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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES HISTORIC DECLINE IN NEW HIV DIAGNOSES**

*Newly released HIV surveillance report shows less than 800 new cases, 15% decline over last year*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), on World AIDS Day, today celebrates that HIV diagnoses in Chicago hit a new record low after five consecutive years of declines. CDPH's 2017 HIV/STI Surveillance Report shows a 15% decrease in residents newly diagnosed with HIV in 2017 compared to one year earlier. This continued decrease is supported by Chicago's Getting to Zero initiative with the goal of effectively eliminating all new diagnoses of HIV in Chicago within the next decade.

"This report shows that we can achieve our goal of eliminating HIV within one generation," said Mayor Emanuel. "We are working to ensure that HIV becomes a thing of the past, while also ensuring that those individuals living with HIV/AIDS have access to the resources needed to live long, healthy lives."

Chicago is also making tremendous gains to reach the national HIV/AIDS strategy of having 85 percent of new diagnosis linked to care within one month of diagnosis. This Surveillance Report shows that 82 percent of those newly diagnosed with HIV in Chicago were linked to HIV medical care within one month of diagnosis. That is up from 80% in 2016 and ahead of national rates. Research shows the sooner a person living with HIV starts medications, the healthier they can be.

"We're proud of the progress of we've made in Chicago with record low new HIV diagnoses. These declines are significant, but disparities remain. With our partners, we are effectively working to invest in and reach our most vulnerable populations," said CDPH Commissioner Julie Morita, M.D. "More people are living and thriving with HIV in Chicago than ever before and we will continue to invest available resources to provide quality care and ultimately bring this epidemic to an end."

In 2017, only 752 residents newly diagnosed with HIV compared to 839 in 2016, and down 60% from 1,850 in 2001, the height of new HIV diagnoses in the city. This is the fewest new diagnosis since 1989.

“CDPH has made a commitment to work directly with community members including gay, bisexual and transgender people of color to close health disparities,” said Erik Glen, Chicago Black Gay Men’s Caucus. “Thanks to that commitment, we are on our way to ending HIV in our communities and across Chicago.”

The continued progress in HIV prevention follows CDPH’s investments to promote and increase access to the latest medical treatments for HIV prevention and care, as well as campaigns to reduce the stigma around HIV, like PrEP4Love. Aligned with Getting to Zero, the City’s efforts are focused on ensuring HIV-positive individuals reach viral suppression and at risk HIV-negative individuals have access to PrEP, the once-a-day prophylaxis proven to prevent HIV transmission. By achieving viral suppression, HIV-positive individuals will no longer be able to transmit the virus.

“We are encouraged by the progress Chicago has made to Get to Zero. Chicago has leveraged the incredible potential of antiretroviral medications for HIV treatment and prevention (PrEP) while also addressing the social inequalities that have long perpetuated the HIV epidemic in our City,” said John Peller, President/CEO, AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

While Chicago has seen steady declines in overall HIV diagnoses over the past 16 years, the report also shows that disparities remain and where CDPH can target additional support services for residents:

- There were 5.1 times as many new HIV diagnoses among men than among women.
- In 2017, individuals aged 20-29 years old were the most frequently diagnosed population group, representing 38% of all new HIV diagnoses.
- Non-Hispanic (NH) Blacks were the most frequently diagnosed population, representing 54.8% of new HIV diagnoses.
- Compared with other HIV transmission groups, there were 3.9 times more new HIV diagnoses among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) than those reporting heterosexual transmission and 19.3 times more new HIV diagnoses than those reporting transmission associated with injection drug use.

CDPH and its partners continue to focus resources specifically toward closing these disparities. Earlier this year, Mayor Emanuel announced \$36 million in new HIV funding opportunities as part of Chicago’s Getting to Zero initiative. As part of that announcement, CDPH pledged to work with community groups to overhaul how federal grant dollars are distributed, ensuring greater alignment with evidence-based practices necessary to meet the ambitious goals outlined in Getting to Zero.

### **A Record of Fighting HIV/AIDS**

Last year, Mayor Emanuel signed on to the international Fast Track Cities initiative which engages mayors and other key stakeholders to accelerate their city’s local AIDS responses. Chicago joins other global cities in this initiative including Paris, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Mumbai, Bangkok, New York City and San Francisco among many others. Fast Track Cities builds on CDPH’s

comprehensive efforts to improve health disparities and reduce the burden of HIV as outlined in the citywide public health plan, Healthy Chicago 2.0.

In addition to launching Getting to Zero, Chicago also adopted the Undetectable=Untransmittable philosophy, championing the fact that people living with HIV on effective and sustained treatment do not sexually transmit HIV. To further alleviate disparities, Mayor Emanuel and CDPH partnered with Howard Brown and the University of Illinois at Chicago to expand care at two primary care clinics for residents living with HIV. In its third year of operations, as of September 2018, at seven months of the fiscal year, our providers have provided services to 3,254 clients in the four locations (Englewood, Uptown, South and West) or 63 percent over of our benchmark of serving 2,000 clients per year through this initiative.

Further, CDPH has launched an acute HIV hotline, 312-74-ACUTE (312-742-2883), recognizing the short timeframe and highly infectious nature of the acute HIV infection phase. This will ensure services are provided to acutely infected HIV individuals in a timely and efficient manner. By quickly ensuring acutely infected individuals obtain needed services, the individual is on a quicker path to viral suppression. The diagnosing provider can also call the secure CDPH hotline to meet the 24-hour reporting period. The hotline is answered by a HIV Surveillance Epidemiologist during the business hours of 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. After hours, the provider can leave a voicemail and CDPH will then follow up with the provider directly.

For more information on the Primary Care clinics and CDPH's HIV prevention, treatment and surveillance initiatives please visit [www.cityofchicago.org/health](http://www.cityofchicago.org/health).

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