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## **New Statewide Campaign Takes Steps Toward Ending HIV/AIDS Epidemic**

**(Jackson, Miss.)** – The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) announced today a new awareness campaign titled “Put Your Foot Down, Mississippi” to inspire Mississippians to join renewed efforts to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Mississippi.

Contrary to public perception, HIV/AIDS is still a problem in the U.S. Approximately 1.2 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV and about 14 percent of them do not know it. In Mississippi, 19.2 out of every 100,000 adults and adolescents were diagnosed with HIV in 2018. Nationally, HIV is spreading fastest among young people, gay and bisexual men, African Americans, and Latinos. Young adults aged 20-29 are the leading age group for newly diagnosed cases.

The “Put Your Foot Down, Mississippi” campaign is a call to all Mississippians to take steps toward ending the misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS by educating themselves, getting tested in order to know their status, protecting themselves proactively against HIV, and doing their part to stop the spread. The campaign focuses on encouraging people to engage with content that will help strengthen understanding about HIV/AIDS from a scientific perspective, how it spreads, and practical ways to protect themselves and loved ones.

The MSDH Office of STD/HIV and the DMH Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services have partnered to address ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Mississippi. DMH provides federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant funding to the MSDH Office of STD/HIV to provide HIV testing in substance use treatment programs. Through this partnership, MSDH and DMH hope to increase public awareness of rapid HIV testing, including where to locate and how to access needed services, such as those available through county health departments.

In addition, the Put Your Foot Down, Mississippi campaign will provide helpful resources on prevention and self-care that encourage Mississippians to create a stronger and healthier future for themselves, their partners, and their communities.

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**TAKE A STEP TO END HIV TOGETHER.**



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Put Your Foot Down, Mississippi is using a four-step approach to ending the HIV epidemic together. To achieve the nationwide goal of reducing new HIV infections in the United States by 75% by the year 2025 and 90% by the year 2030, the Center for Disease Control's Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America focuses on four key strategies and steps that together can end the HIV epidemic in the U.S.

The four-step approach operates as follows:

1. Diagnose all individuals with HIV as early as possible after infection.
2. Treat people with HIV rapidly and effectively to reach sustained viral suppression.
3. Prevent new HIV transmissions by using proven interventions, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and syringe services programs (SSPs).
4. Respond quickly to potential HIV outbreaks to get prevention and treatment services to people who need them.

To learn more or to find a testing location nearest you, please visit the Put Your Foot Down, Mississippi website at [www.putyourfootdownms.com](http://www.putyourfootdownms.com).

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*The Department of Mental Health is supporting a better tomorrow by making a difference in the lives of Mississippians with mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual or developmental disabilities one person at a time.*

*The Mississippi State Department of Health's mission is to protect and advance the health, well-being and safety of everyone in Mississippi.*

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