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SAMARITAN MINISTRY



Shifting Sands In Tennessee

During the last few months of 2022 and in the beginning of 2023, there have been some shifts in Tennessee in the HIV world and we are keeping an eye on these changes. We are engaging with our partners (other community based organizations in Tennessee and national HIV organizations, the Tennessee Department of Health, and the state legislature) to make sure that the work of HIV care and prevention is able to continue across our state.

We know that in the changing world of HIV, treatment and prevention go together like peanut butter and jelly, creating a perfect sandwich that can both help people live with HIV and prevent new transmissions in the process.

Read on in this NEWSLETTER to learn more about HIV in 2023 and about Samaritan Ministry.

He is Risen!

Our April Support Group Meeting (4/4) coincided nicely with Easter, and an opportunity for our group members to create a "Resurrection Garden", depicting the empty tomb of Jesus, with stone rolled away, discovered by Mary Magdalene and other women, and a white cloth representing the linens that were found in the tomb by Peter. "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen." Luke 24: 1-12



Treatment Update

There is good news regarding the use of injectables for both treatment and prevention of HIV. Injectable medications, usually administered by a healthcare professional, offer patients non-pill options for their regular HIV care. Injectable options for HIV prevention (called PrEP for pre-exposure prophylaxis) are also now available.

Cabenuva is an FDA approved option for HIV treatment.

Administered once every two months, Cabenuva is an alternative to regular daily oral medications. Both options are FDA approved and provide HIV suppression, giving those living with HIV the opportunity to maintain a healthy immune system and also prevent the spread of HIV through sexual contact.

Apretude is an injectable version of PrEP that will reduce the risk of getting HIV by 99% if taken as prescribed. Two daily oral medications (Truvada and Descovy) also provide excellent protection from getting HIV.

For up to date information about PrEP, check out this excellent [CDC website](#).

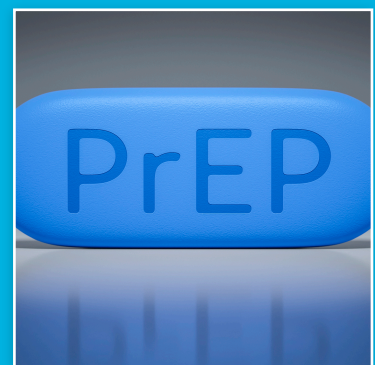
The development of an HIV Vaccine has been elusive for decades since the beginning of the HIV pandemic in 1982.

Many smart and dedicated people (including those who are willing to be subjects in vaccine trials) have worked diligently to find a vaccine that works to prevent HIV. Most vaccines induce our body to make antibodies to fight different pathogens, but HIV disguises itself, so that even if we do make antibodies, the virus changes to escape them.

In January, a large vaccine trial, called Mosaico, was discontinued following disappointing results of planned data review. But scientists work on, developing new strategies to fight this most cunning virus. For great information about HIV vaccines, take a look at this site from [Johns Hopkins](#).

While we still do not have an HIV vaccine, we do know treatment for HIV and PrEP have the potential to stop new transmissions from occurring. But, an HIV vaccine is still important. Dr. Lawrence Corey, MD, speaking at the 30th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI), says that making an HIV vaccine is hard, but it is still necessary.

“Making an HIV vaccine is hard, but it is still necessary, Corey said, as we have never controlled an infectious disease at the population level without a vaccine.”





Our Mission Statement

Our church should be a beacon of light and hope, by way of Christ, to anyone who suffers from or has family or friends who suffer from HIV/AIDS.

What We Do

- Case Management & Counseling
- Jail & Prison Ministry
- Vision Services
- Food Ministry
- HIV Prevention Education & Testing
- Nursing Seminars
- HIV Awareness Seminars
- Materials Development & Distribution
- Support Groups
- Social & Family Support
- Rent & Utility Rescue
- Prescription Drug Assistance

Trends and Changes

People often ask us how our ministry focus has changed over the 27 years of Samaritan Ministry. While there have been changes, **HIV remains the centerpiece of our work.**

For the first 15 years, we were mostly engaged in caring for the sick. Medications were keeping people alive, for the most part, but taking those meds came with a high cost of side effects. Deaths were still common, so funerals were not an uncommon part of our ministry to the community.

