



For Immediate Release – October 16, 2024

Digital Health Institute for Transformation Launches HIV Innovation Sprint to Help Accelerate Efforts to End the HIV Epidemic

- *Innovation Sprint features facilitated workshops on HIV prevention*
- *Participants in New Orleans, Miami and Birmingham, Ala., to engage in five-month design thinking process to co-develop new solutions focused on improving HIV prevention in their communities*

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. – The Digital Health Institute for Transformation (DHIT), a nonprofit dedicated to supporting communities through the process of digital transformation, is launching a five-month series of health innovation events aimed at boosting efforts to help end the HIV epidemic. DHIT is leading the effort across three Southeastern cities – New Orleans, Miami and Birmingham, Ala. – in collaboration with Gilead Sciences, Inc., by engaging the community in an inclusive, facilitated process.

The fight to end the U.S. HIV epidemic has made encouraging progress in the past few years. New infections fell by nearly 8% from 2019 to 2021, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And overall infections decreased by 18% between 2018 and 2022. Yet the job is not close to being finished. About 8,000 people die each year with HIV-related illness, the CDC says¹, and HIV continues to disproportionately affect certain populations such as people of color and gay and bisexual men². HIV prevention is key to helping end the HIV epidemic in the U.S.

The [DHIT HIV Innovation Sprint](#) is designed to convene people who could benefit from HIV prevention with those serving the community, including advocates, health innovators and entrepreneurs. They'll work toward a common goal to co-develop innovations that can make a meaningful difference in ending the HIV epidemic. Beginning with health innovation discovery sessions in November, and continuing through a national summit in March 2025, DHIT is helping communities and organizations in New Orleans, Miami and Birmingham identify gaps and solutions in HIV prevention.

“While we can celebrate decades of progress toward ending the HIV epidemic, we know there’s much more work to be done,” said Michael Levy, CEO of DHIT Global, based in Chapel Hill,

N.C. “Achieving the ‘last mile’ of HIV prevention will require some new approaches and interventions that leverage what’s worked so far to create new opportunities to reach, activate, and engage those who could benefit from HIV prevention.”

People and the healthcare system that serves them often do not have access to resources they need. At the same time, advocates, innovators and entrepreneurs who have a lot to offer the HIV community often struggle to reach those in need. Ending this mismatch is a driving force behind the DHIT HIV Innovation Sprint.

“When you bring in the unusual suspects to help end the HIV epidemic, this creates real community,” said Morris Singletary, founder of PoZitive2PoSitive, an Atlanta nonprofit that provides education about HIV to communities of color.

“We look forward to participating in the Innovation Sprint as a way to identify and address the barriers to HIV prevention in the Southeast,” said Scott Phillips, assistant professor of healthcare management in the Henry Bernstein College of Business Administration at the University of New Orleans. “By getting all stakeholders in the room together for these sessions, we expect to come away with steps to improve our approach to ending the HIV epidemic.”

Innovation Sprint events include:

- **Discovery Day:** This full-day event brings together a diverse set of stakeholders from each community to share needs, expectations and resources around HIV prevention. Scheduled for Nov. 22 in Birmingham, Dec. 6 in New Orleans, and Dec. 13 in Miami.
- **Design Challenge:** Teams are formed to explore the problem, design solutions and work with subject matter experts. Scheduled for Jan. 23-24, 2025 in New Orleans, Jan. 29-30 in Miami, and Feb. 5-6 in Birmingham.
- **Summit:** Teams selected by an independent panel to advance their innovations from the Design Challenge will present at the North Carolina Health Innovation District’s Digital Health Summit in Charlotte, N.C., March 18-19, 2025.

“The Innovation Sprint is a part of our efforts to support the HIV community and is consistent with our mission to discover, design, develop and deliver innovations for people with life-threatening diseases, including HIV,” said Trudy Buckingham, executive director and head of Patient Focused Implementation Science at Gilead.

About DHIT Global

The Digital Health Institute for Transformation (DHIT) is a non-profit education and research institute supporting communities through the process of digital health transformation. We collaborate with leading academic institutions, associations, and industry to cultivate talent and ecosystems with our immersive learning platform, harnessing real-world experiences that drive the adoption of next-generation skills, emerging technologies, and new models of health. For further information visit: <https://www.dhitglobal.org>. For further information about the Innovation Sprint visit: <https://www.dhitglobal.org/hiv-sprint/>

About Gilead Sciences, Inc.

Gilead Sciences, Inc. is a biopharmaceutical company that has pursued and achieved breakthroughs in medicine for more than three decades, with the goal of creating a healthier world for all people. The company is committed to advancing innovative medicines to prevent and treat life-threatening diseases, including HIV, viral hepatitis, COVID-19, and cancer. Gilead operates in more than 35 countries worldwide, with headquarters in Foster City, Calif. For further information visit: <https://www.gilead.com>

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1 KFF, The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States: The Basics. Updated Aug. 16, 2024. Accessed Sept. 24, 2024.

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HIV Prevention in the United States: Mobilizing to End the Epidemic. Accessed Sept. 24, 2024.

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