



CDC: “Effectively No Risk” of Sexual HIV Transmission if Undetectable

The strongest federal endorsement to date of the messaging behind the “Undetectable Equals Untransmittable” campaign.

September 28, 2017

Since at least 2016, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released “[Dear Colleague Letters](#)” in support of HIV/AIDS awareness days. The letters are emailed to community partners and posted on the CDC website.

In recognition of the 2017 National Gay Men’s HIV/AIDS Awareness Day ([NGMHAAD](#)), which is marked annually on September 27, the CDC released [a letter](#) that highlighted the latest HIV statistics related to gay and bisexual men.

However, the NGMHAAD letter also included the CDC’s strongest endorsement to date of the messaging behind the “Undetectable Equals Untransmittable” (U=U) campaign, which was launched by the [Prevention Access Campaign](#) in 2016.

From the letter: “Scientific advances have shown that antiretroviral therapy (ART) preserves the health of people living with HIV. We also have strong evidence of the prevention effectiveness of ART. When ART results in viral suppression, defined as less than 200 copies/ml or undetectable levels, it prevents sexual HIV transmission. Across three different studies, including thousands of couples and many thousand acts of sex without a condom or pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), no HIV transmissions to an HIV-negative partner were observed when the HIV-positive person was virally suppressed. This means that people who take ART daily as prescribed and achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting the virus to an HIV-negative partner.”

The letter is signed by Eugene McCray, MD, who is the director of the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention at the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP) at the CDC, and by Jonathan H. Mermin, MD, MPH, who is the director of NCHHSTP at the CDC.

The CDC letter follows [a review](#) of HIV transmission messaging by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which was begun after discussions between HHS and the Prevention Access Campaign.

To read the CDC letter, [click here](#). To read more about the HHS review of HIV transmission messaging, [click here](#). To read more about the Prevention Access Campaign, [click here](#).

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