

### You can live well with HIV

SAYFSM services will help you find direction and hope.

These programs and services are available for you at SAYFSM:

- Emotional and spiritual support group for Africans living with HIV
- HIV counseling and testing
- HIV/AIDS prevention education
- Prevention intervention and health education for HIV positives
- Culturally and linguistically sensitive educational materials
- Medical case management
- Care advocacy
- Mental Health Counseling
- Resources and referral for housing, employment, public assistance, food shelf, clothing, schooling, legal, household items, and other needs.

### Get Tested!

All testing and related services are free and available at the SAYFSM office.

SAYFSM tests blood using standard rapid HIV test kit/Oraquick kit that is performed by well-trained and certified staff members.



Call SAYFSM and talk to a staff member to schedule an appointment.

Test results in about 15 minutes.

### Our address:

SAYFSM  
2395 University Avenue, #200,  
St. Paul, MN 55114

Telephone No.: (651) 644-3983  
E-mail: [info@sayfsm.org](mailto:info@sayfsm.org)  
Website: [www.sayfsm.org](http://www.sayfsm.org)

### DONATIONS GLADLY ACCEPTED!

Yes! I would like to contribute to SAYFSM:  
\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_ \$5 \_\_\_ other

Please send your donation to:

SAYFSM  
2395 University Avenue W, #200  
St. Paul, MN 55114

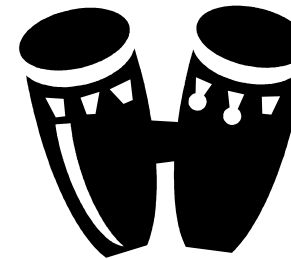
### FREE HIV Testing Sites

- SAYFSM ----- 651-644-3983
- JustUS Health ----- 612-341-2060
- Red Door ----- 612-543-5555

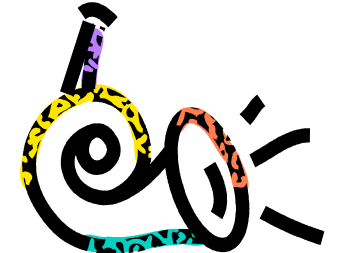


Providing culturally appropriate services

Sub-Saharan African Youth & Family Services in Minnesota (SAYFSM) provides culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate HIV/AIDS education and social services to all Africans in Minnesota.



# Mbiu



A newsletter of SAYFSM

Issue 14/April 2021

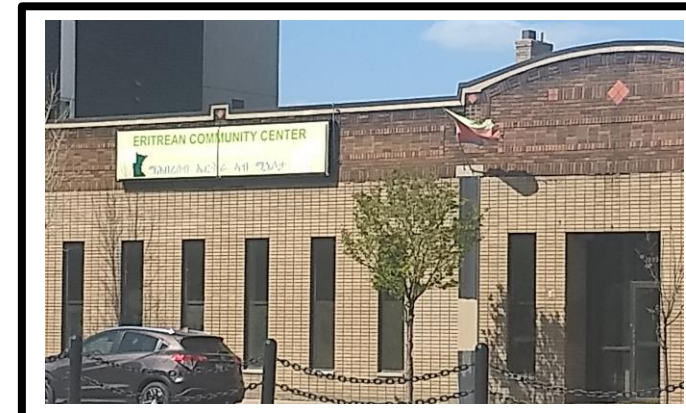
St. Paul, MN

651-644-3983

[www.sayfsm.org](http://www.sayfsm.org)

[info@sayfsm.org](mailto:info@sayfsm.org)

## Message to the Community



Eritrean Community Center of Minnesota, St. Paul,

The Eritrean Community Center of Minnesota (ECCM) was established in the early 1980s. It is an organization made up of Eritreans to serve Eritreans in Minnesota. ECCM works to provide information, knowledge, instruction, and training in physical and mental health awareness, childcare, domestic issues, social and cultural counseling including personal care, and material assistance to our members. As such, ECCM has been working with our partners to educate our members on the presence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS in our community.

