



MORRIS HEIGHTS HEALTH CENTER

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Morris Heights Health Center Recognized for Effectiveness In Treating People with HIV in the Bronx

Bronx, New York—Morris Heights Health Center (MHHC) has been selected as a model HIV treatment program in the state by the New York State Department of Health in honor of World AIDS Day on Friday, December 1st, 2017.

As part of the distinction, MHHC's HIV Care Services Program will be showcased on the website for Ending the Epidemic (<http://etedashboardny.org>), Gov. Mario Cuomo's ambitious initiative to reduce the number of new HIV infections in the state to just 750 by 2020, down from a high of 14,000 at the height of the epidemic.

"This honor just validates the work we're doing here in the Bronx," said Dr. Susan Enahoro, medical director of the HIV Care Services Program at MHHC. "Before, all of us in the field were focused on testing but it's not just about finding people and testing them, it's about treating them. And what about the people who are not yet positive but are at high risk? We make sure they don't get infected. That's an important part of our work, if we're going to stop the spread."

The recognition comes on the heels of a three-year \$2.1 million grant that the U.S. Department of Health awarded MHHC in October to provide medical care and support services to low income and uninsured people living with HIV. MHHC has a long history of fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Bronx. It was one of three community health centers in the late 1980s funded to pilot an integrated HIV service delivery model for a federal funding program as part of the federal Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program.

The state health department will highlight MHHC's effectiveness in the use of the cascade of HIV care, which are the various steps necessary for everyone who needs care to remain engaged in it—from initial testing to being able to suppress the virus through treatment.

In 2016, MHHC's program was able to get all of its newly diagnosed patients to take antiretroviral drugs, the recommended treatment of HIV. Moreover, it was able to retain 93% of them in treatment, and 86% achieved what is known as viral suppression, meaning they have a very low level of HIV in their blood.

They are not cured but can lead otherwise healthy lives and reduces the possibility of them spreading the virus.

In addition to the statewide recognition, MHHC will host a program in honor of World AIDS Day that will include a memorial walk in remembrance of those who have died of AIDS. The event will begin at 8 a.m. in the third floor conference room at MHHC's headquarters at 85 W. Burnside. The event is open to the public.

About Morris Heights Health Center

Since its inception in 1981, Morris Heights Health Center has been a federally qualified health center. Funded by federal, state, city, private foundation grants and corporate donations, MHHC is an outgrowth of a grassroots community response to medical abandonment of the Morris Heights section of the Bronx. MHHC is a network of eight treatment and diagnostic centers serving some 53,000 patients annually. MHHC's mission is to be "the vanguard for quality, affordable and accessible healthcare for all."

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