



**National African
Immigrant and
Refugee HIV and
Hepatitis Awareness
(NAIRHHA) Day**

toolkit





National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Table of Contents | 2 |
| 1. Purpose of NAIRHHA Day Toolkit..... | 4 |
| This toolkit aims to: | 4 |
| 2. What is National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day)? | 6 |
| 3. Why is NAIRHHA Day Important? | 7 |
| Population Demographics | 7 |
| HIV Prevalence in the African Immigrant and Refugee Population | 7 |
| Hepatitis B Prevalence in the African Immigrant and Refugee Population | 8 |
| Why is Another HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Needed? | 11 |
| To learn more about NAIRHHA Day, please visit: | 11 |
| 4. History of NAIRHHA Day..... | 12 |
| 5. Leading Organizations..... | 14 |
| Multicultural AIDS Coalition (MAC) | 14 |
| Africans for Improved Access (AFIA) Program | 14 |
| Hepatitis B Foundation | 14 |
| Coalition against Hepatitis for People of African Origin (CHIPO) | 14 |
| 6. What to Consider When Engaging African Immigrant Communities. | 15 |
| 7. NAIRHHA Day Event Ideas and Promotional Resources | 16 |
| Example Events: | 16 |
| Press Conferences | 16 |
| Collaborative Community Events with Other Organizations | 16 |
| Speaking Engagements..... | 16 |
| NAIRHHA Day Walk/Run Events | 16 |
| NAIRHHA Day Community Parade..... | 16 |
| Sample Event Promotions..... | 17 |
| a. NAIRHHA Day Flyer | 17 |
| b. NAIRHHA Day Petition | 17 |
| c. Letter Template for Local Organization Involvement..... | 17 |
| d. Event Communication Templates | 17 |
| 8. Get Involved with NAIRHHA Day on Social Media | 18 |
| NAIRHHA Day on Facebook..... | 18 |



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Purpose of NAIRHHA Day on Facebook:..... | 18 |
| How to Support NAIRHHA Day on Facebook: | 18 |
| NAIRHHA Day on Twitter/X..... | 18 |
| Purpose of @NAIRHHADay on Twitter:..... | 18 |
| Twitter Basics:..... | 19 |
| How to Support NAIRHHA Day on Twitter: | 19 |
| Sample Tweets | 19 |
| Sample Facebook Posts | 20 |
| Use Proverbs to Maximize Engagement..... | 21 |
| Proverbs..... | 21 |
| 9. Tips for Efficient Fundraising | 24 |
| Identify potential sources for funding/sponsorship/partnerships: | 24 |
| Determine who from your organization will make initial contact: | 24 |
| Establish Sponsorship Levels: | 24 |
| Determine levels of sponsor recognition: | 25 |
| What to Do When Securing Sponsorships..... | 25 |
| Explain the Need..... | 25 |
| 10. Evaluation..... | 27 |
| 11. Contact information for the Multicultural AIDS Coalition | 28 |
| 12. Resources..... | 29 |
| A. HIV/AIDS Basics | 29 |
| What is HIV? | 29 |
| How does HIV weaken the immune system? | 29 |
| How does one get HIV? | 29 |
| Is there a cure for HIV? | 29 |
| What is AIDS? | 29 |
| What are some common symptoms of AIDS?..... | 29 |
| How does one get AIDS? | 30 |
| What is the difference between HIV and AIDS? Are they the same thing? | 30 |
| What are some of the most and least common ways to contract HIV/AIDS? | 30 |
| What are common prevention strategies to limit the overall prevalence of HIV/AIDS?..... | 30 |
| B. Hepatitis B Basics..... | 31 |
| What is hepatitis B? | 31 |
| How is hepatitis B transmitted? | 31 |
| What are the two levels of hepatitis B? | 31 |



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Is there a cure for hepatitis B? | 32 |
| Is hepatitis B preventable? | 32 |
| Hepatitis B Foundation Storytellers | 32 |
| 13. Appendix | 33 |
| A. NAIRHHA Day Flyers (Can use any combination of the three) | 33 |
| B. Petition | 36 |
| National African Immigrant & Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day) | 36 |
| Why is it important to have an HIV/AIDS and hepatitis b awareness day for African immigrants?..... | 36 |
| How does National African Immigrant & Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day) address this issue? | 36 |
| C. Template for Letter of Proclamation | 38 |
| Proclamation Letter | 38 |
| D. Template for Call to Action for Local Organizations..... | 39 |
| E. Press Release Template | 40 |
| F. Media Advisory | 41 |
| G. Calendar Alert | 43 |
| H. NAIRHHA Day Resolution | 44 |
| NAIRHHA DAY RESOLUTION | 44 |
| I. Congressional Letter in Support of NAIRHHA Day | 47 |

1. Purpose of NAIRHHA Day Toolkit

This comprehensive toolkit serves as an essential resource for organizations, communities, families, and individuals seeking to actively partake in the observance of National African Immigrant & Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day. Designed to empower and guide your efforts, this toolkit provides a wealth of information and practical strategies to raise awareness, advocate for action, and foster a deeper understanding of the HIV/AIDS and hepatitis epidemics, particularly within African immigrant and refugee communities.

This toolkit aims to:

- Be a guide for organizations, communities, families, and individuals celebrating NAIRHHA Day on September 9th
- Advocate for NAIRHHA Day on the federal, state, and local levels.
- Increase awareness about HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B in our communities in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

- Provide facts on the HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B epidemics (in general and specifically for the African immigrant and refugee population)
- Present a comprehensive introduction to NAIRHHA Day
- Offer sample materials on how to:
 - Get other organizations involved with NAIRHHA Day
 - Organize and promote NAIRHHA Day events
 - Increase fundraising efforts
 - Stay connected to current NAIRHHA Day updates through social media

Disclaimer

In this toolkit, the terms "African-born," "African immigrants," and "African immigrants and refugees" are used interchangeably. These terms collectively refer to individuals who were born in Africa and have relocated to the United States, including those who have immigrated voluntarily and those who have sought refuge.



2. What is National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day)?

National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day, or NAIRHHA Day, aims to focus national and local attention on the highly prevalent health issues of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B among the African immigrant and refugee population in the United States, in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

The resolution recognizing NAIRHHA Day as a federal health observance was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in September 2023. NAIRHHA Day is officially observed on **September 9th** and is now listed on HIV.gov. Your continued efforts are vital to advancing its traditions and widening its impact. NAIRHHA Day provides a platform for organizations, communities, families, and individuals to:

- Raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B to reduce stigma
- Learn protective measures against HIV, hepatitis B, and related diseases
- Understand current and emerging care/treatment strategies to help end these epidemics
- Create and implement effective, tailored strategies addressing these public health crises in African immigrant communities



3. Why is NAIRHHA Day Important?

Population Demographics

African immigrants represent the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. immigrant population, doubling in numbers every decade since 1970. As of 2019, over 2.1 million African immigrants resided in the United States, accounting for 5.1% of the total immigrant population. This growth rate has significantly outpaced overall foreign-born population increases, especially between 2010 and 2018 when the sub-Saharan African immigrant population grew by 52% compared to 12% for all immigrants (Anderson, 2020; Lorenzi & Batalova, 2022).

The largest African immigrant groups originate from Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, and Kenya. Geographically, they are concentrated in major metropolitan areas like New York City, Washington D.C., and Minneapolis. Significant populations also reside in Texas, California, and Georgia (Pew Research Center, 2023).

African immigrants generally have higher levels of educational attainment compared to other immigrant groups and the U.S. native-born population. Approximately 36% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, versus 33% of all immigrants. Notably, 46% of Black African immigrants attain at least a bachelor's degree, significantly exceeding the overall U.S. population (Boundless, 2023).

While employment rates are high among African immigrants, earnings tend to be lower than native-born Americans. This is partly due to underemployment and non-recognition of foreign credentials (Migration Policy Institute, 2023). Nearly 28% contribute to the healthcare sector as nursing assistants, personal care aides, and registered nurses (Boundless, 2023).

HIV Prevalence in the African Immigrant and Refugee Population

Although Blacks comprise only 13.6% of the U.S. population (2020 census), they accounted for 40% of HIV incidence and prevalence in 2021 (AIDSVu, 2024). HIV diagnosis rates among African-born individuals are six times higher than the general population and nearly twice that of U.S.-born Black individuals (Demeke et al, 2019; Prosser, Tang, & Hall, 2018). However, due to HIV surveillance methods failing to record individuals' birthplaces, the rate among African immigrants is under-reported.

In addition to high HIV rates, this population is at greater risk of late-stage diagnosis (Blanas et al, 2012). Cultural stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS plays a significant role, leading to fear and reluctance to



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

seek testing/treatment. This stigma prevents individuals from accessing necessary services and openly discussing their status, contributing to late diagnoses.

