



AIDS
FOUNDATION
CHICAGO

For more than thirty-five years, AIDS Foundation Chicago (AFC) has led the fight for HIV prevention and treatment services across Illinois and is committed to mobilizing communities in the pursuit of equity and justice for people living with and vulnerable to HIV or other chronic conditions.

To realize the priorities and goals of the Getting to Zero Illinois (GTZ-IL) plan to end the HIV epidemic by 2030, AFC is proud to advocate and prioritize the following state legislative agenda in partnership with and through the leadership of community organizations and coalitions across Illinois in 2024.

Strengthening and Protecting Illinois' HIV Funding Infrastructure (SPIHFI)

AFC is advocating for a \$2 million increase in state funding for HIV education, prevention, testing, and treatment in the state's Fiscal Year 2025 budget, as well as \$2.5 million in new funding to launch eight Rapid Start for HIV Treatment pilot sites. AFC is also proud to advocate for fully funding the African American HIV/AIDS Response Fund (AAHARF) and ensure timely disbursement to intended Black-led community-based HIV organizations. Finally, AFC is proud to advocate for the protection of funding for the Getting to Zero Illinois (GTZ-IL) initiative, PrEP4Illinois program, and STI testing, treatment and prevention.

Connection to HIV Testing and Linkage to Care (TLC) Act

Testing, linkage to care, and HIV treatment are widely recognized as the three critical arms of HIV prevention, especially when prioritized among the Black, Latiné, and LGBTQ+ communities disproportionately impacted by HIV. AFC is proud to advocate for legislation that enacts the following reforms:

- **At-Home HIV Testing Kits:** Mandates insurers and Medicaid provide coverage for home test kits for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, without cost-sharing.
- **Rapid Start Pilots:** Creates eight Rapid Start for HIV Treatment pilot sites that will initiate antiretroviral therapy within 7 days of initial diagnosis or within 7 days of referral to HIV medical care.
- **HIV Education in County Jails:** Ensures that all county jails provide HIV/AIDS education to people who are incarcerated and visitors, as well as link them to HIV testing as mandated by Illinois' County Jail Act.

Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB)

Many Illinoisans, including people living with and vulnerable to HIV, are often forced to choose between their medication and other necessities, like rent and groceries. Prescription drugs don't work if people can't afford them. AFC supports legislation that would establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB), an independent, nonpartisan body with the authority to evaluate high-cost prescription drugs and set up-per payment limits on what Illinoisans will pay.

Overdose Prevention Sites (OPS) Pilot


More than 3,200 Illinoisans lost their lives due to opioid overdoses in 2022. Overdose prevention sites (OPS) have been shown to save lives, reduce the spread of communicable diseases, such as HIV and Hepatitis C, and link those with substance use disorders to behavioral and physical health care. AFC is proud to support legislation that would authorize the creation of one OPS pilot site and connect folks to community support or other existing medical care, treatment, recovery programs and harm reduction services.

Healthy Illinois for All

AFC is pleased to work alongside the community partners of the Healthy Illinois campaign to request the full funding of the Health Benefits for

ILLINOIS STATE
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

2024



PRIORITIES

Immigrant Adults (HBIA) and Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors (HBIS) programs in the state's Fiscal Year 2025 budget to enable re-opening program enrollment without co-pays.

Ban on Short-Term Limited Duration “Junk” Health Insurance Plans

While short-term limited duration (STLD) health insurance plans, also known as “junk insurance plans”, may appear cheaper, they are not subject to the consumer protections of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) including the requirement to provide coverage of essential health services. In turn, Illinoisans with these plans can be denied coverage for certain conditions resulting in people going without necessary care or facing higher out-of-pocket costs. AFC is proud to continue supporting legislation that bans these plans that often deny coverage to people with chronic conditions like HIV and result in higher premiums.

Funding to Prevent & End Homelessness

Without question, housing is healthcare, especially to Illinoisans living with and vulnerable to HIV. AFC and the Center for Housing and Health (CHH) are proud to work alongside community partners Housing Action Illinois, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Illinois Shelter Alliance, and the Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA) to advocate for \$85 million in new funding in the state's Fiscal Year 2025 budget—for homeless prevention, emergency shelter, homeless youth programs, supportive housing, and other priorities—to keep making progress on the HOME Illinois plan to prevent and end homelessness.

Stop the Revolving Door from Re-Entry to Homelessness to Prison

Housing is the basis for stability and success, but current Illinois registry and housing banishment laws systematically displace, exclude and reincarcerate people—disproportionately Black men—with past convictions while failing to support survivors and prevent victimization. AFC and CHH are proud to work alongside the Chicago 400 to support legislation that would reduce housing banishment zones from 500 to 250 feet, allow Illinoisans experiencing homelessness to register at police stations annually or quarterly (like housed people) instead of weekly, and shrink the registry footprint by making “failure to register” a misdemeanor.

Ban on Prior Authorizations in Health Insurance Plans

Prior authorization is a requirement by health insurance plans for patients to obtain approval of a health care service or medication before the care is provided. However, these requirements often cause delays for patients, including those with chronic conditions like HIV, and in turn, result in negative clinical outcomes. AFC supports legislation that bans prior authorization in health insurance plans for gender-affirming care/hormonal therapy, as well as HIV/HCV treatment and prevention.

This list of legislative priorities is not an exhaustive list and does not encompass all the policy work that AFC's Policy & Advocacy team is currently doing on the state level. As the state legislative session progresses, AFC will monitor and engage with emerging issues that arise when they align with our mission, vision, and values. We will also continue to support legislation that meaningfully addresses racial health equity and impacts people living with and vulnerable to HIV and people experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

Keep up with AFC's policy & advocacy work by signing up for our Mobile Action Network! You can sign up by texting AFC to 40649 or by visiting <https://p2a.co/Vga0Jee>.

SAVE THE DATE: Virtual Advocacy Day 2024 (Wednesday, April 10, 2024)

Stay tuned for more information about how to register and participate!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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