



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 26th, 2024

Press Contact: Nia Nottage [niaforever@comeforever.net](mailto:niaforever@comeforever.net),  
917-730-7684

## **Mayor Adams Proposes \$5.3 Million in HIV/AIDS Funding Cuts: Emergency Townhall on May 30**

*WHAT: ACT UP NY Town Hall*

*WHEN: Thur. May 30th 7-9pm*

*WHERE: The LGBT Center on 208 W 13th Street and <http://bit.ly/actup-emergency-townhall>*

*EVENT: <https://www.facebook.com/events/429615819859935>*

**New York City, May 24th, 2024** - The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) is deeply disturbed by Mayor Eric Adams' proposal to cut over \$5.3 million in HIV/AIDS funding from the FY25 City Budget [1]. We challenge all public officials with a conscience to meaningfully and actionably oppose these cuts on behalf of their constituents and the residents of The City of New York. In response to these draconian cuts during a public health crisis, ACT UP is holding a hybrid **Town Hall on May 30th (from 7:00pm - 9:00pm)** at **The LGBT Center on 208 W 13th Street in Manhattan**, to amplify the rightful concerns of the public who will be facing the brunt of this negligent policymaking.

The Town Hall will discuss:

- Disastrous impacts of the proposed \$5.3 million cut to HIV/AIDS Programs
- Quiet removal of COVID-19 PPE and Testing Clinics
- City response to rising MPOX cases
- Recent Condom Availability Program issues

We do not have to speculate about how the loss of this funding will impact preventative programs and residents with HIV/AIDS. Long standing pillars of care with decades of prevention and viral suppression experience such as Callen-Lorde, GMHC, and Housing Works will lose capacity and funding for important direct care services. Several programs for medical adherence and prevention will be gutted completely [1], and a number of both Department of Health and partner organizations' staff will be laid off meaning a loss in capacity to provide services that survive these cuts. New York City reported an increase in HIV infections for vulnerable populations in its most recent annual report [2], pulling funding for these services after the City failed to meet the goals it set in 2020 is a disgrace and must be challenged.

In a hearing held by the City Council, City Health Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasani was pressured to explain why cuts to HIV/AIDS services could not be redistributed, his response was: "If we were to reverse the cuts, another direct service program would have to face the pain

of these cuts.” [3] ACT UP strongly rejects this faulty comparison. It is evident to us that the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and Dr. Vasan do not recognize the ‘pain’, or in other words, immediate and demonstrable harm these cuts would cause to a historically underserved immunocompromised population. The facts are that New York City residents with HIV/AIDS are vulnerable in the age of COVID-19 and MPOX, and removing vital services will only further degrade public health as a whole. ACT UP advocates that City Council amend their recently released funding priorities to include the \$5.3 million sum for HIV/AIDS programs as this could avert a dangerous reduction in available care for those living with the virus. These cuts to social services are a high and wholly unnecessary cost for the taxpayer to bear when the shortfall can be mended by reducing spending in other areas of city government.

As we continue to see, the Mayor is happy to spend our money subjecting city residents to historic amounts of police brutality and surveillance, a cost that will continue to mount on the wallets of taxpayers. As a community who founded its equality in spite of and resistance to police brutality, we will never normalize reckless spending toward security theatre at the expense of public health. Just this winter on World AIDS Day, the Mayor reiterated his support of HIV+ New Yorkers by lighting City Hall and several municipal buildings in Red [4]. This has been shown to be an utterly empty and meaningless gesture as the priorities of this Administration do not include tangible support for stopping the AIDS crisis that has continued since the 1970’s.

