

## A Journey Through The Native HIV/AIDS Timeline

### 1978

- Gay men in the United States and Sweden, heterosexuals in Tanzania and Haiti begin showing signs of what will later be called AIDS.

### 1981

- June 1981: CDC reports a rare lung infection among gay men in Los Angeles. A rare cancer in gay men. Cases begin to surface in California and New York. This is named **GRID - Gay Related Immune Deficiency** aka "Gay Cancer"
- December 1981: First cases reported with injection drug users.

A total of 159 cases of the new disease are recorded in the U.S. An estimated 300,000 people are infected with HIV but don't know it.

### 1982

- CDC announces that GRID may be transmitted through sexual contact or exposure to contaminated blood.
- **AIDS "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome"** is used for the first time.
- The **Gay Men's Health Crisis** is founded and other **AIDS Service Organizations (ASO)** are established including the **San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF)**.
- **Gay Polynesians Alliance/California (GPAC)** have their first gathering during San Francisco Gay Pride parade.

771 cases of AIDS reported to date in the U.S.  
618 deaths.

### 1983

- CDC says the virus is not transmitted through casual contact routes such as food, water, air, and environmental surfaces.
- AIDS is reported among female partners of infected men, suggesting heterosexual contact transmission.
- The National AIDS hotline is established.
- The **Institut Pasteur** in France finds a virus that may be the cause of AIDS.
- The first report of pediatric AIDS directly acquired from their mothers at birth known as perinatal transmission

- The first AIDS discrimination lawsuit is filed by Lambda Legal defending a doctor evicted for treating AIDS patients.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** holds their first meeting on AIDS and begins international surveillance.
- U.S. President Ronald Reagan has not mentioned the word "AIDS".
- Congress passes the first bill with specific funding for AIDS research and treatment.
- First HIV case is reported in Hawai'i.
- **Life Foundation** is founded by **Dr. McQuinn** and **Jack Law**, Hawai'i's first AIDS Service Organization (ASO).
- Hawai'i's **Community Health Outreach Work (CHOW)** begins as a 3-year demonstration project funded by the National Institutes on Drug Abuse to provide HIV prevention services through outreach to **Injection Drug Users (IDUs)**.

2,807 cases of AIDS reported in the U.S.  
2,118 deaths.

### 1984

- U.S. **Dr. Robert Gallo** claims he discovered the virus that causes AIDS a year after the Institut Pasteur in France claimed the discovery.
- Dr. Robert Gallo and his team at the **Institute of Human Virology (IHV)** at the University of Maryland School of Medicine develop a diagnostic HIV test.
- Bath houses and sex clubs close down starting in San Francisco followed by New York and Los Angeles.
- Amsterdam opens the first needle and syringe exchange program in the world.

7,239 cases of AIDS reported in the U.S.  
5,596 deaths.

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**1985**

- In an **Office of Technology Assessment** (OTA) to the U.S. Congress on American Indian health, high rates of sexually transmitted infections and substance use are reported. The report also addresses the issues of data and the challenge of mixed-race and Spanish surnames. (The OTA reported to the U.S. Congress from 1972 to 1995 – **Public Law 92-484** – with the purpose of providing Congressional members and committees with an objective and authoritative analysis of the complex scientific and technical issues of the late 20th century. This included 750 studies on a range of topics such as HIV, acid rain, health care, global climate change, and polygraphs.)
- The **National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases** (NIAID) is the lead center within the **National Institute of Health** (NIH) in HIV/AIDS research. Due to HIV disease that involved multi-system and multi-organ, nearly every NIH, Center, and Office (ICO) becomes involved in HIV/AIDS research.
- The First International Conference on AIDS is held in Atlanta, Georgia, by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Department of Health.
- FDA approves the first **HIV Antibody Test**. The licensed **Enzyme-Linked Immuno Sorbent Assay** (ELISA) AKA **Enzyme Immuno-Assays** (EIA) is the result of the intense effort to develop tests that could be used to protect the nation's blood supply and reduce the spread of HIV.
- U.S. President Ronald Reagan mentions "AIDS" for the first time after a press interview.
- **Ryan White**, a 13-year-old hemophiliac, is banned from attending school in Indiana because he was living with AIDS.
- Actor **Rock Hudson** discloses his AIDS diagnosis the same year he dies and leaves \$250,000 to set up the **American Foundation for AIDS Research** (amfAR).
- The **Names Project Foundation Memorial** for AIDS victims was inspired by **Cleve Jones**, who creates the first 3' x 6' quilt panel, which would eventually become part of The AIDS Memorial Quilt.

AIDS is now reported in 51 countries and every continent except Antarctica.

15,527 cases of AIDS reported in the U.S.

12,529 deaths.

**1986**

- The virus which causes AIDS is officially called the **Human Immunodeficiency Virus** (HIV).
- After six years, President Ronald Reagan breaks his silence on the epidemic, calling AIDS "public enemy number one" during his State of the Union to the U.S. Congress.
- A published report by U.S. Surgeon General Everett Koop on AIDS urges sex education as a means of HIV prevention.
- **Maui AIDS Foundation** and **Malama Pono** on the island of Kauai become the first neighbor islands in Hawai'i to form AIDS Service Organizations (ASO).
- Condom sales increase from 1986 to 1988 by 25% .
- **Bill Hall**, Tlingit Indian from Hoonah, Alaska, from the Raven Clan, tests positive for HIV. As a long-time survivor, he has volunteered on a number of community advisory boards including the defeat HIV CAB and **Multicultural HIV/Hepatitis C Action Network** (MHHAN) and served on the **Seattle HIV Planning Council**. Being open about his status, Bill was featured in a video titled "**Positively Native.**"
- Diagnosed with HIV this year, **Carole LaFavor**, an Ojibwe woman, novelist, activist, and nurse, works with the **Minnesota American Indian AIDS Task Force**. She is the founding member of Positively Native and promotes the use of traditional medicines.

