THE MESSAGE AND MOVEMENT
CHANGING THE NARRATIVE
ABOUT LIVING AND LOVING WITH HIV
Bruce Richman, Founding Executive Director
Prevention Access Campaign U=U
What is U=U?

Undetectable = Untransmittable

People living with HIV who are on treatment and have an undetectable viral load **cannot transmit HIV** to sexual partners.
A defining moment in history

1996

2016

#UEQUALSU | @PreventionAC

U=U

FIGHTING
FOR OUR LIVES

Undetectable = Untransmittable

#UequalsU
A defining moment

1996

2016
A defining moment in history

2016
Why is U=U a game changer?

- Transforms social, sexual, & reproductive lives
- Dismantles HIV stigma
- Reduces anxiety associated with HIV testing and adds an incentive to start and stay on treatment and in care
- Provides a strong public health argument for increasing access and eliminating barriers to treatment and care. (The Third U = Universal)
Advocacy – The 3rd U: Universal

Increasing access and removing barriers to treatment, care & services:

Improves well-being of people w/HIV

“Personal health”

Eliminates new HIV transmissions

End the Epidemic

“Public health”
Advocacy – The 3rd U: Universal

Increasing access and removing barriers to treatment, care & services for PLHIV:

End the Epidemic

Prevent new HIV transmissions

“Public health”

Improve the well-being of people w/HIV

“Personal health”
Advocacy – The 3rd U: Universal

End the Epidemic
Prevent new HIV transmissions

Increasing access & removing barriers to treatment and care

Improve the well being of PLHIV
U=U public health argument

Improving access and removing barriers to treatment, care & services:

1. Improves the well-being of people living with HIV
2. Eliminates new HIV transmissions
Why did we need the U=U campaign?

- Lack of access to accurate information
- Lack of expertise, authority, or disposition to draw a conclusion on the aggregate of research
- Paternalism, bias, prejudice, and stigma
- Resistance to change

Science doesn’t have a publicist.
Why did we need the U=U campaign?

Tell the truth
-or-
We’ll tell it for you

All people with HIV have a right to accurate information about their social, sexual, and reproductive health.

HIV stigma is a public health emergency. U=U is an immediate & effective public health solution.
Bringing science to the people Jan to July 2016

July 2016
Partners

NYC Health

Terrence Higgins Trust
Bringing science to the people Jan to July 2016
U = U
UNDetectable = UNtransmittable
A PERSON LIVING WITH HIV WHO HAS AN UNDETECTABLE VIRAL LOAD DOES NOT TRANSMIT THE VIRUS TO THEIR PARTNERS.

The International AIDS Society is proud to endorse the U=U consensus statement of the Prevention Access Campaign.

It's a fact... "A person living with HIV who has an undetectable viral load will not pass HIV to their sexual partners."

The Saving Lives charity is proud to support the Prevention Access Campaign’s equality consensus statement.
“Effectively no risk” of sexual transmission when on treatment and undetectable (September 27, 2017)

U=U: **100% effective** for preventing sexual transmission

Authorizes flexibility in messaging, including PAC’s communications and U=U

Dr. Jonathan Mermin, Dr. Eugene McCray, Dr. Carl Dieffenbach, Anne Rancourt, Murray Penner, Gina Marie Brown, Dr. Richard Wolitski, Jesse Milan, Bruce Richman, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci
U=U is the foundation of being able to end the epidemic

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, Director NIAID, NIH
Why Is U=U a Game Changer?

U=U is a game changer because it transforms the social, sexual, and reproductive lives of PWH. It enables PWH and their partners to be in a relationship without fear of transmitting HIV. PWH report no longer feeling “like a pariah” or “contaminated.” Furthermore, it changes the way health professionals, the public, employers, and policymakers see and make decisions related to PWH.

U=U is an essential component for ending the epidemic. When people learn that U=U, they are more likely to get tested and to start and stay on a treatment. Staying on ART brings health benefits to PWH, their partners, and the general public.
All persons with HIV should be informed that maintaining a plasma HIV RNA (viral load) of <200 copies/mL, including any measurable value below this threshold value, with antiretroviral therapy (ART) prevents sexual transmission of HIV to their partners.