Around 2007, new classes of HIV medications changed the landscape. These new meds were more friendly to the patient, controlled HIV more effectively, and involved much fewer pills. This was a great time of change.

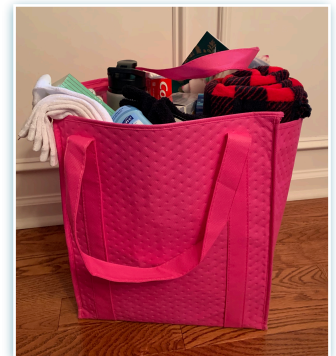
Our Hope Bucket project is an example of this change. This project was created as a Christmas gift to HIV patients, including a list of handy toiletry items in a bucket in case the patient got sick. Today, our project involves an insulated utility bag. Progress.

So, for the last 12 years we have been more focused on LIVING with HIV. Our clients are older and their health problems are more likely to be related to growing older than to HIV.

We have learned (through important research) that successful treatment for HIV will prevent sexual transmission of the virus. The moniker, U=U (undetectable = untransmittable) has become a unique way to encourage those living with HIV to maintain treatment for two reasons - maintaining health AND preventing the spread to others.

And, PrEP (Preexposure Prophylaxis) medications offer a new way to prevent HIV with daily medications or periodic injections .

We are excited about the changes to come. Stay tuned.



GIVE TO SAMARITAN MINISTRY

Giving is an important part of the success of Samaritan Ministry. While we have great support from area churches and from a few national foundations, about 30% of our budget (\$24,000 out of \$78,000 total 2023 budget) comes from individual givers like you. YOU help make it possible for us to do our work.

- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Case Management & Counseling
- ✓ Jail & Prison Ministry
- ✓ NARCAN (Naloxone) Training and Distribution
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Food Ministry
- ✓ HIV Prevention Education & Testing
- ✓ Hepatitis C Prevention Education & Testing
- ✓ Nursing Seminars
- ✓ Support Groups
- ✓ Social & Family Support
- ✓ Rent & Utility Rescue
- ✓ Prescription Drug Assistance
- ✓ Home HIV Testing

Giving is easy.

- 1) Go to the Central Bearden website [HERE](#) - select Samaritan from the pull down menu. You can make a gift directly to Samaritan Ministry.
- 2) Mail us a check.

Make sure to make your check payable to Central Bearden and that you put Samaritan Ministry in the memo. You can mail your check to:

Samaritan Ministry
Central Baptist Church of Bearden
6300 Deane Hill Dr.
Knoxville, TN 37919



To **CHALLENGE** negative and judgmental attitudes towards people with HIV/AIDS.

To increase **KNOWLEDGE** and **UNDERSTANDING** and decrease fear and misconceptions.

To provide **ACCURATE INFORMATION**.

To give practical and pastoral **SUPPORT** to people and families living with AIDS.

To **ENGAGE** in prayerful dialogue with other churches, faith communities and secular organizations.

A Slate of Activities for 2023

We will be teaching and providing **HIV and Hepatitis C testing** throughout our community each and every month.

We sponsor two Support Groups at Samaritan Ministry. Our **HIV Support Group** (in it's 20th year!) meets on the first Tuesday of each month. Our relatively new group for **parents with transgender children** also meets monthly. Contact [Wayne](#) if you are interested in these groups.

Our **Summer Cookout**, a Samaritan tradition, is scheduled for June 6.

We will again collect **Holiday Hope Bags** during the month of November.

The 22nd Annual Thanksgiving Banquet is all set for November 16.

Hope for the Holidays, a Christmas Party Celebration, will be held at Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church on December 7.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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*Samaritan
Ministry*



Why HCV?

A Small Agency with a Big Footprint

Samaritan Ministry, a small HIV Service Organization in Knoxville, TN, has been working since mid-2013 with our testing partner, The McNabb Center, to advocate for increased awareness concerning the Hepatitis C (HCV) epidemic. With trainings and workshops, community stakeholder meetings, and HCV antibody testing, Samaritan Ministry has had an impact on how the Tennessee Department of Health is acting and reacting to this epidemic. Great progress had been made during this time.

- 1) The Tennessee Department of Health has created a dedicated HCV staff to address this epidemic.
- 2) All Tennessee Public Health Departments are now testing for Hepatitis C.
- 3) Tennessee passed a Syringe Exchange Bill in 2017 to directly address injection drug use.
- 4) Agencies across Tennessee have received Hepatitis training and are conducting HCV antibody testing.
- 5) HCV can be cured.