28,712 cases of AIDS reported in the U.S.  
24,559 deaths.

**1987**

- Playwright and activist **Larry Kramer** along with a diverse and nonpartisan group of individuals unite in anger and commitment to the direct action to end the AIDS crisis. In New York City, they form **ACT UP** (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), which stages demonstrations and AIDS activism using ephemeral media with slogans such as "SILENCE = DEATH" and "ALL PEOPLE WITH AIDS ARE INNOCENT."
- ACT UP pushes to shorten the approval time of AZT (zidovudine, Retrovir) which is the first anti-HIV drug waiting to be approved by the FDA.
- FDA announces a two-year shortening in the drug-approval process.
- Western blot HIV blood test kit is approved by the FDA.

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- FDA approves **Azidothymidine AKA zidovudine (AZT)** as the first antiretroviral drug for the treatment of AIDS.
- President Reagan stops entry into the U.S. for HIV-positive immigrants and travelers.
- Princess Diana opens the United Kingdom HIV/AIDS unit at the London Middlesex Hospital and demonstrates a landmark moment by shaking hands with a man living with AIDS to show the world someone can't get HIV from casual contact.
- **The AIDS Memorial Quilt** visits the national capital covering a space larger than a football field with a total of 1,920 panels.
- Pianist **Liberace**, the Queen of Glitter, dies of AIDS-related illness.
- **"And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic,"** a book by **Randy Shilts**, is an account of the early days of the AIDS epidemic in the U.S. (It wins the Stonewall Book Award and from 1987 to 2004 sold over 700,000 copies. It was translated into seven languages and in 1993 was featured in an HBO film earning nine awards including the 1994 Emmy Award.)
- The **FIRST NATIVE HIV COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS** come together bringing the Native face and voice to the National forum: **Ron Rowell** (Choctaw), **Dr. Kathleen Toomey**, **Dr. Ben Muneta** (Navajo), **Carole LaFavor R.N.** (Ojibwe), **Phil Tingley** (Kiowa), **Willie Bettelyoun** (Lakota) and **Marty Lynn Prairie** (Lakota).
- A small delegation of American Indians attends an HIV Communities of Color conference in Atlanta, Georgia, and are overlooked as being a low prevalence population.
- Ron Rowell (Choctaw) establishes The National Native American AIDS Prevention Center in Oakland, California.
- **Sharon Day** (Ojibwe) establishes **The Indigenous People's Task Force** in Minneapolis, MN.
- The first case of HIV in the Navajo Nation is reported.
- **The Big Island AIDS Project** is established on the island of Hawai'i
- FDA gives the green light for importation of non-approved treatment for **People with AIDS** (PWA).
- A treatment for **Kaposi Sarcoma** (KS) & CMV Retinitis is developed for the first time.
- The U.S. bans discrimination against federal workers living with HIV.
- The film **"Her Giveaway: A Spiritual Journey with AIDS"** confronts the invisibility of women, Native Americans, AIDS, and lesbians through the story of Carole LaFavor. It is produced by Dakota and Minnesota American Indian Tasks Force.
- **The National Native American AIDS Prevention Center** (NNAAPC) joins forces with HIV advocates from the San Francisco Bay Area who introduce NNAAPC to Papa Ola Lokahi, the agency that oversees the scope of work under the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act. This begins a 40-year partnership and collaboration between American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians.
- The NNAAPC begins networks with the Piout Nation, the Alaska Native Health Board, the Choctaw, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Nations.
- A delegation of American Indians including Ron Rowell attends the Minority AIDS Conference and finds a lack of support for the Native community as Native infections numbers were too low for their interest.
- The NNAAPC is the first Native organization to receive HIV prevention funding from the CDC.
- **Project Red Talon**, a program of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, is established to provide training and technical assistance to tribes and tribal organizations on HIV, STI and HCV. Funded by the Indian Health Service's HIV Program.
- The **Health Resources and Services Administration** (HRSA) begins to show interest in what is happening with Natives living with HIV.
- The **World Health Organization** (WHO) designates December 1st as **WORLD AIDS DAY**.
- NNAAPC lays down the groundwork for a National HIV/AIDS care system, which would later be funded by the Ryan White CARE Act.
- **Gregory House** on the island of Oahu opens Hawai'i's first AIDS Housing facility.

50,378 cases of AIDS reported in the US.  
40,849 deaths.

## 1988

- **"Understanding AIDS,"** a U.S. government pamphlet under the leadership of **Surgeon General Everett Koop**, is mailed to every household.

82,363 cases of AIDS reported in the US.  
61,816 deaths.

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**1989**

- The FDA authorizes pre-approval of Retrovir for the treatment of pediatric HIV disease.
- After two years of intense ACT UP activism over the price of AZT, Burroughs Wellcome lowers the price by 20%.
- Amanda Black, "Miss Kitty" Gunsmoke actor, dies of AIDS-related illness.

117, 508 cases of AIDS reported in the US.

89,343 deaths.