AIDS at 25: Women and the HIV Epidemic

News and Events

- Pernessa Seele founds The Balm In Gilead, leader of the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS
- Former *Playboy* "Playmate" Rebekka Armstrong diagnosed with HIV
- TV star Amanda Blake ("Miss Kitty" on "Gunsmoke") dies of AIDS
- U.S. HHS Secretary, Donna Shalala, fails to lift ban on federal funding for needle exchange programs despite government research that they reduce HIV transmission
- Haitian-born social worker Marie St. Cyr becomes first director of New York-based Women and AIDS Resource Network (WARN)
- Activist Dawn Averitt diagnosed with HIV; she later founds Women's Information Service and Exchange
- Dr. Mathilde Krim, Dr. Michael Gottlieb and actress Elizabeth Taylor launch American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR)
- Elizabeth Glaser co-founds Pediatric AIDS Foundation after learning she and her children have HIV
- Laurie Garrett, longtime journalist at New York's *Newsday*, begins reporting regularly on HIV/AIDS
- Singers Bette Midler and Barbra Streisand hold fundraiser for San Francisco AIDS Foundation
- Mother Teresa visits AIDS patients in Washington, D.C.
- Surgeon General C. Everett Koop urges any woman considering pregnancy to be tested for HIV
- Princess Diana opens first AIDS hospital ward in U.K. and campaigns against AIDS-related discrimination
- Madonna gives her first AIDS benefit concert
- Social worker Caitlin Ryan becomes first executive director of AID Atlanta, the oldest AIDS Service Organization (ASO) in Southeast
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Margaret Heckler says an AIDS vaccine will be available in 2 years
- First National Women and HIV Conference held in Washington, D.C.
- ACT UP protests at the U.S. CDC to expand AIDS definitions to include women-specific diseases
- Florida resident Kimberly Bergalis accuses her dentist of infecting her with HIV during a dental procedure
- Jeanne White urges U.S. Senate to pass the Ryan White CARE Act named in honor of her late son; signed into law in August
- Mary Fisher, a woman living with HIV, addresses Republican National Convention
- Elizabeth Glaser criticizes under-funding of AIDS research at Democratic National Convention
- Int'l Conference on AIDS focuses on women
- Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) launches Lesbian AIDS Project
- Miss America Leanza Cornett makes AIDS awareness a priority of her "reign"
- The ASO Women Alive is founded in Los Angeles
- Liz Smith is first major newspaper columnist to write about AIDS
- President Clinton appoints Kristine Gebbie as nation's first AIDS "czar"
- Dr. Joycelyn Elders appointed Surgeon General; she resigns in 1994 following controversial remarks on sexuality
- New York State passes legislation requiring that all newborns be screened for HIV
- First Lady Hillary Clinton urges pregnant women to be tested for HIV
- Dr. Helene Gayle named director of U.S. CDC's HIV division
- Actress Sharon Stone becomes amfAR's celebrity spokeswoman
- Mary-Louis Parker plays an HIV-positive leading character in movie "Boys on the Side"
- Rebecca Denison becomes one of the first HIV-positive women to talk publicly about becoming pregnant
- Latina talk-show host Cristina Saralegui launches awareness organization Arriba La Vida (Up with Life)
- Actress Susan Sarandon helps found The HIV/AIDS Human Rights Project
- South African AIDS activist Gugu Diamini is beaten to death after revealing her HIV status
- Anne-christine D'Adesky launches *HIV Plus* to address gap in HIV treatment reporting for the general public
- Ana Oliveira becomes first woman executive director of GMHC
- The Global Campaign for Microbicides is founded at the XII Int'l AIDS Conference in Geneva
- Israeli singer Ofra Haza dies of AIDS
- Civil rights leader Coretta Scott King launches campaign to bring AIDS Memorial Quilt to black colleges
- U.N. General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS calls on nations to assess impact of epidemic "at all levels of society, especially on women"
- U.S. HHS releases first manual focused on medical care for HIV-positive women
- Wisconsin teenager Korrin Krause is fired from her job at Quality Foods IGA because she is HIV positive
- Whoopi Goldberg is named Goodwill Ambassador for the American Health Foundation for her commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS
- Dr. Julie Gerberding becomes director of U.S. CDC
- Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, South Africa's health minister, advocates garlic to combat HIV rather than antiretrovirals; critics dub her "Dr. No"
- First annual National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day held
- HIV-positive Regan Hofmann becomes editor-in-chief of *POZ* magazine
- HIV-positive, 7-months pregnant Jennifer Jako appears on cover of *Newsweek*
- Oprah Winfrey and Tyra Banks take HIV tests to encourage greater openness about the disease
- Author J.L. King publishes *On The Down Low*, leading to media coverage of black men who sleep with men but identify as heterosexual
- Jenna Bush, the President's daughter, announces plans to publish a nonfiction book about a young HIV-positive woman in Central America

The Epidemic

- First cases in immune deficiency reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC); women are among those diagnosed
- Dr. Robert Gallo (U.S. National Cancer Institute) and Dr. Luc Montagnier (Institut Pasteur, Paris) co-discover HIV
- HIV test becomes available
- Name "AIDS" given to deadly new disease
- Women represent 7% of U.S. AIDS cases
- First HIV treatment, AZT, approved by U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) at a dose of 2 pills every 4 hours (12 tablets per day)
- Women represent 22% of new AIDS cases among African Americans
- U.S. FDA approves the female condom
- U.S. CDC expands official definition of AIDS to include gynecological manifestations of HIV infection
- U.S. FDA approves use of AZT for preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission after results of ACTG 076 study show perinatal use of drug cuts infection in newborns by 67%
- Advent of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) with introduction of first protease inhibitor; dosing is 2–3 times daily, totaling more than 20 tablets
- AIDS becomes number one cause of death for African-American women ages 25–44
- U.S. FDA approves rapid HIV test, which gives results in 20 minutes
- Women account for 30% of new U.S. HIV diagnoses, up from 21% in 1996
- UNAIDS reports that women account for nearly half of all people living with HIV worldwide
- Simpler treatment regimens are introduced featuring 2 pills a day
- 15 microbicide candidates are in clinical trials
- 17.5 million women worldwide are living with HIV
- U.S. CDC reports over 1 million Americans are living with HIV/AIDS; women account for 29% of new HIV diagnoses each year
- U.S. CDC estimates that HIV diagnosis rate among black females is more than 20 times higher than white females
- Clinical trials of the microbicide Ushercell are closed after women were found to have higher rates of HIV than those using placebo

1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2007

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