

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:
___\$100 ___\$50 ___\$25 ___other

Please send your donation to:

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

Thank You!!

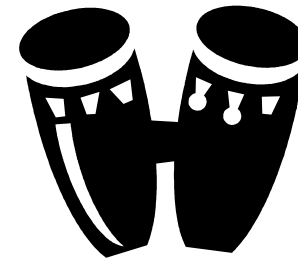
FREE HIV Testing Sites

- SAYFSM ----- 651-644-3983
- Clinic 555 ----- 651-266-1255
- 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.



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651-644-3983

www.sayfsm.org

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“...We are not out of woods yet.”



Bahar Oumer,
Director, Oromo Community of MN

First of all, I would like to acknowledge and thank SAYFSM for more than two decades of linguistically and culturally appropriate HIV/AIDS education, awareness, and social services programming among African immigrants. We owe a lot to SAYFSM for dispelling stigma and misinformation

regarding the transmission of HIV/AIDS and for providing much needed support for people living with HIV/AIDS.

While progress has been made in improving community awareness of HIV/AIDS, particularly in combatting stigma—again, thanks to SAYFSM and other agencies--our internal assessment and wider community perception indicate that we are not out of the woods yet. Stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS are still widespread and commonplace in our community. At times, not only a person living with HIV/AIDS but also family members are stigmatized in the community. Such collective stigmatization and isolation deter people living with HIV/AIDS from going public and talking about their status and experiences living life with HIV/AIDS.

I seize this opportunity to call upon and implore our community to be their brothers and sisters’ keepers and avoid ostracizing people living with HIV/AIDS

and their families. People living with HIV/AIDS are part and parcel of the community. They are part of us. They are our family. As a communal society, we should live up to our age-old cultural ethos of caring and looking after each other. By caring for each other we can combat HIV/AIDS. But if we continue to stigmatize and ostracize people living with HIV/AIDS, we are helping the virus, not the community. And above all else, we must remind ourselves and our community that people living with HIV/AIDS have not contracted the disease as a curse or bad luck. Any one of us could be exposed if we fail to take preventive measures.

“By caring for each other we can combat HIV/AIDS”

Currently, as a community we are leading a life under a Covid pandemic-imposed new normal; however, we should not lose sight of the presence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS in our community. We must bring this issue to the front and center in our community health and wellness discussions. While we should be concerned about the Covid-19 pandemic, we should not be distracted from raising awareness about HIV prevention, testing, and care. Hence, I call upon each and every member of our community to continue to protect yourselves and your loved ones from HIV/AIDS.

In particular, I want to reach out directly to the young people in our community to be certain that you understand that lockdown and social distancing do not mean turning a blind eye or deaf ear to HIV/AIDS. For example, extra care must be taken when organizing house parties. Otherwise, such a risky

endeavor could expose participants to both COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS. Hence, I urge you to protect yourselves and your loved ones both from COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS. I hope you know that there is no trade-off between diseases.

The only way we know our HIV status is by getting tested. So, I highly encourage our community to undertake HIV testing. Fortunately, there are free HIV testing centers. You can obtain information from SAYFSM. Testing should not be done only when we want to make intimate partnerships or travel, as is the case among our community, but we must make testing a regular occurrence. Health professionals advise this practice. So, let us make a habit of doing regular HIV testing.

Last but by no means least, I would like to reach out to our community members who are living with HIV/AIDS. My fellow community members, let us once more remind ourselves that HIV/AIDS does not define anyone. You community members who are living with HIV/AIDS, please know that HIV does not define you. I cannot emphasize enough that you are bigger and greater than the virus. You are part of our community. You can continue to contribute to our community. We cannot afford to lose you from community life, conversation, experience, and activities. We always need your experience, lessons, wisdom, and inspiration. Please come forward and teach our community that it is indeed possible to live, love, and thrive regardless of HIV status.

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.



What do you need to know about HIV?

*“Knowledge is better than riches.”
Cameroonian proverb*

WHAT IS HIV/AIDS?

- **HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. It damages the immune system, which is the body's natural defense mechanism that protects our bodies from diseases and infections.**
- **After being infected, you can live for several years without having symptoms or knowing you have HIV and can pass it on to others.**
- **After being infected with HIV for several years, your immune system is severely damaged, and your infection progresses to AIDS.**
- **AIDS is the last stage of HIV.**
- **Only a doctor can diagnose AIDS.**
- **There is no vaccine or cure for HIV/AIDS.**
- **Treatment is available to help most people with HIV infection to live healthy and longer lives, even though they can still pass HIV on to others if protection is not used or they share needles.**
- **In order to benefit from treatments, knowing your HIV status early is crucial. You can know the status of your HIV only by getting tested for HIV.**

**HIV does not discriminate!
Anyone can get HIV!**