

# A Call for a Just and Equitable South



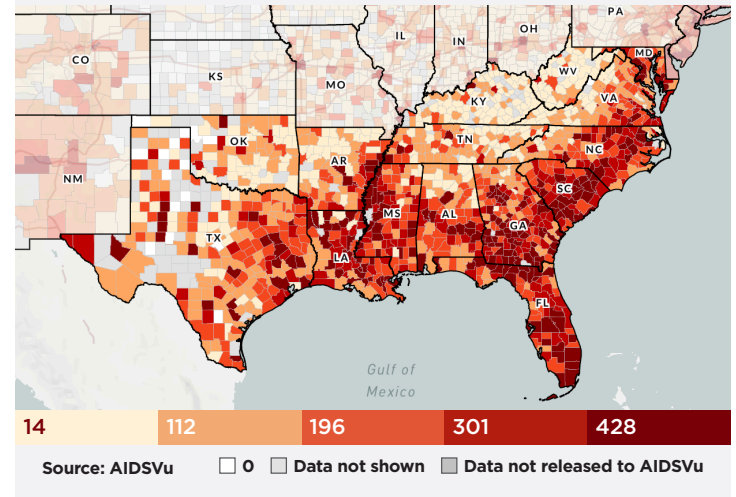
## HIV Crisis in the South

HIV impacts the South with greater intensity than the rest of the nation, accounting for over 50% of all new diagnoses despite only housing 38% of the U.S. population. This crisis demands immediate and focused action, especially in rural communities and among marginalized groups such as LGBTQ/trans people.

## Our Rich Cultural Mosaic

The region is a mosaic of diverse cultures, each telling a unique story of life in the land of resilience and grace. Yet, beneath this cultural richness, significant public health challenges persist.

Rates of Persons Living with HIV per 100k, 2021



## Urgent Challenges



### HEALTH DISPARITIES

Disproportionate rates of HIV and other health issues among racial and ethnic minority populations are exacerbated in the South, demanding strategies that respect and protect underserved communities.



### PERVASIVE STIGMA

Stigma around HIV and other conditions worsens the struggle for affected individuals. A 2021 survey by Gilead and GLADD found that in the South, stigma operates on multiple levels: the individual, media representation, and from a policy level. This is particularly acute for LGBTQ+ communities.



### LIMITED HEALTHCARE ACCESS

Health care access in the South is largely dependent on a patchwork of programs that because of a combination of policy and funding decisions are woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the South. 7 of 10 states that have not expanded Medicaid reside in the South.



### ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Socio-economic disparities, legacies of Jim Crow, segregation, and ongoing structural racism continue to impact overall health and well-being, emphasizing the need for protecting the right to vote as a means to advocate for systemic change.

# Bold Policy Proposals



## EXPAND HEALTHCARE ACCESS & MEDICAID

Ensure everyone can access quality healthcare services by advocating for both the expansion of Medicaid to cover more low-income individuals and the improvement of overall healthcare access across the South.



## IMPROVE HEALTH EQUITY

Implement targeted strategies to address and reduce health disparities among underserved populations, including those in rural communities.



## COMBAT STIGMA

Enforce policies that address and reduce stigma and discrimination, incorporating harm reduction principles.



## INCREASED FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS

Secure more funding for programs aimed at reducing HIV transmission and improving care.



## HIV DECRIMINALIZATION/MODERNIZATION

Support efforts to decriminalize living with HIV and address over-policing and criminalization of communities of color.

## Call to Action

Join us in our fight for a just and equitable South. Here's how you can help:



### ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

Demand policies that tackle health disparities, economic inequality, and social injustice.



### SUPPORT LOCAL INITIATIVES

Get involved with local organizations improving community health.



### VOTE FOR EQUITY

Elect leaders who prioritize justice and equity, including the right to vote.



### EDUCATE AND MOBILIZE

Raise awareness and mobilize your community to take action.

Together, We Can Make a Difference. The future of the South depends on our collective action. By uniting and taking bold steps, we can create a region where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

## Join us in this critical mission for a healthier, more equitable South!

As we await the release date of the 2024 Southern States Manifesto, we encourage you to follow and join SAC as members. Stay informed, get involved, and be a part of the change we need.

Scan to Join

