

GHF2019

17TH ANNUAL GAY HEALTH FORUM
FRIDAY 24TH MAY 2019

KEY MESSAGES OF THE 2019 GAY HEALTH FORUM #GHF2019

1. A person on effective treatment with a sustained undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.

The preventive impact of effective HIV treatment highlights the need to maximise access to treatment in order to minimise and ultimately eradicate HIV transmission. Advocating the U=U message is also an important way to help reduce the stigma experienced by people living with HIV, whose sexual partners may be concerned about acquiring the virus unnecessarily.

We recommend consistent and unambiguous terminology when discussing U=U such as "no risk" or "zero risk" of sexual transmission of HIV, avoiding terms like "reduced risk", "negligible risk" and "minimal risk."

2. We want to end HIV transmission in Ireland. We believe that this is achievable, but only if we have access to all the preventative tools available to us.

PrEP is a key tool in achieving a break in new HIV transmissions.

We call on government to make PrEP free and accessible to those vulnerable to acquiring HIV.

3. Effective HIV & STI prevention work should be delivered within the context of a broader sexual health and wellbeing framework which addresses the range of social determinants of health that impact on sexual behaviour and risk for HIV.

We are calling on all those who work with gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men to achieve a cultural competency that celebrates diverse identities and understands the interconnectedness with sexual, mental, physical and social health.

4. Sexual health services in Ireland are stretched beyond capacity.

Prompt access to services for diagnosis and treatment of HIV and STIs is crucial in stemming rising rates, most of which disproportionately affect gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

We call on the government to properly fund and resource sexual health services throughout the country to ensure all those in need of sexual health services have prompt and appropriate access to care.

Key Speakers

Bruce Richman

Executive Director of Prevention Access Campaign's U=U Movement

Bruce is the executive director of Prevention Access Campaign's Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U), a growing international movement to share the revolutionary but largely unknown fact that people living with HIV on treatment with an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV to sexual partners. In 2012, nine years after his diagnosis, Bruce learned U=U. After recognizing that millions of people with HIV and the public were not being informed about this ground-breaking science, he joined with activists and researchers to ensure the science reaches the people it was intended to benefit. U=U is based on the principle that all people living with HIV have a right to accurate and meaningful information about their social, sexual, and reproductive health based on science not stigma.



Nathan Sparling

Chief Executive of HIV Scotland

Nathan Sparling is the Chief Executive of HIV Scotland. Nathan leads HIV Scotland's team to ensure that all their work achieves the best outcomes for people living with and affected by HIV, ensuring they are involved at every step. Previously he worked in the House of Commons where he was a Senior Parliamentary Adviser, covering many social policy issues including pensions and the devolution of social security powers to the Scottish Parliament. He was a prominent campaigner on equal marriage in Scotland and was a Political Adviser on the Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act. As a PrEP user, Nathan heads an organisation that fought for PrEP to be made free on the Scottish NHS – a successful campaign for which HIV Scotland won the Cracking Campaign Award at the Scottish Charity Awards in 2018. He'll reflect on almost two years on PrEP access – full and free in Scotland – and what that means for getting to zero.



Rusi Jaspal

Pro Vice-Chancellor at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

Rusi Jaspal is Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, and Professor of Psychology and Sexual Health at De Montfort University, Leicester, UK. He is also an Adjunct Professor of Minority Research at Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland. Rusi Jaspal is a Chartered Psychologist and Fellow of the British Psychological Society. He has written over 100 articles and book chapters focusing mainly on the social psychological aspects of sexual identity, sexual health and behaviour among gay men. The presentation focuses on enhancing sexual healthcare practice among marginalised groups, namely men who have sex with men (MSM) and MSM of ethnic minority background. Both groups are at disproportionately high risk of poor sexual health. The presentation will provide insight into the lives, narratives and identities of individuals from these marginalised groups, thereby raising awareness of inequalities experienced by members of these groups. It is argued that poor psychological wellbeing can lead MSM to engage in behaviours that put them at risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Possible interventions for enhancing sexual health are proposed.