Moreover, language barriers and unfamiliarity with the U.S. healthcare system hinder timely access to health and social services. Limited English proficiency makes navigating services and understanding medical advice difficult, delaying care and treatment adherence (Fennie et al., 2016).

Immigration status also affects healthcare access. Undocumented immigrants may avoid seeking medical help due to deportation fears, leaving health conditions like HIV untreated. Even those with legal status face obstacles due to complex insurance systems (Venters & Gany, 2011).

Lastly, socioeconomic factors like low income and lack of insurance are prevalent, exacerbating vulnerability to late HIV diagnosis. Many African immigrants work low-wage jobs without health insurance, making care unaffordable (Kerani et al., 2008).

Hepatitis B Prevalence in the African Immigrant and Refugee Population

Like HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B disproportionately affects African immigrants. It is a serious liver infection causing liver cancer. Researchers label HBV a "silent epidemic" due to its asymptomatic nature for years until serious liver damage occurs. Furthermore, hepatitis B is inaccurately surveyed among foreign-born groups, limiting prevalence data and hindering intervention strategies (Ward & Byrd, 2012; Wong et al, 2021).

Estimates suggest 550,000 to 2.4 million U.S. residents live with hepatitis B, with 40%-70% being foreign-born (Kowdley et al., 2012; Wong et al, 2021). Approximately 15% of African immigrants are affected (Freeland et al, 2020).

Despite these statistics, African immigrant and refugee communities face barriers to hepatitis B screening and care, including lack of awareness about the disease and its risks, language/cultural differences impeding communication, limited healthcare access due to financial constraints and lack of insurance, stigma/discrimination, and inadequate targeted outreach (Ward & Byrd, 2012; Freeland et al, 2020).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended in 2008 that all persons born in regions of the world with intermediate to high hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection rates, including most African countries, should be tested for hepatitis B. This recommendation is part of efforts to identify and manage chronic HBV infections among high-risk populations in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008).



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

The CDC updated its hepatitis B screening and testing recommendations on March 10, 2023. This change recommends that all adults, including those of African descent, be screened for hepatitis B at least once in their lifetime. Prior to this update, recommendations were primarily risk-based, targeting specific high-risk groups such as individuals born in regions with high hepatitis B prevalence, including many African countries (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023; Hepatitis B Foundation, 2023).

The new guidelines aim to improve the timely diagnosis and linkage to care for those with hepatitis B, thus helping to prevent the complications associated with undiagnosed and untreated hepatitis B (Hepatitis B Foundation, 2023).

The high HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B prevalence among African immigrants, surpassing other population groups, underscores the critical need for National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day).

References:

- Anderson, M. (2020). The growing diversity of Black America. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/13/the-growing-diversity-of-black-america/>
- AIDSVu. (2024). HIV incidence and prevalence in the U.S. AIDSVu. Retrieved from <https://aidsvu.org>
- Boundless. (2023). Data Report: Black Immigrants in the U.S. Retrieved from <https://www.boundless.com>
- Demeke, H., Wang, G., Dean, H., O'Donnell, J., Johnson, A., & Beer, L. (2019). HIV Diagnosis, Care, and Viral Suppression among African-born Persons in the United States, 2013–2014. *American Journal of Public Health*, 109(S1), S55-S63. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304868>
- Lorenzi, J., & Batalova, J. (2022). African Immigrants in the United States. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/african-immigrants-united-states-2022>
- Migration Policy Institute. (2023). *Diverse Streams: African Migration to the United States*. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org>
- Pew Research Center. (2023). One-in-Ten Black People Living in the U.S. Are Immigrants. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org>
- Prosser, A. T., Tang, T., & Hall, H. I. (2018). HIV in Persons Born Outside the United States, 2007–2010. *Journal of Community Health*, 38(2), 341–346. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-012-9625-4>
- Blanas, D. A., Nichols, K., Bekele, M., Lugg, A., Kerani, R. P., & Horowitz, C. R. (2012). HIV/AIDS among African-born residents in the United States. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 15(4), 718-723. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-012-9671-9>



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

Fennie, K. P., LaLota, M., Beck, D. W., Rigau-Pérez, J. G., & Maddox, L. (2016). HIV-related stigma among African immigrants living in the United States. *Journal of the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care*, 15(2), 144-152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2325957415600148>

Foth, T. (2012). Cultural competence in HIV care: Challenges for African immigrant communities. *Journal of Community Health Nursing*, 29(4), 222-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07370016.2012.722131>

Freeland C, Bodor S, Perera U, Cohen C. Barriers to Hepatitis B Screening and Prevention for African Immigrant Populations in the United States: A Qualitative Study. *Viruses*. 2020;12(3):305. Published 2020 Mar 11. doi:10.3390/v12030305

Kerani, R. P., Kent, J. B., Sides, T., Dennis, G., Ibrahim, A. R., Cross, H., & Golden, M. R. (2008). HIV among African-born persons in the United States: A hidden epidemic? *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, 49(1), 102-106. <https://doi.org/10.1097/QAI.0b013e3181831806>

Venters, H., & Gany, F. (2011). African immigrant health. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 13(2), 333-344. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-009-9243-x>

Kowdley, K. V., Wang, C. C., Welch, S., Roberts, H., & Brosgart, C. L. (2012). Prevalence of chronic hepatitis B among foreign-born persons living in the United States by country of origin. *Hepatology*, 56(2), 422-433. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hep.24804>

Ward, J. W., & Byrd, K. K. (2012). Hepatitis B in the United States: A major health disparity in foreign-born populations. *Hepatology*, 56(2), 490-492. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hep.25741>

Wong RJ, Brosgart CL, Welch S, et al. An Updated Assessment of Chronic Hepatitis B Prevalence Among Foreign-Born Persons Living in the United States. *Hepatology*. 2021;74(2):607-626. Doi:10.1002/hep.31782

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2008). Recommendations for identification and public health management of persons with chronic hepatitis B virus infection. *MMWR*, 57(RR08), 1-20. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5708a1.htm>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Recommendations for hepatitis B screening and testing — United States, 2023. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/testingchronic.htm>.

Additionally, you can refer to the announcement from the Hepatitis B Foundation: Hepatitis B Foundation. (2023). New CDC Universal Screening Recommendations will save lives, Hepatitis B Foundation president says. Retrieved from <https://www.hepb.org/newsroom/latest-news/new-cdc-universal-screening-recommendations/>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Hepatitis B FAQs for health professionals. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/hbvfaq.htm>



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

Why is Another HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Needed?

While February 7th's National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD) and June 8th's Caribbean American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day serve vital roles in their respective communities, they do not adequately address the distinct cultural barriers and challenges African immigrants face in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This glaring gap demands the existence of a specific observance like NAIRHHA Day.

The richly diverse African immigrant communities in the U.S. encompass a multitude of ethnic groups, cultural traditions, and historical backgrounds. This incredible diversity means their needs and struggles in combating HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B are distinctly unique. A one-size-fits-all approach cannot effectively address the linguistic barriers, stigmas, and lack of tailored resources these vibrant communities face.

HIV diagnosis rates among the African-born population are six times higher than the general U.S. population, and hepatitis B virus impacts 8-15% of this population compared to less than 1% of the general U.S. population. Late-stage diagnosis, fueled by cultural stigma, fear, and systematic barriers to care, perpetuates this public health crisis. Urgent, targeted intervention is paramount.

NAIRHHA Day serves as a crucial platform to raise nationwide awareness, dispel misconceptions, and foster open dialogue within African immigrant communities. It support individuals into prevention, testing, and treatment services without judgment or barriers. This day is an essential rallying call to enact culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies and dismantle structural barriers impeding progress towards addressing HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B for the African immigrant and refugee population.

To learn more about NAIRHHA Day, please visit:

National African Immigrants and Refugees HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day:

<https://nairhhaday.org/>

For information on NAIRHHA Day on HIV.gov: <https://www.hiv.gov/events/awareness-days/nairhha-day>



4. History of NAIRHHA Day

In 2006, a group of individuals and organizations, including the Office of Minority Health, examined HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B issues impacting African immigrants. They collected best practices and strategized on approaches to engage communities in addressing barriers to prevention and care. As part of this effort, regional summits were held in Worcester, Massachusetts; Seattle, Washington; and Washington, D.C. The African National HIV Alliance (ANHA) emerged from these summits and was supported by the Office of HIV Policy in 2006 to convene a strategic planning session. Members of the ANHA Board came together and identified the establishment of NAIRHHA Day as a priority.

The Africans for Improved Access (AFIA) program at the Multicultural AIDS Coalition, the Coalition against Hepatitis for People of African Origin (CHIPO), and the Hepatitis B Foundation spearheaded mobilization efforts. Their goal was federal recognition for NAIRHHA Day, bringing visibility to the "hidden epidemic" (Kerani et al, 2008) within African immigrant and refugee communities nationwide.

