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2026 HIV Summit

Post Event Report and Strategies

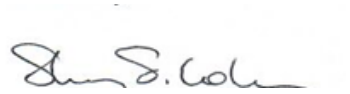
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Letter from the Moderator:

It was an honor to serve as Moderator for the 2026 HIV Summit. A convening that truly reflected the power of collaboration, compassion, and shared leadership across the Memphis Transitional Grant Area (TGA). Together, the conversations and strategies developed throughout the day demonstrated not only commitment, but also strength in the path forward. Each voice contributed to a stronger, more unified framework for action, grounded in the principles of Educate. Empower. and Encourage. It is my hope that the strategies accepted here serve as a living guide for continued partnership, progress, and impact.

Sincerely,



Sherry Cohen
Deputy Administrator
Office of Strategic Initiatives
Shelby County Health Department

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Overview

The 3rd Annual Shelby County HIV Summit served as a powerful platform for collaboration, strategy, and renewed commitment to ending the HIV epidemic in Shelby County and the Memphis TGA. The event successfully gathered government agencies, healthcare providers, funders, community-based organizations, and advocates to align on one shared goal: expanding equitable access to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment.

A list of strategies for proposed efforts was achieved by each breakout session.

Breakout Session 1

Category: HIV Prevention Continuum Movement in Memphis

Key Strategies:

1. Address Basic Needs and Access to Care: Support clients who face difficult choices between meeting essential needs and accessing HIV prevention or treatment services.
2. Expand Mental Health Support: Increase access to mental health resources and promote stigma-free conversations about trauma, depression, and emotional well-being.
3. Promote Inclusive Communication: Adapt education and service delivery approaches to accommodate individuals with varying learning abilities and needs.
4. Improve Transportation Access: Expand transportation options to reduce barriers to accessing prevention, treatment, and support services.
5. Prioritize Provider and Staff Well-Being: Encourage self-care practices and provide resources that support the mental, emotional, and physical health of service providers and staff.

Breakout Session 2

Category: Reaching Youth

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Key Strategies:

1. Strengthen Peer Education: Empower youth to educate and support their peers through relatable, peer-led education and outreach initiatives.
2. Engage and Educate Parents: Provide parents with educational resources and ongoing support to help them navigate conversations about sexual health and HIV prevention with their children.
3. Communicate Authentically: Use clear, approachable, and age-appropriate language. Focus on building genuine connections rather than attempting to use youth slang or appear trendy.
4. Promote Youth Empowerment and Autonomy: Equip young people with accurate information and the confidence to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.
5. Leverage Community Partnerships: Collaborate with churches, fraternities, sororities, and other social clubs, and other community-based groups to expand outreach and connect with youth in trusted environments.

Breakout Session 3

Category: Reaching Latine Populations

Key Strategies:

1. Advocate for Equitable Healthcare Access: Support education and advocacy efforts to protect Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program services, the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), and other healthcare access programs for immigrants, regardless of immigration status.
2. Pool Resources and Funding: Encourage collaboration among organizations to share funding, coordinate HIV testing events, and maximize the impact of available resources.
3. Prioritize Relationship-Based Outreach: Invest in direct, in-person community engagement rather than relying primarily on technology. Maintain a visible presence and build trust through consistent, informal check-ins.
4. Develop Nontraditional Community Partnerships: Build relationships with trusted community institutions, including churches and libraries, to improve outreach, strengthen trust, and increase access to health information and services.
5. Demonstrate Visible Support for Latine Health: Publicly advocate for the health and well-being of Latine communities and promote inclusive, culturally responsive HIV prevention and healthcare services.

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Breakout Session 4

Category: Reaching Rural Populations and Hard to Reach Populations

Key Strategies:

1. Implement Creative Outreach Events: Explore innovative engagement opportunities, such as a themed party bus offering HIV testing, prevention resources, and incentives for participation at popular night spots.
2. Utilize Social Media Strategically: Leverage platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to promote testing events, share prevention information, and increase awareness among underserved populations.
3. Host Themed Community Engagement Activities: Organize seasonal campaigns, such as a Thanksgiving-themed initiative featuring weekly giveaways throughout November, to encourage participation and maintain community interest.
4. Strengthen Community Partnerships: Collaborate with local organizations to provide educational resources, promotional items, and other incentives that encourage engagement with HIV prevention services.
5. Expand Testing in Accessible Locations: Offer HIV testing and prevention education at college campuses and apartment communities, incorporating giveaways or other incentives to increase participation.

Breakout Session 5

Category: PrEP Uptake

Key Strategies:

1. Reduce Structural Barriers to Access: Improve access to PrEP by providing transparent information about costs and payment assistance, multilingual support, virtual and in-person appointments, and flexible service hours.
2. Expand Laboratory and Clinical Partnerships: Partner with community organizations and healthcare providers to increase access to laboratory services, establish service agreements, and offer more convenient testing and monitoring options.
3. Strengthen Retention in Care: Develop strategies to maintain consistent engagement with PrEP clients through regular follow-ups, ongoing support, and continuity of care.

4. Promote PrEP Adherence: Provide education, counseling, and individualized support to help clients take PrEP as prescribed and address challenges that may affect adherence.
5. Enhance Patient Navigation Services: Invest in comprehensive navigation support to help clients understand their options, overcome enrollment and access barriers, coordinate appointments and services, and remain engaged in PrEP care.

Closing Reflection

The 2026 HIV Summit met and exceeded its objectives. The day's dialogue demonstrated power and collective leadership. When agencies, providers, and community voices come together, progress accelerates. Working together and filling in the gaps for one another remain central to the TGA's ongoing HIV response.

The 2027 HIV Summit Committee will commit to a deliberate expansion of marketing and outreach to ensure the summit reaches the community, HIV champions and advocates, and HIV service organizations throughout the Memphis tri-state area including East Arkansas and Mississippi.

In 2027, that means more people carrying the Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) tagline "We're Here Until HIV Isn't." This is more than a slogan, it's a promise to stay engaged, provide support, and help eliminate HIV as a public health threat. It reflects persistence, community commitment and engagement, and the belief that sustained action will end the epidemic.

Acknowledgements

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- All speakers, facilitators, and attendees for their leadership and engagement.