



# COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

December 2025

**40 Years of Nashville CARES:  
Leading the Fight, Expanding for the Future.**





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# 40 YEARS OF NASHVILLE CARES: LEADING THE FIGHT, EXPANDING FOR THE FUTURE.

In 1985, Nashville CARES began with a mission born out of urgency, compassion and grit: to care for our neighbors living with HIV, and to fight the surrounding stigma. Over the years, that mission has grown into a movement. We've evolved from crisis responders to leaders in public health, equity, and innovation. CARES now provides dignity, acceptance and unwavering care for 20,000+ individuals across Tennessee each year. The unrelenting devotion of our staff is what makes Nashville CARES extraordinary: one in five team members has been with us for over 10 years, with some offering nearly three decades of compassion and service.

Nashville CARES offers a unique combination of services for those living with HIV and other at-risk communities, providing resources and referrals designed to support a healthier, happier life. From common-sense precautions like free condoms and Safer Injection Support to comprehensive programs promoting healthy aging, our team is proud to be a trusted partner in our community members' quest for lifelong wellness.

## **Nashville CARES Services include:**

- Case Management
- Nutrition & Transportation
- Housing & Utility Assistance
- Virtual and In-Person Peer Support Groups
- Counseling
- Insurance Assistance
- Employment Assistance

## **Whole-person healthcare, from a team that really does care.**

As the scope of our mission expands, this life-changing work would be even more effective by extending our clinical services to provide more comprehensive care. That dream is now a beautiful reality. By establishing CARES 360 Community Clinic as a full-service health hub the CARES family is already setting a new standard for inclusive, community-based healthcare.

### **CARES 360 Services include:**

- HIV Prevention – PrEP, PEP, Rapid Testing
- HIV Treatment
- STI Care
- Hepatitis C Testing & treatment
- Long-Term Well-Being and Primary Care for HIV and PrEP Patients
- Counseling & Psychiatry

But this new chapter isn't just about us. It's about everyone who believes that empathy-based healthcare is a right, not a privilege. It's about building a Tennessee where no one slips through the cracks. A community where all healthcare is holistic. Where dignity leads the way.

## **Join Us!**



As we celebrate 40 years of standing beside you and our community, we invite you to be part of what's next. Join us on January 22, 2026, for our Grand Opening & Open House as we celebrate our history and the next chapter of Nashville CARES.

**Interested in joining the celebration? Scan to tell us where to send your invitation.**

**To learn more about us visit [NashvilleCARES.org](https://NashvilleCARES.org) | [CARES360.org](https://CARES360.org)**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

We are taking a break in December, but will see you all in the New Year on January 14 for our next Seminar presentation.

In the mean time, feel free to go to our Youtube Channel to see all past seminars from 2025!



October 2025 | CFAR-Wide Seminar Series presented by Tennessee CFAR  
3 views • 1 month ago



September 2025 | CFAR-Wide Seminar Series presented by Tennessee CFAR  
14 views • 1 month ago



July 2025 | CFAR-Wide Seminar Series presented by Tennessee CFAR  
5 views • 3 months ago



June 2025 | CFAR-Wide Seminar Series presented by Tennessee CFAR  
2 views • 3 months ago



December 2024 | CFAR Wide Seminar Series  
3 views • 3 months ago



November 2024 | CFAR Wide Seminar Series  
4 views • 3 months ago



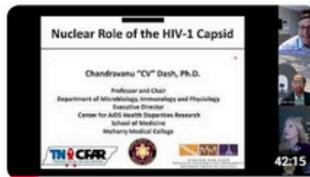
August 2025 | CFAR Wide Seminar Series  
9 views • 3 months ago



May 2025 | CFAR-Wide Seminar Series presented by Tennessee CFAR  
11 views • 5 months ago



February 2025 CFAR-Wide Seminar Series presented by Tennessee CFAR  
6 views • 7 months ago



Nuclear Role of the HIV-1 Capsid  
8 views • 1 year ago



The Tennessee CFAR: Impact through a Shared Mission  
8 views • 1 year ago



Meharry Medical Collage: A Brief History and Current Status  
14 views • 1 year ago

To view these videos, [Click Here](#)

# EXTERNAL EVENTS

How can people advocate for reproductive freedom if they don't truly understand it?

# THE AUTONOMY PROJECT

## A Reproductive Rights Crash Course

A 4-month series for young adults to help them gain the knowledge and tools to better understand their bodies, identities, and rights.

**October 6, 2025 -  
January 26, 2026**

Virtual Meetings Twice  
Monthly on Mondays  
7:00-8:15pm EST

Queer-Inclusive & Interactive!



Sign up for any individual session or the whole series!



**Scan here  
to register!**



# EXTERNAL EVENTS

## THE BODY OF CHRIST HAS AIDS

*A Story of Compassion  
in the Face of Deadly Silence*



### **Early Preview & Panel Discussion**

Edgehill UMC | 1502 Edgehill Ave, Nashville, TN

**Sunday, December 7 @ 3pm**

*The Body of Christ Has AIDS* is a deeply personal story of one of the most tragic decades in American history. This documentary examines the contradictory ways Christianity responded to the HIV/AIDS crisis. This examination is deeply contextualized within American society, pop culture, and religious life.

Join us for an early preview of this powerful film set for release next year, followed by a panel discussion with filmmakers Stephen Hale and Margaret Irwin, along with Dr. Tiye Link and Dr. Ellen Armour. This event is sponsored by Edgehill UMC and Nashville Cares.



NASHVILLE™  
**CARES**

Learn more & reserve  
your free tickets:



<https://www.edgehill.org/aids>

# EXTERNAL EVENTS

**High-Level Faith & Public Health Forum**

## **World AIDS Day 2025**

Hope, Healing, and Human Dignity: A Faith Response to HIV

Monday, 1 December 2025 at 1:00 PM to 2:45 PM ET  
Church Center for the United Nations (CCUN),  
777 United Nations Plaza New York, NY 10017 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

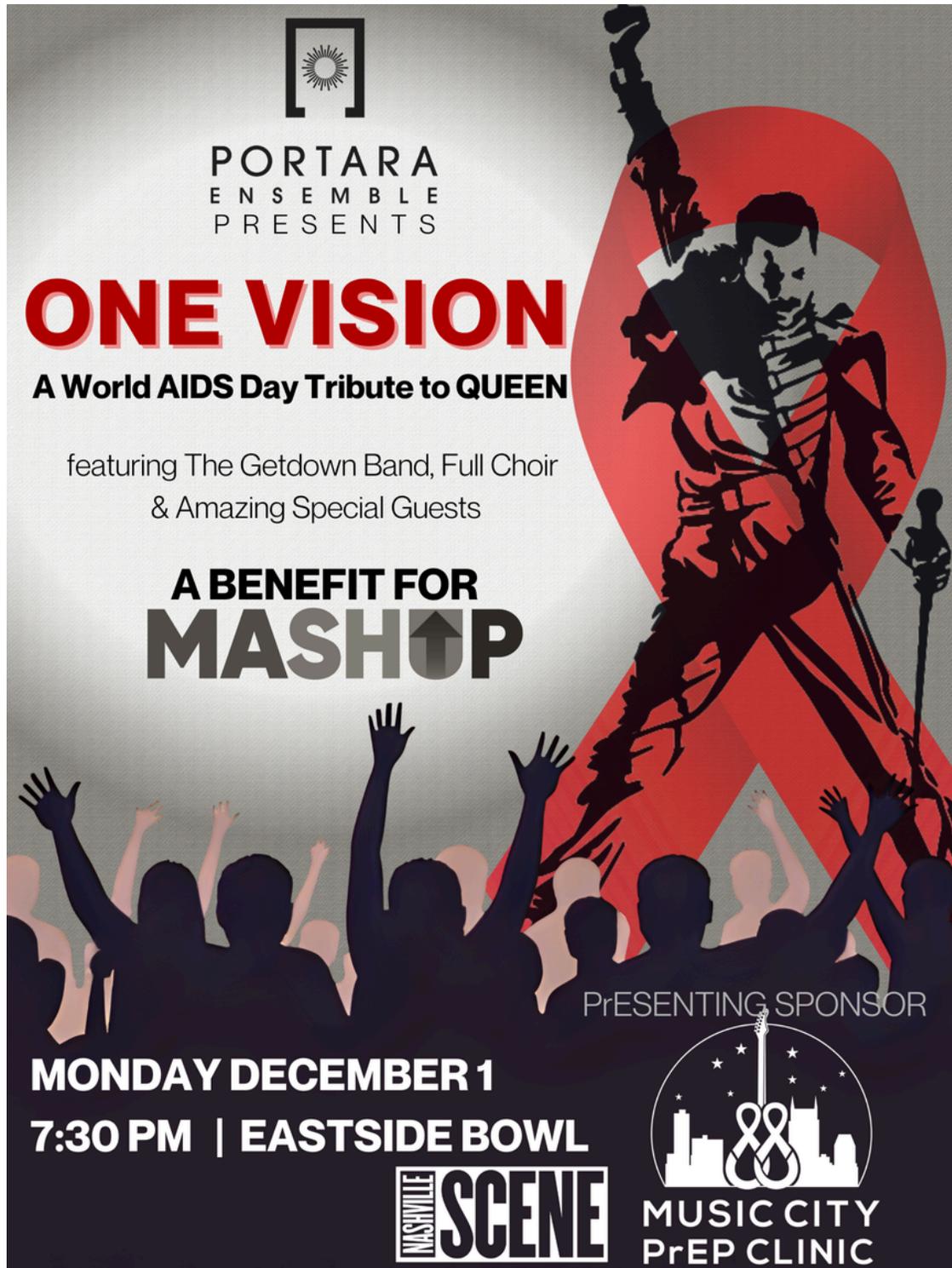
To convene faith leaders, biomedical experts, policy makers, and community advocates for a public forum that integrates worshipful reflection with a high-level panel discussion on the pathway to end HIV as a public health crisis—centered on dignity, equity, spirituality and scientific progress.



