

# Support World AIDS Day today and every day



World AIDS Day is held every year on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December. For the past four years, the global UNAIDS campaign has been about getting to zero: zero AIDS-related deaths, zero new infections, and zero discrimination.

As of 2015, new HIV infections have fallen by 35% and AIDS-related deaths have decreased by 41% according to the UNAIDS report, *How AIDS Changed Everything*. Furthermore, the global response to HIV has averted 30 million new HIV infections and nearly 8 million AIDS-related deaths since 2000.

All of this was achieved by a global commitment to speak about HIV & AIDS, encourage safe sex practices, fight discrimination, and encourage testing.

In South Africa, mother-to-child transmission of HIV is the lowest it has ever been due to the introduction of precautionary treatment, with only 200 cases reported in 2014. Government plan on seeing that number reduced to zero.

Kofi Annan, former United Nations secretary-general says, “We no longer talk about halting and reversing the AIDS epidemic. We talk about ending it as a public health threat. What was a dream of a few is now a right for all – with 15 million people accessing HIV treatment, and the number rising daily.”

Finding our way to zero will mean:

- **Raising awareness.** In South Africa HIV & AIDS denialism still exists and it is one of the biggest obstacles to getting to zero. The stigma around getting tested, diagnosed, and treated remains a major challenge. We need to do more to raise awareness that HIV doesn't discriminate according to race, gender, age, or sex – anyone can get it. HIV can be passed on through infected bodily fluids, most commonly via sex without a condom or by sharing infected needles and syringes.
- **Getting tested for HIV and knowing your status.** Don't let fear stand in the way. Being diagnosed as HIV-positive is not the death sentence that it used to be. With early action via antiretrovirals, HIV-positive people are living long lives.
- **Stopping discrimination wherever we encounter it.** By openly discussing HIV & AIDS, we take back the stigma and it loses its power. We must share stories to create solutions.

Together we can find our way to zero by getting involved: fighting against stigma and HIV denialism, raising awareness, getting tested, and working together.