Patients may recognize this concept as Undetectable = Untransmittable or U=U.
Argentina · Armenia · Australia · Austria · Azerbaijan · Bahamas · Bangladesh · Belarus · Belgium · Bermuda · Brazil · Bulgaria · Cambodia · Cameroon · Canada · Chile · China · Colombia · Côte d’Ivoire · Croatia · Cyprus · Czech Republic · Denmark · Democratic Republic of the Congo · Egypt · El Salvador · England · Estonia · Finland · France · Georgia · Germany · Ghana · Greece · Guatemala · Guinée · Guyana · Haiti · Hong Kong · Hungary · Iceland · India · Indonesia · Ireland · Israel · Italy · Japan · Kazakhstan · Kenya · Kosovo · Kyrgyzstan · Latvia · Lebanon · Liberia · Macedonia · Malawi · Malaysia · Mauritius · Mexico · Moldova · Monaco · Montenegro · Nepal · The Netherlands · New Zealand · Nigeria · Northern Ireland · Norway · Pakistan · Panama · Peru · The Philippines · Trinidad & Tobago · Poland · Portugal · Romania · Russia · Scotland · Serbia · Singapore · Slovenia · South Africa · South Korea · Spain · Swaziland · Sweden · Switzerland · Taiwan · Tajikistan · Tanzania · Thailand · Tunisia · Turkey · Uganda · Ukraine · United States · Uzbekistan · Venezuela · Vietnam · Zambia · Zimbabwe

960+ partners
101 countries

Prevention Access Campaign - As of March 28, 2020

www.preventionaccess.org/community
U=U

Around the World
"We now have the robust data to say, with confidence, that people living with HIV who are on effective treatment cannot pass on the virus.”

Dr Michael Brady

Hear Horcelie's story

People with HIV who have an undetectable viral load cannot pass HIV on.
“We now have the robust data to say, with confidence, that people living with HIV who are on effective treatment cannot pass on the virus.”

Dr Michael Brady

Hear Horcelie's story

CAN'T PASS IT ON

People on effective HIV treatment CAN'T PASS IT ON.

FACT.

People with HIV who have an undetectable viral load cannot pass HIV on.

Matthew Hodson @Matthew_Hodson
People with #HIV who are virally suppressed:
- Have babies born without HIV
- Have sex, without condoms, without risk
- Live as long a life as someone without HIV

Facts not fear.
Science not stigma.
ENGLAND

ZAMBIA

VIETNAM

JAPAN
U=U (We Can Win) - B Flow, Judy Yo, Ron Kay, D2 & JC Starboy (Shot by No ID Guru Pictel)
Gareth Thomas: HIV and Me

we call, Undetectable equals Untransmittable, U=U.

CNN Town Hall
Los Angeles
5:47 PM PT

Just dropping HIV knowledge on the today show ... undetectable = untransmittable

CNN PRESIDENTIAL TOWN HALL WITH MAYOR PETE BUTTIGIEG
#EqualityTownHall
What is Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)?

Science has confirmed that when a person living with HIV is undetectable, they’re not only healthier, they also cannot pass HIV to anyone else. Or, Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U).

This is a landmark development in the history of HIV. It means that people living with HIV who are undetectable have no reason to fear passing on the virus to sexual partners. People living with HIV are a part of the solution to ending HIV just by taking the medicine they take every day to stay healthy.

Check out www.uequalsu.org

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Co oznacza Niewykrywalny = Niezakaźny (N=N).

Badania udowodniły, że osoba z niewykrywalną wioremą, jest nie tylko zdrowsza, ale również nie jest zakaźna względem innych osób. Lub, niewykrywalny = niezakaźny (N=N).

To przelomowe odkrycie w historii HIV. Oznacza ono, że osoby żyjące z HIV nie muszą obawiać się przekazania wirusa swoim partnerom seksualnym. Są również częścią strategii rozwiązania problemu HIV, poprzez zażywanie leków, które przyjmują codziennie, również aby zachować swoje zdrowie.

Sprawdź www.uequalsu.org
Dowiedz się więcej na TheBody lub www.UequalsU.org

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Какво е Неоткриваем = Непредаваем (H=H)?

Науката доказа, че ХИВ-положителните, които са "неоткриваеми" са само по-здрави, но и не могат да предадат вируса на други хора. Т.е. Неоткриваем = Непредаваем.

Това е значимо откритие в историята на ХИВ. "Неоткриваемите" не трябва да се страхуват, че могат да предадат вируса на сексуалните си партньори. Инфектиранияте с ХИВ, които взимат своите лекарства всекидневно, предоставят начин за решение на проблема.

Вижте www.uequalsu.org
Communicating U = U

• Clear
• Confident
• Consistent
• Conscious
Be *clear* about U = U

**Don’t say:**

- Negligible
- Extremely unlikely
- Virtually impossible
- Close to zero
- Helps prevent

**Do say:**

- Can’t pass it on
- Can’t transmit
- No risk
- Zero risk
- Prevents HIV
Be confident about U = U

Don’t say: I believe in U=U but use a condom and/or PrEP just in case.