Beyond raising HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B awareness to reduce stigma, NAIRHHA Day educates on prevention, encourages screenings and treatment, and advocates for policies promoting healthy African immigrant communities and individuals. It also supports eradicating related epidemics fueling HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B inequities, including tuberculosis, substance use disorders, and mental health issues.

For over a decade, advocates pursued official federal health observance designation. Supporters utilized social media campaigns, Twitter chats, and webinars highlighting unique issues, and amplified leaders and organizations addressing HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B among African immigrants. In 2023, two major milestones were achieved: a U.S. House resolution by Rep. Hank Johnson formally granted NAIRHHA Day national recognition, and it earned an official listing on HIV.gov's HIV/AIDS awareness day compilation.



HISTORY OF NAIRHHA DAY

2014

Inaugural citywide events in Boston and Washington, DC

Change.org petition to establish NAIRHHA Day: 377 supporters

September 24th, 2014: Boston City Council proclamation by Councilor Charles Yancey

2015

Thunderclap campaign reaching more than 500,000 people

NAIRHHA Day toolkit

2016

HIV.gov report + #AIHHchat Twitter chat

Proclamation by Senator Elizabeth Warren

2017

Webinar: Barriers and Strategies to Addressing HIV and Hepatitis B among African Immigrants

Hep B Blog: Commemoration of National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV & Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

2018

Webinar: Stigma Can't Win: HIV and Hep B Among African Immigrants

2019

NASTAD Blog: National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness Day

2020

NAIRHHA Day Virtual Celebration

2021

Eliminating HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis Inequities Among African Immigrant Communities in the US: A Conversation with Federal and Local Partners Webinar

2022

#NAIRHHANow Twitter Chat and organizational sign-on letter with support from 32 organizations and 124 individual petition signers

U.S. Congresspeople Reps. Johnson, Meng, Lee, and 11 of their colleagues sent a letter on September 9, 2022, to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requesting support for the designation of September 9th as NAIRHHA Day

2023

Hepatitis B and HIV Screening, Prevention, and Management for African Immigrants and Refugees in the United States: Barriers and Solutions Webinar

Congressional resolution introduced by Rep Hank Johnson

NAIRHHA Day officially recognized by HHS

CONNECT WITH NAIRHHA DAY!

www.nairhhaday.org



Follow us on social media and share our graphics!



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

5. Leading Organizations

Multicultural AIDS Coalition (MAC)



The mission of the Multicultural AIDS Coalition (MAC) is to mobilize communities of color to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We work to ensure high-quality, accessible prevention, and treatment services for people living with HIV, at high risk of becoming infected or closely affected by the disease.

Africans for Improved Access (AFIA) Program



The AFIA program is the first program in Massachusetts dedicated to addressing the increasing HIV/AIDS rates in African communities living in Massachusetts. AFIA provides HIV prevention, education, and screening services for African immigrants and refugees.

Hepatitis B Foundation



The Hepatitis B Foundation is the only national non-profit organization dedicated to the global problem of hepatitis B. The Foundation is dedicated to finding a cure for and improving the quality of life for those affected by hepatitis B worldwide.

Coalition against Hepatitis for People of African Origin (CHIPO)



CHIPO is a coalition of organizations and individuals interested in addressing the high rates of hepatitis B infections among African communities in the US and Africa. CHIPO is a forum for sharing information and best practices and improving national capacity to increase hepatitis B awareness, testing, vaccination, and treatment among highly impacted African communities.



6. What to Consider When Engaging African Immigrant Communities.

Engaging African immigrant and refugee communities in HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B awareness requires thoughtful, culturally responsive, and trust-building approaches. These communities are not monolithic—they reflect a rich diversity of language, religion, migration history, and health beliefs.

Effective engagement begins with true partnership, a core value of NAIRHHA Day. This means going beyond outreach or consultation to co-create solutions with community leaders, share decision-making power, and invest in community-driven leadership. It includes compensating individuals and organizations for their time and expertise, and building relationships that extend beyond a single campaign. When African immigrant communities help shape and lead the work, efforts to address HIV and hepatitis B become more culturally grounded, sustainable, and impactful. Below are key considerations:

Cultural and Linguistic Relevance: African immigrant communities speak dozens of languages and come from a range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Language access is not just about translation—it's about using words, images, and examples that resonate. Partner with trusted translators and community leaders who can provide cultural context and ensure messages are respectful and relevant.

Addressing Stigma and Building Trust: HIV and hepatitis B carry deep stigma in many African communities, which can prevent individuals from participating in a campaign. Engagement efforts must prioritize confidentiality, normalize conversations about sexual health, and highlight stories of resilience and care. Work with faith leaders, elders, and peer educators who can open doors and shape narratives that reduce fear.

Leverage Existing Community Structures: Community-based organizations, mutual aid groups, and cultural associations already have trust and reach within African immigrant communities. Partner with these entities rather than creating parallel systems.

Immigration-Related Barriers: Fear of deportation, lack of insurance, or unfamiliarity with the healthcare system are real barriers. Engagement must acknowledge the role of immigration status and provide information about rights, low-cost or free health services, and protections such as confidentiality in care.

Faith and Spiritual Beliefs: Faith and spirituality are central in the lives of many African immigrants. Collaborate with faith-based institutions to host events, provide education, and disseminate health information. Acknowledge spiritual values while promoting health practices grounded in evidence and compassion.



7. NAIRHHA Day Event Ideas and Promotional Resources

Celebrating NAIRHHA Day offers an opportunity to engage our local community and partners to raise awareness about this important cause. From lively parades to informative press conferences, the possibilities for impactful events are endless. The examples below merely scratch the surface of creative ways to commemorate the day, though each requires thoughtful planning to execute successfully. Don't be afraid to think outside the box and tailor events that resonate with your community's unique character. After all, the more innovative and inclusive the celebration, the greater the impact in advancing NAIRHHA Day's mission.

Example Events:

Press Conferences

- Launch a NAIRHHA Day mobilization event where key individuals involved (i.e. program directors of organizations supporting NAIRHHA Day, government officials, public health officials, community activists, etc.) present information and address questions from the public and media.

Collaborative Community Events with Other Organizations

- Promote NAIRHHA Day at community events with an informational table highlighting your organization and its initiatives supporting NAIRHHA Day.

Speaking Engagements

- Discuss NAIRHHA Day and your organization's efforts at different community-based events.

NAIRHHA Day Walk/Run Events

- Set up a 5k run/walk to raise awareness about NAIRHHA Day. Consider charging a small fee per participant (i.e. \$10-20 per walker/runner) and/or encourage individuals to run/walk in teams that will raise funds together for the event.
- Consider having food and/or vendors to attract attendees.
- Offer HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B testing by healthcare providers. Distribute condoms and educational resource materials about HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B.

NAIRHHA Day Community Parade

- Organize a NAIRHHA Day parade honoring African immigrants and refugees impacted by HIV/AIDS or hepatitis B. Offer screening services and resources, and provide an opportunity for community members to share their stories with others to raise awareness and promote community support. Consider inviting food vendors.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

Sample Event Promotions

This section provides resources to help promote and mobilize your NAIRHHA Day efforts. There are sample documents for each in the **Appendix**, starting on **page 29**. Feel free to alter the templates to be more appropriate for your needs.

a. NAIRHHA Day Flyer

This flyer summarizes key facts and includes a link to the social media toolkit and hashtag for promoting the day. It's a great way to raise awareness and encourage participation.

b. NAIRHHA Day Petition

This petition supports local recognition of and ongoing national advocacy for NAIRHHA Day on September 9th.

c. Letter Template for Local Organization Involvement

Use this template to connect with local organizations and seek their support for NAIRHHA Day initiatives.

d. Event Communication Templates

Use these templates to effectively promote your NAIRHHA Day event:

- **Press Release:** Announce your event to the media with a sample press release, including key details to secure media coverage promoting the event, your organization, and NAIRHHA Day. The format of a press release can vary in layout and length. Please use our sample as a guide.
- **Media Advisory:** Invite media to attend and cover your event using a sample media advisory. This differs from a press release by specifically inviting media presence and providing essential event details. Please use our sample as a guide and modify the format and length as appropriate.
- **Calendar Alert:** Clearly outline the who, what, when, where, and why of your NAIRHHA Day event. Adjust the layout and specifics as necessary.



8. Get Involved with NAIRHHA Day on Social Media

Spread the word about NAIRHHA Day by using your social media platforms! Your participation on social media can make a tremendous impact. By sharing information and encouraging conversations, you contribute to reducing stigma, promoting preventive measures, and supporting better health outcomes for those individuals impacted by HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B.

