

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
Website: 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



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651-644-3983

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“We Should be Strong and not Succumb to Diseases”



My name is Achu (not my real name). I was born and raised in a country in Africa. In 2000, my father died of HIV/AIDS. Following that, my sister who lived in the USA came and took all the family members to the hospital to get tested for HIV/AIDS. The doctor who examined me cried and tore apart and threw my lab paper. Although I sensed that something had gone wrong from his body reaction, he refused to tell me the result of my testing.

My sister insisted that I should get my result. After one month she took me again to the hospital to get tested again. This time around, the doctor told us the result. As I already suspected, the result was HIV positive. My sister could not hold back her tears. She was shocked and moved by what she heard.

I was not that shocked because I already knew that my HIV test result could be positive. I tried my best to convince myself that I can and should live and thrive even if I have HIV in my blood. Instead of unceasingly dwelling on my status, I started figuring out how to lead a normal and healthy life. I have concluded to consider HIV/AIDS as any other disease. My sister who is also a practicing nurse used to send me antiretroviral therapy (ART). I have seen a lot of change since I started taking ART. For instance, my immunity has improved.

“Fearing stigma and discrimination, I have decided not to reveal my HIV/AIDS.”

Few people in my country of birth had adequate awareness about HIV/AIDS at the time I learned of my status. Fearing stigma and discrimination, I have decided not to reveal my HIV/AIDS status. That is why I have chosen to tell my story under a made-up name.

I came to the USA in 2019. After I briefly lived in Texas, I moved to Minnesota where I am living right now. Since arriving in the USA, I have been getting better due to access to advanced healthcare. I regularly visit my primary physician and follow medical treatment. On top of this, I enjoy my privacy. Here in America people mind their own business and rarely intrude into the private affairs of others. I have not had many problems worrying that people know my status or backbite about me. This has brought me a great sigh of relief and room to deal with my health and life affairs more comfortably.

I have a relative who has been a client of SAYFSM. She told me about support, care and education offered at SAYFSM. Since I joined SAYFSM, I have received useful emotional, psychological, and moral support. I joined a SAYFSM support group team that helped me to regain confidence, renew hope, and think positively. I am extremely grateful to the SAYFSM staff for their excellent and supportive service and approach.

“I must emphasize that worrying or grieving about status hurts more than the disease itself.”

I would like to reassure my fellow PLWHA (people living with HIV/AIDS) that it is possible to live and enjoy the bounty of the world irrespective of HIV/AIDS status. We should remind ourselves that HIV/AIDS is not an exceptional disease. We must treat it like any other disease and live our lives without isolating ourselves from social life. I must emphasize that worrying or grieving about status hurts more than the disease itself. We should be strong and not succumb to diseases.

I advise the youth to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS by maintaining abstinence before marriage. I also empathize that youth should refrain from unsafe practices and take precautionary steps such as using a condom. I call upon all persons to be tested regularly for HIV/AIDS.



**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