Why is an AIDS Service Organization involved Hepatitis C testing and training?

First, many people living with HIV are also living with HCV (as many as 25%) and there are common vulnerabilities for both. HCV is at epidemic proportions in the U.S. and Tennessee (our home state) is having an HCV crisis. In **July 2015**, the Tennessee Department of Health issued a Public Health Alert regarding Hepatitis C.

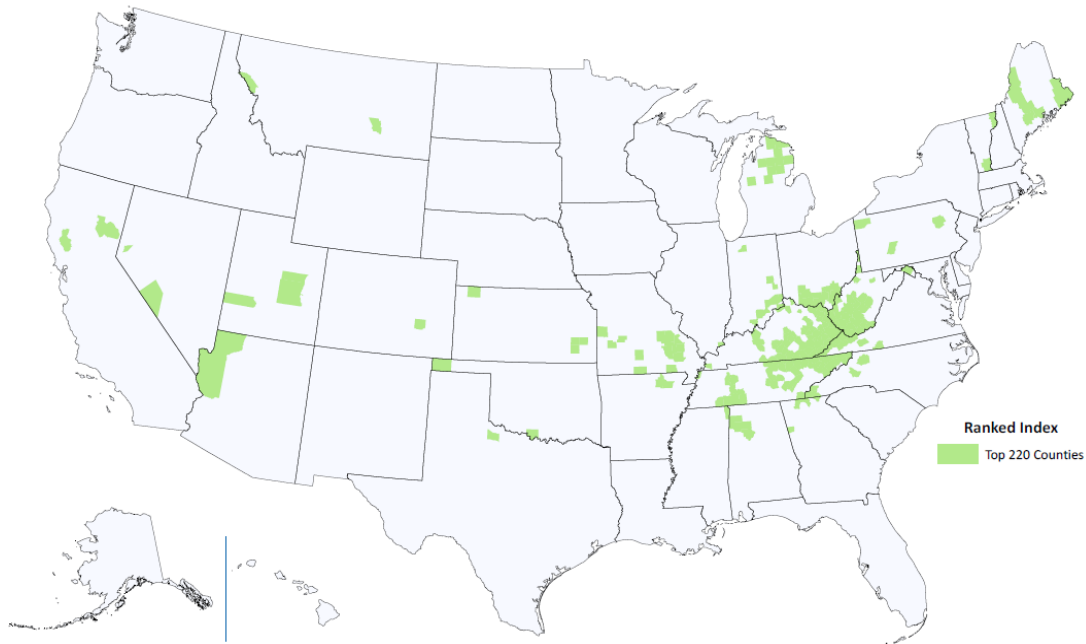
We are also concerned, as a Christian organization, with the social justice implications of a disease that seems to be affecting the injection drug user population in significant numbers. **Who will speak up and advocate for this voiceless group?**

Our HCV antibody testing, using the OraQuick HCV Rapid Antibody Test, has been successful in helping to identify the problem. Keeping in mind that we have tested in **venues with high vulnerabilities**, such as half-way houses, homeless shelters, and recovery centers, our statistics have been amazing. (See chart on page 6.)

The map of the U.S., provided by the CDC [2016], illustrates the top 220 counties in the United States that have the highest vulnerability for outbreak of HIV and HCV infection, primarily based on rural injection drug use. Forty-Two of these counties are in Tennessee.

Vulnerability to Rapid Dissemination of HIV/HCV Infections Among Persons Who Inject Drugs: Ranked index using regression model coefficients

26 States with 1 or more vulnerable counties



HEPATITIS C TESTING 2013-2022				
YEAR	NUMBER TESTED	IDENTIFY AS IDU	POSITIVE RESULT	% POSITIVE
2013	81	23	19	23%
2014	217	89	68	31%
2015	146	53	49	34%
2016*	534	268	195	37%
2017*	632	328	251	40%
2018*	770	357	245	32%
2019*	709	315	229	32%
2020	195	86	68	35%
2021	140	28	29	21%
2022	303	74	84	28%
TOTALS	3727	1621	1237	33%

This article has been updated. It was first published in 2016.

* These figures include numbers from our testing partner, The McNabb Center.