First, here is information on where and how to follow us on social media. Following this, you'll find sample tweets and Facebook posts to help you join the conversation and amplify our message.

NAIRHHA Day on Facebook

We invite you to "like" our official NAIRHHA Day Facebook page: [NAIRHHA Day on Facebook](#).

Purpose of NAIRHHA Day on Facebook:

- Promote NAIRHHA Day on September 9th.
- Share the latest HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B news.
- Provide updates on NAIRHHA Day.
- Engage in discussion about the importance and meaning of NAIRHHA Day
- Network with organizations supporting NAIRHHA Day.

How to Support NAIRHHA Day on Facebook:

- Click the "Like" button on the page.
- Invite your Facebook friends to "like" our page.

NAIRHHA Day on Twitter/X

Follow @NAIRHHADay on Twitter/X: [NAIRHHA Day on Twitter](#).

Purpose of @NAIRHHADay on Twitter:

- Promote NAIRHHA Day on September 9th.
- Share the latest HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B news.
- Provide updates on NAIRHHA Day.
- Engage in discussion about the importance and meaning of NAIRHHA Day
- Network with organizations supporting NAIRHHA Day.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

Twitter Basics:

- "Tweet" to share messages about causes, events, or thoughts.
- "Favorite" tweets by clicking the heart button.
- "Retweet" to share others' tweets while giving them credit.

How to Support NAIRHHA Day on Twitter:

- Click the "Follow" button on our @NAIRHHADay page.
- "Favorite" our tweets by clicking the heart button.
- "Retweet" our tweets to share them with your followers.
- Invite your Twitter network to follow us @NAIRHHADay.

Follow our Facebook and Twitter pages for educational graphics and updates to create awareness for the annual September 9th NAIRHHA Day celebrations.

Sample Tweets

1. Join us on September 9th for NAIRHHA Day to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B among African immigrants and refugees. Together, we can reduce stigma and promote health! #NAIRHHADay
2. Did you know African immigrants have higher rates of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B? Let's spread awareness and encourage testing and treatment on #NAIRHHADay, September 9th!
3. NAIRHHA Day is on September 9th! A day dedicated to educating and supporting African immigrant communities in the fight against HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B. Learn more at nairhhaday.org. #NAIRHHADay #HIVAwareness #HepatitisAwareness
4. Mark your calendars for NAIRHHA Day on September 9th! Let's unite to improve health outcomes for African immigrants and refugees. Together, we can make a difference. #NAIRHHADay #HepatitisAwareness #HIVAwareness
5. Stand with African immigrants & refugees on #NAIRHHADay (Sept 9th)! Fight stigma & raise awareness about HIV/AIDS & hepatitis B.
6. Did you know African immigrants face higher HIV rates? #NAIRHHADay promotes testing & culturally appropriate care. Learn more & join the movement!
7. Language barriers & fear shouldn't prevent healthcare access. Support #NAIRHHADay & advocate for better healthcare systems for African communities.
8. Celebrate #NAIRHHADay! Let's work together for a future where all African immigrants & refugees can thrive, free from HIV/AIDS & Hep B.
9. African immigrants face high rates of HIV/AIDS & Hep B. #NAIRHHADay promotes testing, treatment & culturally appropriate care. Learn more & join the movement!



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

Sample Facebook Posts

1. Join us on September 9th for National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day)! This day focuses on the health challenges faced by African immigrants and refugees in the U.S. Let's raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote health in our communities. Learn more and get involved: nairhhaday.org #NAIRHHADay
2. Did you know that HIV diagnosis rates among African-born individuals are six times higher than the general U.S. population? On NAIRHHA Day, September 9th, we aim to change that. Spread the word, encourage testing, and support treatment efforts in our communities. Together, we can make a difference. #NAIRHHADay #HIVAwareness
3. NAIRHHA Day is officially recognized on September 9th! This day is dedicated to addressing the high rates of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B in African immigrant and refugee communities. Join us in raising awareness, advocating for better health care, and reducing stigma. Find out how you can help: nairhhaday.org #NAIRHHADay #HealthForAll
4. African immigrants face significant health challenges, including high rates of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B. On September 9th, we observe NAIRHHA Day to highlight these issues and work towards better health outcomes. Let's educate, support, and make a difference together. Learn more here: nairhhaday.org #NAIRHHADay #HepatitisAwareness
5. September 9th is #NAIRHHADay! This day highlights the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B on African immigrants and refugees. Learn more and get involved: [link to your NAIRHHA Day resources]
6. Join the Movement! September 9th is National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (#NAIRHHADay). This day is crucial for raising awareness about the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B on African immigrant and refugee communities in the U.S. Let's stand together to fight stigma, promote culturally appropriate healthcare access, and work towards ending these epidemics. Learn more and get involved at [link to your website/resources].
7. Did you know? African immigrants and refugees face significantly higher rates of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B compared to the general population. #NAIRHHADay highlights the need for culturally appropriate education, prevention strategies, and accessible healthcare services for this vulnerable community. Let's work together to create a healthier future for all.
8. Language barriers and cultural differences can be significant obstacles for African immigrants and refugees seeking healthcare services. This #NAIRHHADay, let's advocate for improved healthcare systems that address these barriers and ensure everyone has access to the care they need.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

9. Imagine a future where African immigrants and refugees can thrive, free from the fear and burden of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B. This is the vision behind #NAIRHHADay. Let's celebrate the resilience of these communities and commit to ongoing efforts towards achieving this goal.

| SAMPLE HASHTAGS | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| #AfricanImmigrants | #HIVAIDS |
| #HIVAwareness | #HepatitisBAwareness |
| #StoptheStigma | #HepatitisB |
| #hepB | #NAIRHHADay |
| #ImmigrantHealth | #RefugeeHealth |
| #KnowYourStatus | #GetTested |
| #HIVprevention | #GetInvolved |
| #HepatitisBprevention | #TalkAboutIt |

Feel free to adjust the links and hashtags as needed.

Use Proverbs to Maximize Engagement

Proverbs

African proverbs represent the collective wisdom, values, and experiences of diverse African cultures. They often convey moral lessons, offer advice, or reflect upon everyday life, relationships, and human nature. These proverbs are not just linguistic expressions but also serve as a means of passing down cultural knowledge and traditions from generation to generation. They highlight the importance of community, respect for elders, perseverance, and the interconnectedness of people and nature. African proverbs are a testament to the depth of African cultures and their enduring relevance in today's world.

Using African proverbs can be a good tool for raising awareness in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way. Check out some examples of proverbs below that have been used for NAIRHHA Day events and commemorations. The accompanying graphics can be found in different African languages at www.nairhhaday.org, and <https://www.hiv.gov/events/awareness-days/nairhhad>.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

| PROVERB | ACTION |
|---|--|
| Wisdom is like a Baobab tree; no one individual can embrace it. | Let's work together to eliminate hepatitis B and HIV. |
| A single bracelet does not jingle. | We need your voice! Join the #NAIRHHADay movement. |
| Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable. | We are stronger together in the fight against hepatitis B and HIV. |
| Having a good discussion is like having riches | Stop the stigma! Talk with your friends and family about hepatitis and HIV. |
| It is little by little that a bird builds its nest. | Change is happening! Stay informed about the latest in cure and vaccine research. |
| Try as you may to hide a deadly disease, pain will reveal it. | Get tested for hepatitis B and HIV! It can save your life. |
| No one knows caution as regrets. | Live a long and healthy life! Treatment is available for hepatitis B and HIV. |
| A person is a person because of other people. | We need each other! Join #CHIPO and help eliminate hepatitis B. |
| If you are on the road to nowhere, find another road. | Find the right road for you! Connect to the community and link to resources. |
| To come out of one's house is learning. | There are resources and services available! Learn more about how you can protect yourself and your family. |
| What hurts you hurts me. | Let's stop stigma together! Addressing HIV stigma in our community is everyone's responsibility. |
| A man who takes advice, is still a man who acts of his own free will. | Ask questions and seek information from your doctor about hepatitis B and HIV. |
| A problem shared is a problem solved. | Get involved! Find out what is happening in your city to increase testing and linkage to care. |
| Not to know is bad, not to wish to know is worse. | Know your status! Find a testing site near you - https://gettested.cdc.gov/ . |
| Lack of knowledge is darker than night | Protect yourself! Get facts about hepatitis B and HIV. |



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

| SAMPLE HASHTAGS | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| #SayingsToLiveBy | #GetTested |
| #AfricanProverbs | #GetInvolved |
| #HIVprevention | #WorkTogether |
| #HepatitisBPrevention | #NAIRHHADay |
| #LearnMore | #StrongerTogether |
| #TalkAboutIt | |

Feel free to adjust the hashtags as needed.



9. Tips for Efficient Fundraising

When sponsoring health awareness and outreach events like NAIRHHA Day, raising funds for expenses such as venue rental, food, entertainment, and giveaways is often necessary. Ensuring a variety of attractions can help appeal to event goers. If you lack sufficient funds, don't panic—there are many ways to raise money!

While these fundraising strategies may not specifically apply to your event, pick and choose what is relevant and use the other tips as a resource for future events.

Identify potential sources for funding/sponsorship/partnerships:

- Friends of your organization
- Like-minded organizations – those serving other local social and health care needs of African immigrants and refugees in your area
- Advertisers in the community – particularly billboard companies and metropolitan transit advertising agencies
- Businesses with an established presence in the African immigrant and refugee community (e.g. grocery stores, banks, other financial institutions, restaurants, etc.)
- Community organizations (e.g. churches, fraternal organizations, chambers of commerce, etc.)
- Local leaders and other individuals with influence in the community
- Media (e.g. television stations, newspapers, and radio stations)

Determine who from your organization will make initial contact:

- Use existing connections where possible. If someone has a viable contact at a specific business or organization, you may want that person to be the one to do the asking.
- Create a table or spreadsheet listing targets and the responsible person for each contact.

Establish Sponsorship Levels:

Below are a few ways that individuals and businesses can show their support for your event:

- **Monetary donations:** Itemize event needs and specify what different donation levels will cover. Consider a Named Sponsor who contributes a significant percentage (e.g. 50%) and receives prominent public recognition (include their name, logo, and other identifiers on signs, handouts, etc.). The Named Sponsor and any other significant contributors should be publicly thanked for their support.
- **In-kind gifts:** Encourage grocery stores, movie theaters, or other businesses to donate relevant goods or services. Grocery stores may donate food and drinks for your event, or a movie theater



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

may donate free movie passes. Be creative in brainstorming products and services that would help attract and incentivize attendees.

- **Volunteers:** Welcome volunteers from businesses for tasks like flier distribution or event assistance. Oftentimes, businesses will encourage their staff to sign up to volunteer for community events. Be willing to allow others to help you leading up to, and on the day of your NAIRHHA Day activity or event.
- **Publicity support:** Ask organizations to include event information in newsletters or display posters. Churches, sororities, fraternities, local barbers and beauty shops are a good place to start.
- **Media partners:** Partner with non-competitive media (such as radio stations, television stations, and or local newspapers) to publicize the event and list them as media partners on promotional materials.

Determine levels of sponsor recognition:

- Decide what sponsors will receive in return and ensure the level of sponsor recognition aligns with their contribution. This could include mentions in media interviews, logos on signage, or inclusion in promotional materials.

What to Do When Securing Sponsorships

Once you've identified potential sponsors, here are some strategies to effectively communicate your cause and secure funding or partnerships:

Explain the Need

Provide information demonstrating why sponsor involvement is crucial. Include fact sheets on local, regional and national HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B rates (locally, regionally, and nationally), news articles illustrating the diseases' impact in your area, and the press materials planned for your campaign. Some health departments can provide zip code-level data.

Allow Ample Response Time

Organizations may take weeks or months to decide on donations. Give them sufficient time to reply, but follow up periodically to ensure you are still being considered for a donation.

Request Face-to-Face Meetings

Determine who handles sponsorships and schedule meetings with them. Bring fact sheets, rate info, press materials, and a formal letter addressed to your contact. Research any past support they've provided for your organization, community, or HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B causes.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

Present Professionally

Once meetings are confirmed, arrive punctually and dressed appropriately for the environment. When in doubt, dress suits for women and business casual for men is appropriate.

Send Personalized Letters

If meetings aren't possible, identify the correct recipient for sponsorship information and mail them a personalized letter. Follow up with calls to discuss feasibility and next steps.

Maintain Records

Keep all organization correspondences on file. This simplifies future outreach and tracks solicited and received contributions.

Express Gratitude

Thank sponsors and partners, sharing the event's community/nationwide impact, participation numbers, and affirmative success stories. Gauge your relationship to determine if including photos is appropriate. Add them to next year's contact list. A thank-you card with a handwritten note and your business card will help solidify the relationship for potential future support.

NOTE: The Tips for Efficient Fundraising section was adapted from the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Toolkit



10. Evaluation

Celebrating NAIRHHA Day is a powerful way to raise awareness and make a difference in your community. To ensure that this toolkit meets your organization's needs and serves as a valuable resource, ongoing evaluation is essential. We recognize that resources may be limited, but here are some simple and effective ways to measure your progress:

1. **Maintain Updated Contact Lists:** Keep an updated list of partners and their contact information to streamline communication and coordination.
2. **Evaluate Social Media Engagement:** Track the number of likes, retweets, and followers you gain. Measure engagement by noting conversations with other organizations and any increases in social media activity.
3. **Conduct Basic Surveys:** Use surveys to gather feedback from your community. Ask questions such as:
 - How many people learned about your organization through NAIRHHA Day activities?
 - Have they heard of NAIRHHA Day?
 - How did they hear about it?
 - Do they have a better awareness of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B, and do they know where to find resources?

By evaluating your efforts, you can make informed adjustments to better meet the needs of your community and those you serve. We hope you will empower yourself with this toolkit to create meaningful impact and foster positive change, ultimately reducing the incidence of HIV and hepatitis B among African immigrants and refugees.



11. Contact information for the Multicultural AIDS Coalition

We would love to have your feedback on current NAIRHHA Day initiatives as well as the effectiveness of this toolkit. We invite you to direct all feedback toward the Multicultural AIDS Coalition (MAC), specifically any staff member within the Africans for Improved Access Program. No comment is too big or too small, so please share your thoughts! Your feedback is important because we will use your feedback to ensure that all interested supporters have the necessary information and resources to continue supporting NAIRHHA Day on September 9th. In addition, you may use the contact information below to inquire about other initiatives relating to HIV/AIDS awareness and outreach sponsored by the MAC. For questions or inquiries related specifically to hepatitis B, please reach out to the Hepatitis B Foundation. Thank you for your time and service, and let us all band together to make NAIRHHA Day on September 9th a national success!

Multicultural AIDS Coalition, Inc.

9 Palmer Street

Roxbury, MA 02119

Phone Number: 617-442-1622

Fax: 617-442-6622

Hepatitis B Foundation

3805 Old Easton Road

Doylestown, PA 18902

Phone Number: 215-489-4900



12. Resources

A. HIV/AIDS Basics

What is HIV?

- HIV refers to Human Immunodeficiency Virus, a virus that weakens the body's immune system (which is responsible for fighting off diseases).

How does HIV weaken the immune system?

- HIV destroys T-Cells, or CD4 cells, which normally function to fight infection and disease within the body. The destruction of these T cells causes the immune system to weaken and to be unable to clear HIV from the body like it normally does for other viruses. This is precisely why having HIV is lifelong; the immune system will never fully have the capability to fight this virus off.

How does one get HIV?

- HIV is spread through bodily fluids. Specifically, HIV can be spread in four ways (from the bodily fluid with the highest concentration of the virus to the lowest):
 1. Blood (including menstrual and birth delivery blood)
 2. Semen/Cum/Pre-Cum/Ejaculate
 3. Vaginal Secretions
 4. Breast Milk

Is there a cure for HIV?

- There is currently no cure for HIV, but there is a treatment known as antiretroviral therapy (ART), which lessens the negative health outcomes and effects of HIV on the body, thus helping to vastly improve the quality of life and even the length of life of those affected by HIV.

What is AIDS?

- AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. AIDS is a syndrome, which is a collection of symptoms and signs of the disease, in which the immune system is deficient and not working properly. AIDS is the last stage of HIV.

What are some common symptoms of AIDS?

- AIDS fulfills the characteristics of a syndrome because it is associated with having symptoms of low CD4 levels (which are used to fight off bodily infection and diseases), along with one or many opportunistic infections. Opportunistic infections are infections that are recognized when the body has a weakening or weakened immune system (characterized by low CD4 levels), as is the case with



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

HIV. This creates illnesses that work together with that weakened immune system, making it even weaker than before. Some common examples of opportunistic infections associated with AIDS are invasive cervical cancers, lymphoma, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

How does one get AIDS?

- AIDS is the last stage of HIV which occurs as the HIV infection progresses. One cannot get AIDS without having HIV first.

What is the difference between HIV and AIDS? Are they the same thing?

- HIV is a specific virus, while AIDS is a syndrome that arises after and because of HIV (AIDS is the last stage of HIV). This means that an individual can have HIV, but not have AIDS, but an individual cannot have AIDS if they do not have HIV. It is becoming increasingly common for individuals with HIV to live without progressing to AIDS due to successful treatments for HIV such as antiretroviral therapy (ART).

What are some of the most and least common ways to contract HIV/AIDS?

- Anal sex is the most common way to contract HIV. This partially accounts for the reason that men who have sex with men (MSM) are at higher risk for HIV than other groups.
- Sexual intercourse without protection is considered a high-risk practice because HIV may enter through cuts, sores, or directly through the mucus membrane.
- Sharing needles is considered a high-risk practice because it is easiest for HIV to be spread through blood (blood will spread onto needles after injection, so it is dangerous to share that needle and transfer blood to others).
- Oral sex is considered a low-risk practice. However, HIV can still be spread when performing oral sex with a man in which ejaculate is spread in the mouth.
- HIV can be transmitted from mother to child before or after birth. Before birth, the child can receive HIV from the mother through bodily fluids, such as blood in the birthing canal. After birth, HIV can be spread to the child through the bodily fluid of breast milk, although breast milk is the bodily fluid with the lowest concentration of HIV. **NOTE:** It is less common nowadays for a mother to pass HIV to her child, especially before birth, because mothers with HIV typically receive HIV medicine to reduce the effects that HIV will have on their children.

What are common prevention strategies to limit the overall prevalence of HIV/AIDS?

- Limit the number of sex partners (i.e. sexual intercourse includes vaginal, oral, and/or anal sex)
- Use condoms while performing sexual acts (i.e. vaginal, oral, and/or anal sex)
- Use medicine, such as antiretroviral therapy (ART), if diagnosed with HIV to help lower the negative health effects of HIV



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

- Get tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and encourage others to do so as well
- Consider pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) as a prevention strategy, especially for individuals at high risk of HIV infection

B. Hepatitis B Basics

What is hepatitis B?

- Hepatitis B is an infection affecting the liver that arises when the hepatitis B virus (HBV) attacks the liver.

How is hepatitis B transmitted?

- Hepatitis B is transmitted through bodily fluids and actions that emit bodily fluids. Most commonly, hepatitis B is spread by:
 1. From a mother to child during the childbirth process
 2. Blood
 3. Unprotected sex
 4. Sharing of needles and other healthcare equipment
 5. Sharing household hygiene items (toothbrushes, razors, etc.)

What are the two levels of hepatitis B?

- There are two levels of hepatitis B infection:
 1. Acute hepatitis B infection
 - Acute hepatitis B infections are classified as hepatitis B infections in which HBV does not stay in the body's bloodstream for more than six months. Acute hepatitis B typically shows no symptoms, although some common symptoms (from what is most likely to develop first to what is more likely to develop later on) are extreme tiredness, joint pain, nausea, severe abdominal pain, jaundice, and dark urine.
 2. Chronic hepatitis B infection
 - Chronic hepatitis B infections are hepatitis B infections in which HBV stays in the body's bloodstream for more than six months (usually for life). Studies have shown that it is more common for young children diagnosed with hepatitis B to progress to the chronic stage, since their immune systems are not fully developed and therefore less likely to fight off the virus (90% of infants and 50% of children under the age of five diagnosed with hepatitis B will progress to chronic hepatitis B, as opposed to 2-6% of adults). When a person has



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

chronic hepatitis B, they are unable to clear the virus from their body. These individuals are at higher risk for developing advanced liver disease, such as cirrhosis or liver cancer. Those with chronic hepatitis B need to be under the care of a physician to manage their infection.

Is there a cure for hepatitis B?

- There is currently no cure for hepatitis B, but 90% of adults who contract the virus clear it on their own. There are effective treatments (antivirals) that are often used in people with chronic hepatitis B. The treatments can slow down the virus and prevent more advanced liver disease in many people.

Is hepatitis B preventable?

- Yes, hepatitis B is preventable. It is recommended that all individuals, including adults, receive the hepatitis B vaccine series. The vaccine is typically administered in either two or three doses, depending on the specific vaccine used. This vaccination not only helps prevent individuals from developing hepatitis B in childhood or as adults but also prevents spreading the disease to others.

Hepatitis B Foundation Storytellers

To further your understanding of hepatitis B and its impact, we recommend exploring personal stories from those affected. The #justB storytelling campaign by the Hepatitis B Foundation offers a powerful perspective on living with hepatitis B.

The #justB storytelling is a U.S.-based campaign that aims to raise the profile of hepatitis B as an urgent public health priority and helps put a human face on this serious disease by sharing stories of real people living with or affected by hepatitis B. The goals of the campaign are to increase awareness and advocacy; decrease stigma and discrimination; and promote testing, vaccination, linkage to care, and treatment to help save lives.

Here are the stories of Bunmi and Adama

Bunmi's Story

After her father passed away, Bunmi had to request his death certificate in order to learn the cause of death: liver cancer. She felt stifled by the lack of willingness within her family to talk about hepatitis B. *Watch Bunmi's full story at <https://www.hepbstories.org/justb/bunmi>*

Adama's Story

After suspecting something was wrong for a while, Adama's mother passed away without a diagnosis or treatment. It wasn't until 10 years later, when Adama tested positive for hepatitis B and experienced the same symptoms, that he realized his mom had suffered from the same virus. *Watch Adama's full story at <https://www.hepbstories.org/justb/adama>*

To read other stories and learn more, visit <https://www.hepbstories.org/justb>



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

13. Appendix

A. NAIRRHA Day Flyers (Can use any combination of the three)



The purpose of NAIRHHA Day on September 9th is to bring national and local attention to the HIV and viral hepatitis needs of African immigrants living in the U.S. in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

NAIRHHA Day takes place in September because this is the month that has been designated as National African Immigrant Month (NAIM) in the United States to celebrate the diverse and remarkable contributions African immigrants have made to enrich the United States, in spheres ranging from sports to writing to politics.

THE FACTS

HIV INFECTION RATES ARE **6X** HIGHER

among African immigrants in the United States than in the general U.S. population and are **nearly twice** those of US-born Black individuals.

10% African immigrants face the highest average chronic hepatitis B rates in the country, with **approximately 10%** of these communities living with hepatitis B.

CALL TO ACTION

Use this space to include specific information about your organization's activities/initiatives and how people can get involved.



@NAIRHHADAY

www.nairhhaday.org





National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day



About NAIRHHA Day

The purpose of NAIRHHA Day on September 9th is to bring national and local attention to the HIV and viral hepatitis needs of African immigrants living in the U.S. in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

NAIRHHA Day takes place in September because this is the month that has been designated as National African Immigrant Month (NAIM) in the United States to celebrate the diverse and remarkable contributions African immigrants have made to enrich the United States, in spheres ranging from sports to writing to politics.

THE FACTS

HIV INFECTION RATES ARE **6X** HIGHER

among African immigrants in the United States than in the general U.S. population and are **nearly twice** those of US-born Black individuals.

10% African immigrants face the highest average chronic hepatitis B rates in the country, with **approximately 10%** of these communities living with hepatitis B.

SAVE THE DATE

Celebrate NAIRHHA Day with [insert name of your organization]. **Join us on September 9th** ...add your organization's event(s) or activity information here.



