across mental and physical health. Currently, the state of Illinois, through the Department of Public Health, does not collect routine data on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) that would help address the health disparities found within the LGBT community and among its subpopulations. In order to effectively address LGBT health disparities in Illinois, the state needs to securely and consistently collect SOGI information in health interventions related to COVID-19.

**AFC and our LGBTQ-focused think tank Pride Action Tank, are proud to partner with the Illinois SOGI Data Collection Task Force and community partners to advance legislation that would require SOGI data collection during all COVID-19-related testing, contact tracing, hospital admissions and vaccinations.**

## **HEALTHY ILLINOIS FOR ALL**

COVID-19 lays bare historic racial, ethnic and income inequities in access to health care. Undocumented immigrants—millions of whom are serving on the frontlines as “essential workers”—face incredible barriers to health care, from uncertain coverage of testing and treatment to fear of immigration consequences if they access health care. We cannot continue to accept health care disparities as normal and inevitable.

**To address this pressing issue, AFC supports legislation that would extend Medicaid eligibility to all low-income Illinois residents aged 19 through 64, with household incomes of up to 138% FPL (\$17,236/year for an individual) regardless of their immigration status.** This legislation would cover approximately 92,000 residents including 15,000 young adults. AFC, a steering committee member of the [Healthy Illinois campaign](#), is proud to participate in this campaign to ensure that all Illinoisans are able to access quality, affordable health care coverage.

## **ILLINOIS STATE BUDGET: HIV & OTHER STIs FUNDING**

As we have done annually, AFC will advocate for the protection and increase of state funding for HIV treatment and prevention services. **To achieve the priorities of the [Getting to Zero Illinois \(GTZ-IL\) plan](#), Illinois must invest an additional \$2 million in state funding for HIV prevention and treatment services, including HIV testing and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).** This investment will lead to the continued reduction of new HIV cases, especially when prioritized in Black and Latinx communities where the need is greatest. In addition, **AFC will advocate for the investment in new STI funding of \$900,000 to be prioritized in the state budget, largely to address the growing rates of STI diagnoses (i.e., Chlamydia; Gonorrhea; & Syphilis), screening and treatment services.**

**To address the disproportionate and devastating impact HIV has inflicted on Illinoisans living with or vulnerable to HIV and other chronic conditions, especially those in the Black community, AFC supports an investment of \$15 million in state funding for the African American HIV/AIDS Response Fund (AAHARF).** We strongly believe that these investments in state funding will place Illinois on the right path to end the HIV epidemic and provide healthier and more equitable futures for all Illinoisans.

## **HB 158: ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS' (ILBC) HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE OMNIBUS BILL**

To complete its work from the historic January 2021 Illinois Lane Duck Session, leadership in the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus (ILBC), led by Representative Camille Lilly and Majority Caucus Chair Senator Mattie Hunter, have reintroduced the [Illinois Health Care and Human Service Reform Act](#). **The legislation contains innovative provisions that will eliminate biases and injustices in Illinois' health care system such as creating the Community Health Worker Certification and Reimbursement Act, the Anti-Racism Commission Act, providing for doula services to be covered under Medicaid and requiring implicit bias training for medical professionals (the Implicit Bias Training requirement is also in HB309).** AFC will continue its strong support and advocacy to bring about the necessary transformations to the state's health and human services system, as well as work to achieve true racial health equity that will ultimately improve the health outcomes of Black residents in Illinois.

## **IL HEALTHCARE AFFORDABILITY STUDY**

In May 2020, the Illinois General Assembly passed a [Medicaid Omnibus bill](#) that included a provision for the state's Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) and Department of Insurance (DOI) to provide a report outlining options that will improve access and affordability of health care for Illinois residents. **This report is due to Governor JB Pritzker and the General Assembly by February 28, 2021. Specifically, this report will include the design, costs, benefits and implementation of a State Option for health insurance coverage with a focus on expanding access to health care coverage for those underinsured and uninsured in Illinois.** AFC is committed to advocating for all policies within this report that will increase access to health care coverage and health services, and advance health equity.

## **COVID-19 EMERGENCY EVICTION AND FORECLOSURE PREVENTION**

Housing is health care, especially amid a global pandemic. With so many Illinoisans having lost jobs and income due to COVID-19, it is imperative that the Illinois General Assembly enact the necessary protections for those at risk of losing their home and the resources needed to weather the impact of this public health emergency.

**Specifically, this legislation should ensure the following reforms:**

- **A temporary COVID-19 emergency homeowner and small landlord foreclosure moratorium;**
- **Equitable access to the federally funded emergency rental assistance program for the communities most impacted by the pandemic;**
- **The sealing of eviction records that act as a barrier to housing.**

AFC and our supporting organization, the Center for Health and Housing (CHH), are proud to partner with Housing Action Illinois, the Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA) and the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless to advance legislation that will ensure Illinoisans can stabilize their housing situation for the duration of the pandemic and beyond.

## **PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REFORM ACT – HB711/SB177**

AFC is proud to work with the [Your Care Can't Wait Coalition](#) to advance the Prior Authorization Reform Act this spring session. The goal of this bill is to address patient and physician concerns about the bureaucratic delays caused by the prior authorization processes used by state-regulated health insurance plans. **This legislation will establish consistent timelines so patients don't have to worry about decision-making delays causing further damage to their health. The bill will also make sure prior authorization requirements are based on medical evidence and administered by qualified individuals.**



**Contact: Timothy Jackson, AFC Director of Government Relations**

**Email: [tjackson@aidschicago.org](mailto:tjackson@aidschicago.org)**

**Phone: +1 (256) 200-8878**