HIV/AIDS Resource Guide: Support and Information for Highmark NY Members

What is HIV/AIDS?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that, when left untreated, can severely weaken the body's immune system. It specifically targets and destroys CD4 cells, also known as T cells, which are crucial for fighting off infections and diseases. When the immune system is severely compromised by HIV, a person may develop opportunistic infections or certain cancers, which signals the progression to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).

Living with HIV/AIDS

The landscape of HIV/AIDS care has undergone a remarkable transformation. What was once a devastating illness is now, thanks to medical advancements, a manageable chronic condition. This shift offers hope and empowers individuals to actively manage their health. While a cure is still being sought, modern treatments like antiretroviral therapy (ART) are profoundly effective. When taken consistently, ART can suppress the virus to undetectable levels, allowing people with HIV to live long, healthy lives. Moreover, achieving an undetectable viral load means the virus cannot be transmitted sexually to others (Undetectable = Untransmittable or U=U). This powerful message underscores the success of current treatments and reduces stigma. Effectively managing HIV is a collaborative effort with a dedicated healthcare team. Your primary HIV care provider leads this team, guiding your treatment plan. This comprehensive team may also include mental health counselors, dietitians, and social workers, providing holistic support for your overall well-being.

Highmark NY HIV Disease Management Program

The Highmark NY HIV Disease Management Program is designed to empower our members living with HIV to actively manage their health. Through this program, you will work closely with a dedicated care team to develop a personalized management plan. This plan can include support for medication adherence, nutritional guidance, mental health resources, and risk reduction techniques. Early engagement and self-care education are key to preventing complications and maintaining overall well-being. To enroll or learn more about out HIV/AIDS care management program, please contact the customer service phone number on the back of your Highmark identification card.

Additional Support and Information: Below are trusted external resources that can provide further information and support for individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

New York State Department of Health - Living with HIV Resources

- https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/resources

- *Resources include a comprehensive guide from the New York State Department of Health offers in-depth information and support for individuals newly diagnosed with HIV, covering topics such as understanding HIV, treatment options, maintaining your health, and living well.*

New York State HIV/AIDS Information Line:

- General Information (English): 1-800-541-2437
- General Information (Spanish): 1-800-233-7432
- *All calls are private, and you do not need to provide your name.*

New York State HIV/AIDS TDD/TTY Information Line:

- 1-800-638-5163
- New York Relay Service: 1-800-662-1220

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) HIV/AIDS Resources:

- Information Line: 1-800-CDC-INFO
- Website: https://www.cdc.gov/HIV
- *The CDC provides comprehensive, up-to-date information on HIV prevention, testing, and treatment.*