www.nairhhaday.org

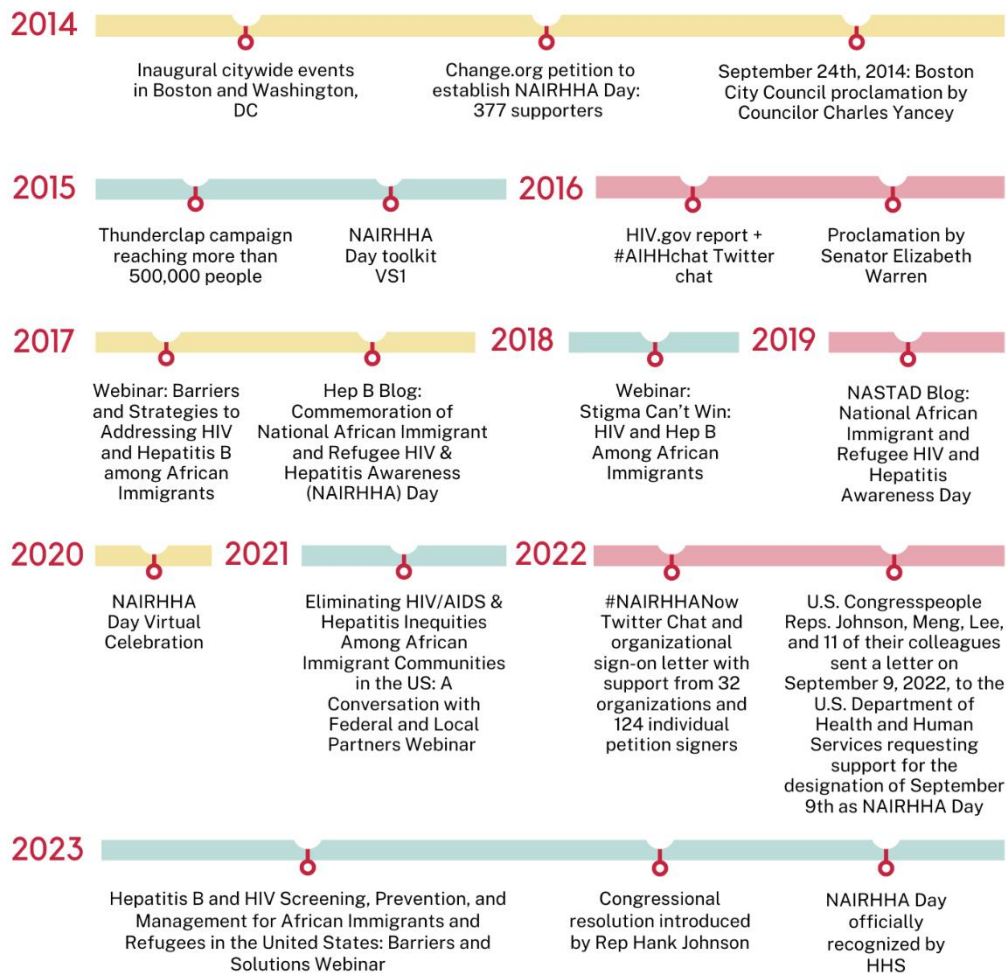




National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day



HISTORY OF NAIRHHA DAY



CONNECT WITH NAIRHHA DAY!

www.nairhhaday.org



Follow us on social media and share our graphics!



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

B. Petition

National African Immigrant & Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day)

We hereby call on [insert] to officially recognize September 9th as National African Immigrant & Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day). September 9th was chosen because the U.S. Congress, the White House, and U.S. governors in over thirty states recognize September as National African Immigrant Heritage Month.

The African immigrant population in the United States has grown rapidly in recent years. In 2018, there were approximately 2.1 million African immigrants living in the U.S., representing about 5% of the total foreign-born population. This marked a significant increase from 2000 when there were about 881,000 African immigrants in the country. The African immigrant community contributes significantly to the economic and social welfare of the U.S.: Two-fifths of African immigrants have at least a bachelor's degree and more than a third work in professional jobs. While NAIRHHA Day was recognized in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2023, we are working on introduction of a Senate resolution, and more widespread recognition of the day at state and local levels around the country.

Why is it important to have an HIV/AIDS and hepatitis b awareness day for African immigrants?

Awareness days have historically been established by community-led advocacy campaigns as a way to bring national attention, resources, and policy change to sub-populations impacted by HIV and other diseases. There is growing data related to the disproportionate impact of HIV and hepatitis B on African immigrants in the U.S. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends hepatitis B testing at least once per lifetime for all adults. Additionally, according to HIV surveillance data from seven jurisdictions (California; Georgia; Washington; Massachusetts; New Jersey; New York City; and Virginia-DC), Africans accounted for 0.6% of the total population but represented 3.8% of HIV diagnoses. HIV, hepatitis B, and other infectious diseases among African immigrants are a “hidden epidemic” because of the failure of current U.S. surveillance reporting requirements to collect data on country of origin. It has been suggested that a significant number of persons currently classified as African-Americans with HIV infection are in fact African immigrants.

How does National African Immigrant & Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day) address this issue?

The purpose of NAIRHHA Day is to bring national and local attention to the HIV and hepatitis B needs of African immigrants living in the U.S. in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. The creation of a national awareness day will also support the eradication of other epidemics fueling or related to HIV disparities among African immigrants, including tuberculosis, substance use and mental health disorders.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

On this day, organizations, communities, families and individuals will:

- Raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B to eliminate stigma
- Learn about ways to protect against HIV, hepatitis B, and other related diseases
- Take control by encouraging screenings and treatment, as well as hepatitis B vaccination
- Advocate for policies and practices that promote healthy African immigrant communities, families, and individuals

By establishing NAIRHHA Day, African immigrants and their allies are determined to have a significant impact on the HIV and hepatitis B epidemic. This is a momentous step towards acknowledging and addressing the needs of a growing percentage of the U.S. population — and towards holding our leaders accountable each year as we continue this fight.

See the [press release](#) and the [letter](#) that U.S. Representatives Johnson, Meng, Lee, and 11 others sent on September 9, 2022, to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requesting support for the designation of September 9th as “National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day.” Or you can reference the [2023 House Resolution press release](#). These can be used alongside your petition.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

C. Template for Letter of Proclamation

IMPORTANT: Call your local City Hall or State offices to identify the specific person to whom a letter and sample proclamation should be sent.

Proclamation Letter

A RESOLUTION to designate **September 9, [YEAR]**, as “**National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day**” in **[Name of City Or State]**

WHEREAS, **September 9, [YEAR]** shall be the first official date of a federally recognized National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day that is to be continued on this date going forward; and

WHEREAS, the day will be used to bring national and local attention to the HIV and hepatitis B needs of African immigrants living in the U.S. and to provide resources in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner recognizing the disproportionate rate at which these viruses impact African-born communities in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, *National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis Awareness Day* has been implemented, organized and supported by the Multicultural Aids Coalition in conjunction with organizations such as the Hepatitis B Foundation and Coalition Against Hepatitis for People of African Origin (CHIPO), but there remains a continued need to further collaborate with other relevant organizations involved in HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B prevention, outreach, care and treatment; and

WHEREAS, **[Number]** residents of **[City or State]** are living with HIV/AIDS and/or hepatitis B and **[Percentage]** of these men, women and children are African immigrants and refugees; and

WHEREAS, **[List the names of state or city organizations that are involved]** are hosting outreach events within their communities to recognize this day and its importance to African immigrants and refugees; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we join with these local, regional and national groups to express our strong support for *National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day* and initiatives to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B in African immigrant and refugee communities and provide access to and encourage utilization of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B prevention, treatment and support services by those affected by these viruses; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE **[Name of governing body]** that we designate **September 9, [YEAR]**, as *National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day* in **[City, State]**, and encourage local residents to support this day by both leading and participating in events that will help to support the cause that is *National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day* (NAIRHHA Day).



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

D. Template for Call to Action for Local Organizations

Dear **[Insert Prospective Organization]**,

My name is **[Insert Your Name]** and I am reaching out from [organization name]. Our organization primarily works to **[Insert main goals and initiatives of your organization in 1-2 sentences]**. We have recently been working hard with other like-minded organizations to increase the impact of and overall awareness about National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/Aids and Hepatitis Awareness Day (NAIRHHA Day) on September 9th. We are happy to share that NAIRHHA Day has officially been recognized as a federal health observance and is listed on HIV.gov.

We are reaching out to **[Insert Prospective Organization]** to assist us in celebrating NAIRHHA Day by hosting an event, sharing resources, or educating your community.

NAIRHHA Day aims to bring national and local attention to the highly prevalent health issues of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B in African immigrant and refugee populations within the U.S. It provides resources to address these challenges in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. Today, we call upon your organization to support us in two ways:

1. Participate in a NAIRHHA Day event sponsored by our organization or host your own event. This year, we will be sponsoring **[Insert the event/outreach activity name]**. **[Insert details of your event/outreach initiative]**.
2. **[Optional: Include any additional requests or ways they can get involved]**

Please contact me using the information below with any questions or for additional details about **[Insert Your Organization]**, **[Insert Your Event]**, or NAIRHHA Day overall. Thank you for considering this request. We appreciate any support you can provide in celebrating NAIRHHA Day on September 9th this year and in the years to come.

Sincerely,

[Name of person sending letter]

[Title]

[Organization, Agency, Group Name]

[Email Address, Phone Number]



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

E. Press Release Template

[USE YOUR COMPANY/ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD]

[Your Company/Organization Name]

[Your Company/Organization Media Contact]

[Your Company/Organization Media Contact Info]

Month/Date/Year

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAIRHHA Day

Together in Support of African Immigrants and Refugees Battling HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B

As the African immigrant and refugee population in the United States has steadily increased, so unfortunately has the number of community members carrying the disproportionate burden of HIV and hepatitis B. This is exactly why NAIRHHA Day is so important. NAIRHHA Day, fully known as National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day, is aimed toward bringing national and local attention to the extremely prevalent health issues of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B in African immigrant and refugee populations in the U.S., and providing resources to address these in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. NAIRHHA Day is now recognized annually on **September 9th** by the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as by many locally recognized and established organizations, and has officially been listed on HIV.gov.

Today, we call upon **[Insert Prospective Media Outlet]** to help aid us in covering our official NAIRHHA Day event for public audiences. Our Company/Organization **[Insert Your Company/Organization Name]** will be hosting **[Insert Your Event]** on **[Insert Event Date]** at **[Insert Event Location]**. **[Insert important event details in 3-5 sentences]**

We ask that you keep this event on your radar and consider providing media coverage in hopes of increasing awareness and impact of NAIRHHA Day in the community. Please contact **[Insert contact person from your organization]** using the email address or phone number above with any questions or additional information about **[Insert Your Event]**, **[Insert Your Company/Organization]**, or about NAIRHHA Day as a whole. We appreciate any and all support **[Insert Prospective Media Outlet]** can provide and hope to be working with you in the future!

