



The HIV Fight Is Not Over **February 8, 2022**

As the [Washington Post reported yesterday](#), the District of Columbia had “mixed results” in the fight against HIV. The reported results are based on the number of new infections in the city in 2020, along with the number of infected people in treatment and the number whose treatment has led to suppression of the virus so they will not infect others.

DC Applesseed and the [Washington AIDS Partnership](#) have long been collaborating with the city to address HIV and hope that the partnership will eventually end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the District.

Meanwhile though, [the recent report](#) shows there were 217 new reported HIV cases in the District in 2020; this is fewer than in previous years but is still way too high. Moreover, as the new report indicates, it seems likely that because of the pandemic this figure may understate the number of new infections since fewer people may have been tested.

One issue of great concern to DC Applesseed in the new report is that the city is not doing enough to educate and protect young people in the city from HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). As the report indicates, over 19% of the newly reported HIV cases in 2020 were among young people 13-24. Moreover, the number of infected young people who have been in treatment long enough to suppress the virus is only 55% of those 13-19 and 45.9% of those 20-24. This compares with 66% of those with viral suppression among the infected population as a whole. In addition, half of all chlamydia infections were in the 13-24 age group. Another concern is that the report shows that heterosexual African American women continue to experience a significant number of cases.

Protecting our young people from HIV should be a high priority for the city, just as protecting them from Covid is a high priority. One tool available to the city to protect them from HIV is to begin complying with the District’s Healthy Schools Act. As a [recent report from the District’s Office of Inspector general](#) recently detailed, the District’s schools are not complying with that Act, which sets our certain requirements for teaching

students about HIV and ensuring that they understand how to protect themselves from the disease.

It is time that the city take steps to comply with the Healthy Schools Act. Today's report makes crystal clear that our young people need and deserve that compliance. And, it makes clear that women can't be left out of the equation either. DC Appleseed looks forward to working with the Mayor, the schools, and the Department of Health to help make that happen.

If you would like to help us advance this important work, please click [here](#) to donate.

Many thanks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Walter Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Walter Smith
Executive Director
DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice