

Getting to Zero Among Black MSM in the U.S. South



The HIV epidemic in the U.S. continues to be marked by geographic, racial, sexual, and gender disparities. According to the latest estimates from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. South experiences the highest rate of new HIV cases and the highest rate of HIV-related deaths in the country. In addition, higher HIV diagnosis rates have been seen in Southern Black men who have sex with men (MSM). To help address this disparity, [HPTN 096](#), a community-randomized trial, will assess an integrated, HIV status-neutral, population-based approach designed to reduce HIV incidence among

Black MSM in the U.S. South by increasing HIV testing, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) use among Black MSM living without HIV, and viral suppression rates among Black MSM living with HIV.

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Shoutout



The first [HPTN 084-01](#) study abstract, “In the Face of a Global Pandemic and Social Barriers, Cisgender Female Adolescents Enroll in HIV Prevention Trial HPTN 084-01 in Sub-Saharan Africa,” was accepted as an oral presentation at the upcoming [International Workshop on HIV & Adolescence](#). HPTN 084-01 (The LIFT Study) is a clinical trial examining whether injectable cabotegravir for pre-exposure prophylaxis is safe and acceptable for adolescent females assigned female at birth. LIFT enrolled study participants at sites in South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Network Member Spotlight



Pamela Thandeka Tshandu, an [HPTN 083-01](#) and [HPTN 084-01](#) protocol team member, is a community liaison officer at Wits RHI in Johannesburg. Her work focuses on promoting the inclusion of all populations in HIV/AIDS prevention research, ensuring clinical trials are innovative, efficient, and timely. The merging of her research experience and advocacy expertise comes into play when she brings forth community concerns to the researchers, making sure their voices are heard.

As a community liaison officer, she oversees community and stakeholder engagement, maintaining good retention in studies. Tshandu is particularly passionate about stakeholder engagement; it offers her the platform to educate communities on the latest research developments. She recently co-authored the HPTN-084-01 abstract entitled "In the Face of a Global Pandemic and Social Barriers, Cisgender Female Adolescents Enrolled in HIV Prevention Trial HPTN 084-1 in Sub-Saharan Africa." The abstract was recently accepted as an oral presentation at the 2021 [International Workshop on HIV & Adolescence](#).

What attracted you to a career in HIV prevention research?

I am passionate about women's issues and believe their voices get silenced. Plus, more women than men acquire HIV. Women must be educated and empowered in sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV prevention.

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Awareness Days



October 15

Hot Off The Press

Pulerwitz J, Thirumurthy H, Tolley EE, van der Straten A. [Mitigating the COVID-19 challenges to HIV prevention efforts in Africa: A socio-behavioral perspective.](#) Glob Public Health. 2021 Sep 23:1-4.

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Silhol R, Coupland H, Baggaley RF, Miller L, Staadegaard L, Gottlieb SL, Stannah J, Turner KME, Vickerman P, Hayes R, Mayaud P, Looker KJ, Boily MC. [What Is the Burden of Heterosexually Acquired HIV Due to HSV-2? Global and Regional Model-Based Estimates of the Proportion and Number of HIV Infections Attributable to HSV-2 Infection.](#) J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr. 2021 Sep 1;88(1):19-30.

Beyrer C, Malone J, Baral S, Wang Z, Rio CD, Mayer KH, Batey DS, Farley J, Gamble T, Stanton J, Hughes JP, Wilson E, Irvin R, Guevara-Perez O, Bocek A, Bruce J, Gaston R,

Cummings V, Remien RH; HPTN 078 Study Team. [Comparing recruitment strategies to engage hard-to-reach men who have sex with men living with HIV with unsuppressed viral loads in four US cities: Results from HPTN 078.](#) J Int AIDS Soc. 2021 Sep;24(9):e25798.

Sugarman J, Donnell DJ, Hanscom B, McCauley M, Grinsztejn B, Landovitz RJ. [Ethical issues in establishing the efficacy and safety of long-acting injectable pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention: the HPTN 083 trial.](#) Lancet HIV. 2021 Aug 26:S2352-3018(21)00153-3.



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