MEDIA CONTACT:

[Name of Media Contact]

[Title]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

F. Media Advisory

[USE YOUR COMPANY/ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD]

[Your Company/Organization Name]

[Your Company/Organization Media Contact]

[Your Company/Organization Media Contact Info]

Month/Date/Year

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAIRHHA Day

Together in Support of African Immigrants and Refugees Battling HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B

WHAT:

NAIRHHA Day, National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day, is a federally recognized health observance aimed at raising awareness about the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B among African immigrant and refugee populations in the U.S. This day provides resources and promotes culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies to address these health issues.

WHEN:

[Insert Event Date]

[Insert Event Time]

WHERE:

[Insert Event Location]

[Insert Address]

WHO:

[Insert Your Organization/Company]

[Key Speakers or Special Guests]

WHY:

The African immigrant and refugee population in the United States has grown significantly, and so has the burden of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B within this community. NAIRHHA Day focuses on bringing attention to these health challenges and offering support to combat them.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

EVENT DETAILS:

- **[Insert important Event Detail 1]** (e.g., Free HIV and hepatitis B screening will be available on-site.)
- **[Insert important Event Detail 2]** (e.g., Guest speaker: Dr. John Doe, an expert in infectious diseases, will discuss preventive measures.)
- **[Insert important Event Detail 3]** (e.g., Cultural performances by local African dance groups.)

MEDIA CONTACT:

[Name of Media Contact]

[Title]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For more details about the event, **[Your Organization/Company]**, or NAIRHHA Day, please contact **[Name of Media Contact]** or visit **[Your Organization's Website]**.

We look forward to seeing your organization represented and helping us raise awareness about this critical health issue.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

G. Calendar Alert

[INSERT YOUR COMPANY/ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD]

[Your Company/Organization Name]

[Your Company/Organization Media Contact]

[Your Company/Organization Media Contact Info]

Month/Date/Year

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Name of your Event]

What: [Insert what your event is (including its title), and a general description (3-5 sentences) of what the event will entail. Also, you may give a brief description (1-2 sentences) about your company regarding the work you do/ services you provide in this section should you so choose.]

Who: [State the other companies/organizations/individuals who will also be involved in your event]

When: [State the date and time on your event]

Where: [State the location of your event, as well as directions should they be necessary]

Why: [State the overall significance of your event and how it is relevant to the mission of NAIRHHA Day]



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

H. NAIRHHA Day Resolution

NAIRHHA DAY RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of September 9th as “National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day.”

WHEREAS, African immigrants represent the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. immigrant population, doubling in numbers every decade since 1970, with over 2.1 million residing in the United States as of 2019; and a growth rate that has significantly outpaced overall foreign-born population increases, especially between 2010 and 2018 when the sub-Saharan African immigrant population grew by 52% compared to 12% for all immigrants;

WHEREAS, HIV infection rates are six times higher in the African immigrant population than in the general U.S. population and are nearly twice those of U.S.-born Black individuals;

WHEREAS, African immigrants face the highest average chronic hepatitis B rates in the country, with approximately 8-15% of these communities living with hepatitis B;

WHEREAS, HIV and hepatitis B are preventable and treatable conditions - with appropriate attention and focus, health outcomes among African immigrant communities can be improved and lives can be saved;

WHEREAS, the CDC recommends that individuals born in Africa, or individuals born in the U.S. who have at least one parent born in Africa, who were not vaccinated at birth, should be prioritized for hepatitis B testing;

WHEREAS, African immigrant communities face significant challenges to HIV and hepatitis B testing, care, and treatment: Though they have high rates of infection, they have low rates of diagnosis and care. Challenges include stigma, fear, lack of awareness and knowledge, language barriers, traditional values and social norms, and limited access to health care services. There also exists a need for providers and services to be culturally and linguistically appropriate to better meet the needs of African immigrants, in keeping with the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care, which describe a framework to deliver services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and respectful, and that respond to patients' cultural health



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

beliefs, preferences, and communication needs;

WHEREAS, immigration status is also associated with fear of health facilities, low acculturation and unfamiliarity navigating complex health care systems, social and economic marginalization, fear of deportation, and a lower rate of health insurance, all posing considerable barriers to the health of African immigrants and refugees living in the U.S.;

WHEREAS, NAIRHHA Day is a day aimed toward bringing local and national attention to the health issues of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B in African immigrant and refugee populations in the U.S., in a way that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. By addressing some of the unique issues that African immigrants in the U.S. face through awareness, education, and resources, NAIRHHA Day will help empower communities to take charge of their own health;

WHEREAS, the objectives of NAIRHHA Day include: raising awareness and eliminating stigma; education about protection against HIV, hepatitis B and other related diseases; placing control back within the community by encouraging screenings and treatment, as well as hepatitis B vaccination; and advocating for policies and practices that promote healthy African immigrant communities, families, and individuals;

WHEREAS, no existing HIV/AIDS awareness day addresses the distinct factors influencing the high rates of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B in African immigrants and refugees, groups which are often overlooked or misclassified as “Black” or “African American” in HIV/AIDS surveillance programs, due to not collecting or reporting on information about country of origin;

WHEREAS, with the rapid population rise of African immigrants in the U.S., it is critical to raise awareness among healthcare and social service providers and among African immigrant and refugee communities about the risk of hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS, their potential consequences, and opportunities for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. As African immigrants become long-term U.S. residents, it will be increasingly important to provide screening, prevention, and treatment of chronic and infectious diseases with a culturally sensitive approach;

WHEREAS, building capacity within communities to promote knowledge, treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B contributes greatly to the sustainability of the NAIRHHA Day initiative, for as communities increase their capacity to respond to the “silent epidemics” of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B, they will develop their own resources to continue this work;



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

WHEREAS, by encouraging more people to get tested and seek treatment, NAIRHHA Day is aiding those who suffer now and preventing others from contracting these transmissible diseases. By trying to lessen, if not remove, the stigma behind HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B, NAIRHHA Day is facilitating community building and communication; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the United States Senate

1. Supports the designation of September 9th as “National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness Day.
2. Recognizes the importance of dedicating more attention and resources to addressing HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B in African immigrant and refugee communities across the U.S.; and
3. Encourages a commitment to reducing new hepatitis B and HIV infections and hepatitis B and HIV-related deaths through more robust screening, vaccination, and linkage to treatment and care in African immigrant and refugee communities.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

I. Congressional Letter in Support of NAIRHHA Day

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2022

The Honorable Rachel L. Levine, MD
Assistant Secretary for Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Admiral Levine,

We write to request your support for the designation of September 9th as “National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day.” As you may be aware, the number of African immigrants and refugees living in the United States has doubled every decade since 1970, reaching more than two million in 2018, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. HIV infection rates are six times higher in the African immigrant population than in that of the U.S. as a whole and are nearly twice those of U.S.-born Black individuals. Additionally, African immigrants face the highest average chronic hepatitis B rates in the country, with approximately 10 percent of people in these communities living with hepatitis B. The CDC recommends that individuals born in Africa, or individuals born in the U.S. who have at least one parent born in Africa, who were not vaccinated at birth, should be prioritized for hepatitis B testing.

Despite these recommendations and high disease burden, African immigrant communities face significant challenges to HIV and viral hepatitis testing, diagnosis, care, and treatment. Challenges include stigma, fear, lack of awareness and knowledge, language barriers, immigration status, social and economic marginalization, and limited access to health care services. Often, care is inaccessible due to language and cultural barriers. Given that HIV and hepatitis B and C are preventable and treatable conditions, we believe that, with appropriate attention and focus, health outcomes among African immigrant communities can be improved and lives can be saved.

Federal recognition of NAIRHHA Day will bring increased awareness and attention to the health issues of HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis in African immigrant and refugee populations in the U.S. NAIRHHA Day will help to eliminate the pervasive stigma surrounding HIV and hepatitis in these communities by encouraging screenings, treatment, and hepatitis B vaccination. No existing HIV/AIDS awareness day addresses the distinct factors influencing the high rates of HIV and viral hepatitis among African immigrants and refugees.

We appreciate your consideration of this important issue and look forward to working with you as we continue this effort to promote increased awareness, testing, prevention, and treatment of viral hepatitis and HIV/AIDS among African immigrant and refugee communities in the U.S. It is time for us to recognize NAIRHHA Day.



National African Immigrant and Refugee HIV and Hepatitis Awareness (NAIRHHA) Day

Sincerely,

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of
Congress

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

Mondaire Jones
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress