

Ricky Martin Honors World AIDS Day From the Epicenter of the HIV Epidemic [VIDEO]

Ricky Martin headlined the AIDS Healthcare Foundation concert, which also honored global health leader and University of Miami outgoing president Julio Frenk.

December 3, 2024 By Trent Straube

Pop star Ricky Martin used his megawatt celebrity to raise awareness of [HIV](#) in Miami, an epicenter of today's U.S. epidemic. The global icon headlined a free concert as part of [World AIDS Day](#) events spearheaded by the [AIDS Healthcare Foundation \(AHF\)](#). World AIDS Day is marked each December 1.



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Held Monday, December 2, at the University of Miami, the free concert included a performance by DJ Spinderella. What's more, AHF presented its Lifetime Achievement Award to public health leader Julio Frenk, the university's outgoing president and the next chancellor for the University of California, Los Angeles.

"Frenk played a pivotal role in launching AHF's Global Public Health Institute at UM," notes an AHF press release on the event. "His groundbreaking contributions to HIV/AIDS response include securing universal access to antiretroviral therapy in Mexico, advancing anti-stigma efforts, fostering global health collaborations and strengthening public health policies worldwide."

South Florida's NBC6 reported live from the concert:

Miami-Dade County remains an epicenter of today's HIV epidemic in the United States. [According to the Florida Department of Health](#), 1,088 people tested positive for HIV in the county in 2022, a 25.3% increase since 2021. What's more, 404 people were diagnosed with AIDS. Most of the HIV cases are among men who have sex with men. Although new cases in Miami-Dade County decreased from 2018 to 2022 among Black Americans by 18% and whites by 44%, new HIV diagnoses increased 18% among Latinos.

[According to AIDSvu.org](#), an interactive site that maps and visualizes HIV data on communities across the nation, about 30,000 people were living with HIV in Miami-Dade County in 2022, out of a population of 2.7 million. For every 100,000 residents in the county, 1,216 are living with HIV. This is referred to as the HIV prevalence rate. In the United States, the prevalence rate for every 100,000 people is 388. In the South, the rate is 466; in Florida it's 626.

In the United States today, it's estimated that about 1.2 million people are living with HIV. (The U.S. population is nearly 335 million.)

Globally, about 39.9 million people were living with HIV in 2023; about 53% were women and girls. The same year, about 1.3 million people contracted the virus, a 60% drop from the high point in 1995. Also in 2023, about 630,000 people died of AIDS-related illness worldwide.

The first case of what is now known as AIDS was reported in June 1981 ([read an interview with the doctor who wrote that original report](#)). To learn more about the virus and the epidemic, click [#AIDS History](#) and also check out the [POZ Basics on HIV and AIDS](#), which includes sections on transmission risks, testing, prevention, treatment and more.

Speaking to NBC reporters during the AHF concert, Tracy Jones, the Southern bureau chief for AHF, said, "We want people to hear that HIV is not over, that we are still experiencing people that are coming down with HIV illness who are living their lives with HIV illness and that stigma kills. Just because a person is living with HIV or AIDS, they still need to be loved," Jones said. "They still need to be hugged. They still need to have their families."

Rallying the crowd from the stage, Martin assured everyone: "Life has highs and lows, but we're

here standing, standing strong.”

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