In light of the COVID-19 epidemic and the “new normal” living style, organizing periodic activities to educate our members on the prevalence of STDs and more specifically HIV/AIDS has been a bit challenging to say the least. However, because of the importance of the need to bring this information to our members, we have given the education of our youth on the pervasiveness of STDs utmost importance, equal to that of COVID-19.

Our society is a closely-knit and conservative society that sometimes sees having an illness as a weakness. In Eritrea, we have come a long way in educating our people on the existence of STDs, practicing safe sex and abstinence, and the need to seek treatment when you have contracted the disease. Ironically, the success story in Eritrea has not translated to the same success among Eritreans in the Diaspora. Our youth, through their reckless social behaviors, ignore safe sex and social distancing guidelines. When they get infected with diseases, they tend

to isolate or distance themselves. Fear of stigma keeps them from seeking help. They feel their illness will not only affect them, but it will also bring shame to their families.

While we have made progress in improving community awareness on HIV/AIDS particularly in combatting stigma, there is still much work that needs to be done. Stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS and their families are still prevalent, which forces people to not go public and share their experiences.

**“Your family needs you; your community needs you; and your country needs you as well. Get tested and seek help!”**

The Eritrean Community Center of Minnesota humbly advises that you protect yourselves and your loved ones both from COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS. We hope you understand that your life and the lives of your loved ones are precious. So, if you suspect you might have HIV, go get tested and seek the advice of qualified professionals.

Fortunately, there are free HIV testing centers. You can obtain information from our office or reach out to SAYFSM. Health professionals advise making HIV testing regularly. So, let us make a habit of testing regularly.

HIV/AIDS or any other disease does not define you. You can live a normal full life with the proper treatment, only after you take the initiative to be tested. Your family needs you; your community needs you; and your country needs you as well. Get tested and seek help!

The Eritrean Community Center of Minnesota (ECCM) has established a partnership with Sub-Saharan African Youth and Family Services in MN (SAYFSM) to

conduct health awareness on HIV/AIDS and other STIs. Accordingly, ECCM has been giving culturally and linguistically appropriate health education to the Eritrean Community on HIV/AIDS and other STIs, causes, and preventions through social media and local community radio.

*Submitted by Ruth Ogbaselassie, Eritrean Community Center of Minnesota Treasurer.*



**Let’s Fight HIV - not those living with HIV**

People don’t want to know if they have HIV, because they are afraid their family and community will judge and reject them. Everyone needs to know they will always be loved and supported even if they have HIV/AIDS.

The virus that causes AIDS is not spread through touch, saliva, tears, sneezing, coughing, or any type of casual contact. HIV is spread mainly through exposure to semen, vaginal fluid, anal fluid, blood, or breast milk from a person who is HIV positive.

# HIV 101

**Without treatment, HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) can make a person very sick and even cause death. Learning the basics about HIV can keep you healthy and prevent transmission.**

## HIV CAN BE TRANSMITTED BY

- Sexual contact
- Sharing needles to inject drugs
- Mother to baby during, pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding

## HIV IS NOT TRANSMITTED BY

- Air or water
- Saliva, sweat, tears, or closed-mouth kissing
- Insects or pets
- Sharing toilets, food, or drinks

## PROTECT YOURSELF FROM HIV

- Get tested at least once, or more often if you are at risk.
- Use condoms the right way every time you have anal or vaginal sex.
- Use activities with little to no risk like oral sex.
- Don’t inject drugs, or if you do, don’t share needles, syringes, or other drug injection equipment.
- If you are at risk for HIV, ask your health care provider if pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is right for you.
- If you think you have been exposed to HIV within the last three days, ask a health care provider about post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) right away. PEP can prevent HIV, but it must be started within 72 hours.
- Get tested and treated for other STDs.

## KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY AND PROTECT OTHERS IF YOU HAVE HIV

- Find HIV care. It can keep you healthy and help reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others.
- Take your HIV medicine as prescribed.
- Stay in HIV care.
- Tell your sex or injection partners that you have HIV.
- Use condoms every time you have sex, and talk to your partners about PrEP.
- Get tested and treated for other STDs.

For more information please visit [www.cdc.gov/hiv](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv)

