

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 24-1721 World AIDS Day

WHEREAS, the first World AIDS Day took place on December 1, 1988, providing a platform to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and to honor the lives affected by the epidemic. This year marks the 36th commemoration of this important day; and

WHEREAS, this year on World AIDS Day, we will recommit to ending the HIV epidemic in Denver and around the world. We will also rededicate ourselves to fighting the discrimination that too often keeps people with HIV from getting the services they need and living the full lives they deserve; and

WHEREAS, forty-one years ago, visionary activists developed the Denver Principles manifesto, which shaped the active involvement of people living with HIV in the AIDS response. This was a historic first step towards the Greater Involvement of People with HIV (GIPA) principle, which promotes the meaningful participation of people living with HIV in decision-making, not as passive subjects but as protagonists fully involved in the response to AIDS. The Denver Principles outlined rights and responsibilities for people living with HIV and provided recommendations to healthcare professionals, family, and friends. This remains the model for an ethical public health response, including for those experiencing homelessness, for people who use drugs, and those living with mental health issues and disabilities and only came into being because of the direct action of advocates and activists; and

WHEREAS, the first needle exchange programs in the United States were created, often illicitly, by groups such as the National AIDS Brigade and the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, also known as ACT UP, as a direct action to reduce the spread of HIV, and needle exchanges have become instrumental tools of harm reduction in Denver and beyond; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the dedication of scientists, activists, health care workers, caregivers, and so many others, we have made enormous progress preventing, detecting, and treating HIV; reducing transmission and AIDS-related deaths; and supporting millions of people so that they can enjoy long, healthy lives. Still, not everyone has equal access to that care. For the more than 10,000 people in the Denver metro area and 39 million people globally now living with HIV — especially members of the LGBTQI+ community, communities of color, women, and girls — a diagnosis is still life-altering; and

WHEREAS, Denver and the State of Colorado are taking bold measures to significantly decrease estimated new transmissions: First, by identifying persons who remain undiagnosed and linking them to care. Second, by supporting persons diagnosed with HIV to engage in care and treatment with access to medication to attain HIV viral suppression, recognizing that early initiation of antiretroviral medication allows individuals to take medication as prescribed and to get and keep an undetectable viral load, which allows them to live long and healthy lives and not transmit HIV. This directly supports the “Undetectable equals Untransmittable” message that individuals with a sustained undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV. Third, by expanding access to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for prevention; and

WHEREAS, World AIDS Day is an opportunity to remember those we have lost; to celebrate those who are surviving and thriving with HIV; to honor health care workers, advocates, and researchers who have dedicated their lives to this disease; and to recognize those who continue to provide support and leadership in the fight to end HIV transmission and the development of AIDS in our lifetime; and

WHEREAS, at a time when our LGBTQ communities, in particular our trans neighbors, are under increasing legal attacks throughout the country, it is imperative that we continue to reduce stigma, strengthen protections, and follow the lead of the communities most impacted. The continued fight for the rights and dignity of people living with HIV and AIDS is central to that imperative.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. That the Denver City Council commemorates 36 years of World AIDS Day on December 1, 2024.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Denver Health, Denver HIV Resources Planning Council, 5280 Fast Track Cities Task Force, Public Health Institute, Vivent Health, Children’s Hospital of Colorado (CHiP), Positive Women’s Network, Brother Jeff’s Cultural Center, It Takes a Village, Colorado Health Network, Crazy Love Africa, Servicios de la Raza, The Denver Element, Harm Reduction Action Center, Hey Denver, and Park Hill United Methodist Church.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL November 25, 2024

PRESIDENT