This event will be in person and Online.

Scan the QR code to learn more

# EXTERNAL EVENTS



  
**PORTARA**  
ENSEMBLE  
PRESENTS

# ONE VISION

**A World AIDS Day Tribute to QUEEN**

featuring The Getdown Band, Full Choir  
& Amazing Special Guests

**A BENEFIT FOR**  
**MASHUP**

PRESENTING SPONSOR

**MONDAY DECEMBER 1**  
**7:30 PM | EASTSIDE BOWL**

  
  
**MUSIC CITY**  
**PrEP CLINIC**

# EXTERNAL EVENTS



**MASHUP**  
6TH ANNUAL  
REV. EDWIN C. SANDERS II  
WORLD AIDS DAY LUNCHEON

**RETHINK.  
REBUILD.  
RISE.**

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

**Friday, December 5, 2025  
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

**REGISTER AT [WWW.MASHUPNASHVILLE.ORG/EVENTS](http://WWW.MASHUPNASHVILLE.ORG/EVENTS)**

# RECENT FINDINGS & DISCOVERIES

Our CFAR researchers are all kinds of HIV experts like physicians, nurses, mental health professionals, epidemiologists, mathematicians, community members, and scientists. We study a range of HIV topics spanning all the way from how cells and the virus work to how communities can improve their support for people living with HIV.



## **IMPORTANT and THANK YOU!**

Our work isn't possible without our volunteers: People living with HIV throughout Tennessee. THANK YOU to our research participants and community advisors. We appreciate you.

## **Promoting Trauma-informed HIV Care in Nashville**

People with HIV are more likely to experience trauma. Understanding this is crucial to create safe places and to improve HIV care by making sure clinicians and HIV care workers are trained to provide trauma-informed care.

Recently, CFAR researchers from Meharry, Vanderbilt, and the Metro public health department partnered with organizations that provide HIV care to learn more about trauma-informed practices. The goal was to learn about factors that help and hinder efforts to provide trauma-informed care in HIV services across Nashville.

To do this, experts in trauma-informed care, community-based research, and implementation science worked with leaders at 5 organizations that provide HIV

services in Nashville, including clinics, community-based organizations, and the metro health department.

The research team analyzed in-depth interviews from 35 HIV care workers across the city. HIV care providers reported that responding to trauma is essential and that resources are needed to support more trauma-informed care across health systems and organizations. Even though HIV workers saw trauma-informed care as a priority, most organizations didn't routinely assess trauma and specific trauma-informed services are limited across the city. Workers voiced the need for scaled-up services, improved trainings, systematic changes to improve patient-centered care, and improved collaboration across networks.



L. Lauren Brown,  
PhD, LCSW

*Nashville's adoption of trauma-informed care for HIV treatment marks a transformative step forward. By ensuring all in HIV care teams—from medical staff to support teams—understand the link between mental and physical wellness, we're working to intentionally create safe, supportive spaces that promote healing, resilience, and hope. I believe trauma-informed HIV care will help us address community needs and pave the way for improved health outcomes and a more compassionate society."*

This work was led by Lauren Brown, PhD and April Pettit, MPH, MD. You can learn more about these researchers by clicking on their names. To read the full report and recommendations, [click here](#).

# HIV HISTORY 1983

In this pivotal year of the AIDS epidemic, major medical, scientific, community, and policy developments rapidly unfold. San Francisco opens Ward 86, the first outpatient AIDS clinic, pioneering the compassionate and comprehensive San Francisco Model of Care. The CDC documents the first AIDS cases in women, issues early prevention recommendations, and clarifies confirmed routes of transmission—while also struggling to build consensus on protecting the blood supply.