Do say: Condoms or PrEP aren’t clinically necessary to prevent HIV with U=U.

You might want to use a condom and/or PrEP:
• to prevent other STDs or pregnancy
• if the partner w/HIV is struggling with adherence
• if you have condomless sex with other partners of unknown HIV status
• for an added emotional feeling of security and agency
Be confident about U = U

Don’t say: You’re only as good as your last viral load test.

Do say: If you’re taking your medication as prescribed and having a regular viral load test you don’t need to worry.

Don’t say: You never know…

Do say: We know.
Be consistent about U = U

• Integrate into patient information, guidelines, clinical rooms, outreach activities, and communications

• Have a conversation about U=U with those living with or vulnerable to HIV at every opportunity

• Make U=U central to speeches, events like AIDS Walks, and other public platforms

• Use social and traditional media repeatedly to convey the message
Be conscious about U=U

Viral load does not equal Value

• Acknowledge that not everyone can achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load.

• Recognize structural, social and emotional barriers that make it difficult for people to start or stay on treatment - especially for marginalized communities.

• Underscore that no one living with HIV is a danger. All people with HIV have options for safer sex e.g. condoms and PrEP

• Clarify that treatment is a personal health decision and not a public health responsibility

• Use the public health argument of U = U to increase access and remove barriers to treatment and care

V does not equal V created by The Stigma Project - Seattle
It is inexcusable for providers to withhold the U=U message from any patient living with HIV.

Conveying benefits and risks surrounding any treatment is fundamental to patients’ decision-making, and this HIV treatment benefit should be no exception.

Educating all patients about U=U is crucial to maximizing the wellbeing of PLWH and their communities and to minimizing the contribution of provider biases to HIV-related disparities.

Providers should discuss U=U with all patients living with HIV

As scientific knowledge surrounding the link between HIV viral suppression and transmission risk evolves, messaging to patients must be updated accordingly. Presenting the results of the multisite, observational PARTNER2 study at the 22nd International AIDS Conference, guilt surrounding potential transmission, and enabling sex without fear. Beyond direct benefits, educating patients about U=U could indirectly reduce community viral load by encouraging HIV medication adherence and consequent viral suppression, supporting public-health efforts.
Provider consequences

• Telling someone they are infectious when they are not infectious is unethical and harmful.

• It is *malpractice* to withhold or deny life-changing information to people with HIV that is science-based and accepted in the field.

• Patients will find out U=U elsewhere, breaking trust between provider and patient.

• Opportunities to improve personal and public health will be wasted.
Conquering fear and anxiety

1. Recognize cognitive dissonance
2. Separate feelings from facts
3. Consider the impacts
4. Borrow confidence from the experts
Sharing your status

Considerations

• Ethical
• Relationship
• Legal
Rules to enjoy U=U

The basics:

- **Treatment**
  - < 200 copies/ml
  - Synonymous with viral suppression

- **Labs**
  - **U=U** is about sex
  - Not breastfeeding or needle sharing

- **Connection**
  - **U=U** only prevents HIV
  - Not other STIs
Dr. Alison Rodger, lead author PARTNER2 to Bruce Richman at International AIDS Conference, July 25, 2018
Hey my hamah, you woman I don't know how to thank you, do you know I was in a relationship with my man and we're using protection and he was going to leave me because of my status his negative, am positive but thank God ever since I started following your posts about U=U, it taught us a lot now am expecting twinz because of and my man is safe😍 you can't believe it he has done several tests but he is negative God is great my dear

23:12

Wow best message for twenty twenty but keep taking your medication dear don't stop we need those twins safe and dad allow me to share this sweet message to inspire others.

23:34
JOIN THE REVOLUTION

It’s time to redefine what it means to live with HIV!

1. **Train** all staff in U=U basic science and communications and provide learning opportunities to diverse audiences

2. **Communicate** clearly, confidently, consistently, and consciously

3. **Speak out** if you see incompetence or inaction and support positive efforts

4. **Advocate** with the U=U public health argument to increase access and remove barriers to treatment and care

5. **Connect** to the movement: join as a *Community Partner* & take part in social media #UequalsU
JOIN THE REVOLUTION

It’s time to redefine what it means to live with HIV!

“That’s when I saw the world change for me and my people.”

Sylvia Rivera – New York City

Thank You!

Bruce Richman
UequalsU.org
@preventionac
@br999
@brichman

#UequalsU

Love to Love Organization - Uganda