The Administration has continued to quietly remove vital public services for COVID-19, impacting those who rely on the City for this necessary medical care. Mayor Adams has stopped the distribution of PPE and rapid COVID tests in public buildings such as libraries, and is shuttering Covid Express Testing Clinics currently only leaving one for the use of all 5 boroughs. These actions directly impact the health of city residents, and create insurmountable accessibility issues. The pandemic is not over immunocompromised populations depend on the consideration and hygiene of others just to attend events, work, or school in person. And as those habits are eroding, encouraged by this Administration and their Department of Health, the City has effectively abandoned the immunocompromised to fend for themselves. Choosing to reduce testing and discourage the use of PPE is negligent to New Yorkers, as well as a dangerous way to ignore transmission and novel variants of the virus. Dismissing the spread of COVID-19 will result in more unconfirmed and undiagnosed cases of Long COVID, a disabling chronic condition that the medical community is still trying to fully understand.

It is clear to ACT UP that public health is an expendable item to the Adams Administration, and when public health is seen as expendable, the people are seen as expendable.

We call on our elected representatives, city officials, and all those of good conscience who are outraged by these cuts to act. Attend our Town Hall on May 30th, add this issue to your agenda, publicly speak out against the cuts, ACT UP, FIGHT BACK, FIGHT AIDS!

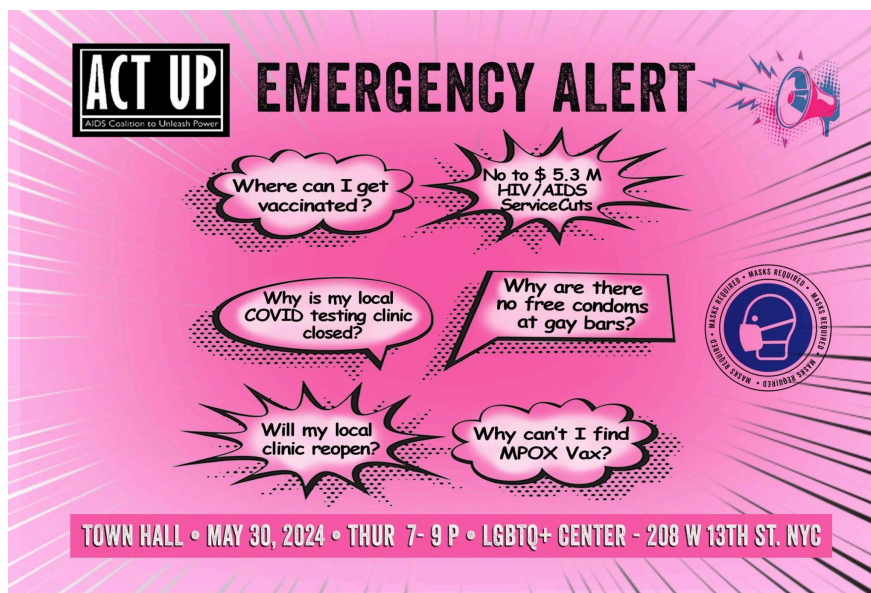
[1] Gay City News: [City Council, non-profits sound alarm as city proposes \\$5 million cut to HIV/AIDS services \(gaycitynews.com\)](https://www.gaycitynews.com/news/city-council-non-profits-sound-alarm-as-city-proposes-5-million-cut-to-hiv-aids-services)

[2] HIV Surveillance Annual Report 2022:  
<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/dires/hiv-surveillance-annualreport-2022.pdf>

[3] City Council Executive Budget Hearing - Committee on Health:  
<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1194794&GUID=B4E91021-45F6-4221-A6FF-02345D1DD3F3&Options=info|&Search=>

[4] Mayor's Office World AIDS Day Press Release: [Mayor Adams Announces City Hall and Municipal Buildings to be lit Red for World AIDS Day | City of New York \(nyc.gov\)](https://www.nyc.gov/newsroom/press-releases/mayor-adams-announces-city-hall-and-municipal-buildings-to-be-lit-red-for-world-aids-day)

The Town Hall will be a hybrid event held at **The LGBT Center on 208 W 13th Street in Manhattan** or on Zoom at <http://bit.ly/actup-emergency-townhall> from **7-9pm**



### About ACT UP

Founded in 1987, ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), is a diverse, non-partisan group of individuals united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis. ACT UP currently meets every Monday night at the LGBTQ+ Center in Manhattan and over zoom.