Activism intensifies: Larry Kramer publishes a landmark call to action; the first AIDS Candlelight Vigils humanize the crisis; and people living with AIDS assert their rights through The Denver Principles, influencing future advocacy.

Several historic “firsts” appear: the first federal AIDS funding (\$12 million), the first front-page New York Times AIDS story, and the launching of the National AIDS Hotline. San Francisco also opens Ward 86, the first dedicated inpatient AIDS unit in the U.S., known for its compassionate, volunteer-led care.

Scientifically, researchers at the Pasteur Institute identify a retrovirus likely responsible for AIDS—a discovery later honored with a Nobel Prize. Meanwhile, discrimination cases emerge, early occupational safety guidelines are issued, and the World Health Organization begins global surveillance, marking the epidemic’s shift onto the world stage.

[Click Here](#) to learn more

# OPPORTUNITIES TO ENROLL INTO RESEARCH STUDIES

Local CFAR investigators lead studies to improve the lives of people living with HIV, to protect people from acquiring HIV, and other important issues.

Studies are looking for:

- [people living with HIV who regularly drink alcohol](#) Page 15
- [people without HIV, to find a vaccine against HIV](#) Page 16
- [men without HIV, to study long-acting PrEP to prevent HIV](#) Page 17

Studies typically provide compensation to participants.

If you know of studies that we missed, please let us know at: [tn-cfar@vumc.org](mailto:tn-cfar@vumc.org)



**META  
HIV CVD**

# IF YOU HAVE HIV, THIS STUDY MAY BE FOR YOU!

## MICROBIOME, METABOLITES, AND ALCOHOL IN HIV TO REDUCE CVD

We're looking for adults ages 18 and older who drink alcohol regularly, are HIV+, and take antiretroviral therapy. We want to see whether taking a supplement called a probiotic can help with some of the gut-related health problems related to alcohol use and HIV.



### Participants will be asked to:

- Come to 5 study visits at Vanderbilt over 1 year
- Complete study phone calls about once a month
- Have their blood drawn
- Provide stool samples

Total compensation for  
completing the entire  
study is \$675

**Take our survey to see if you are eligible!**

**<https://redcap.link/metastudy>**

# HIV VACCINE STUDIES, TO DISCOVER A VACCINE THAT PROTECTS PEOPLE FROM ACQUIRING HIV



In the United States HIV disproportionately affects certain groups and populations; however, HIV can affect anyone. Worldwide there are currently over 40 million people living with HIV. That number is growing.

The Vanderbilt HIV Vaccine Program is looking for healthy adults (ages 18-55) from all walks of life who are not living with HIV to participate in an HIV prevention study.

You cannot get HIV from participating in the study.

Volunteers must be available locally for approximately 12 months. Volunteers will be compensated. You can help fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic

Call 615-936-7327 or email [vic.sorrell@vumc.org](mailto:vic.sorrell@vumc.org) for more information.

In order to develop HIV prevention methods that will work for everyone, we need help from everyone!

ALL RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT OUR PROGRAM.

# EXPRESSIVE

## Together we can help advance HIV prevention research



### Learn about the EXPRESSIVE clinical research study for people who could be exposed to HIV

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) medications may help people at risk of being exposed to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and lower their chance of becoming infected.

This study is comparing an investigational study medicine to an approved PrEP medicine to assess safety, how the investigational study medicine functions in the body, and any side effects (tolerability).

You may qualify to take part in this study if you are at least 16 years of age and:

- Do not have HIV
- Are a cisgender man (assigned male at birth and identify as male), transgender woman (assigned male at birth and identify as female), transgender man (assigned female at birth and identify as male), or gender nonbinary (assigned any gender at birth and do not identify as exclusively male or female)
- Have had receptive anal sex without a condom in the past year (not counting sex in a committed relationship) and **have at least 1** of these situations:
  - Had receptive anal sex with 2 or more partners in the last 3 months, no matter if you used a condom or not.
  - Had rectal or urethral infections like gonorrhea, chlamydia, or syphilis in the last 6 months.
  - Used any stimulant drugs while having sex in the last 3 months.

There are additional eligibility criteria, which the study team can discuss with you.

**To learn more, including the possible risks and benefits of participation, please contact:**

**Call: 615-327-6353**

**Email: [gstanton@mmc.edu](mailto:gstanton@mmc.edu)**

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