

Facts about HIV medical treatment

Studies show that if you are HIV-positive, you can greatly prolong your life and maintain your health – as long as you have the right medical care. Even if you do not need medication, a doctor can advise you on how to stay healthy.

A person who starts HIV treatment while their immune system is strong is 27 times less likely to infect their sex partner than one who delays treatment.

Thoughts from HIV-positive individuals

“When I first found out [that I was HIV-positive], I was devastated. That was 20 years ago, and I thought my life was over. It’s all about reaching out to others – a little human contact for support and some professional help to introduce you to the care you’ll need to keep you healthy for decades to come.”

“Having HIV is a [health issue] like any other. If you work with it, you’ll be happy and healthy. Take your medication, go to the doctor and love yourself no matter what.”

“I always tell people that HIV is not going to kill you unless you give up and let it.”



Linkage to Care Program
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Linkage to Medical Care

at the
DeKalb County
Board of Health



What is the Linkage to Care program?

The Linkage to Care program connects newly and previously diagnosed HIV-positive individuals to HIV medical care.

The program serves metro Atlanta residents who are HIV-positive, are at least 18 years old and are not receiving HIV medical care.

- Individuals diagnosed within the past 12 months may be eligible for the Anti-Retroviral Treatment and Access to Services intervention.
- Individuals diagnosed more than 12 months ago may be eligible for direct referral to HIV medical care.

Why is receiving HIV medical care important for someone who is HIV-positive?

Receiving HIV medical care is important because it addresses the unique issues related to HIV infection. Specially trained providers offer high quality, confidential care.

Services include:

- Guidance on maintaining good health.
- Treatment to lower and control the amount of HIV in the body.
- Treatment to prevent opportunistic illnesses.
- Referrals to additional help such as dental care, counseling and social services.

What is the Anti-Retroviral Treatment and Access to Services (“ARTAS”) intervention?

As part of the Linkage to Care program, the ARTAS intervention serves individuals diagnosed with HIV in the past 12 months.

What does the ARTAS staff offer?

The ARTAS staff provides:

- Up to five client sessions within a 90-day period.
- Strength-based case management.
- Help with identifying barriers that might hinder HIV-positive individuals from accessing care. These can include housing, transportation, financial, substance abuse and mental health issues.
- Support to develop an action plan for linking to HIV medical care.
- Referrals to community resources.

Why is there a need for ARTAS?

An HIV-positive individual’s early entry in to HIV medical care improves their prognosis. However, unfortunately, one out of three people living with HIV knows their status, but is not linked to care. Nearly 40 percent delay entry in to care for a year after diagnosis.

The ARTAS intervention successfully helps clients address barriers, set goals and obtain HIV medical care.

What about services for HIV-positive individuals who were diagnosed more than 12 months ago?

The Linkage to Care staff can directly link previously diagnosed individuals to HIV medical care. They will also assess possible barriers to care.

How can an HIV-positive individual access the Linkage to Care program?

To reach the Linkage to Care program, simply contact the LTC Program Supervisor (see below).

How can a health care or other provider refer a client to the Linkage to Care program?

To refer a client, please follow these steps:

1. Access the referral form at www.dekalbhealth.net/hs/linkagetocare/ or by contacting the supervisor (see below).
2. Print off and complete the form.
3. Fax the completed form to (404) 508-7806.

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