

## Vivent Health Transforms HIV Care in Kansas City Via Merger with Thrive Health Connection



### **TRANSITION ENHANCES AND EXPANDS SERVICES FOR PEOPLE AT RISK FOR AND LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN KANSAS CITY**

KANSAS CITY, MO—May 3, 2021—Vivent Health is pleased to announce its merger with Thrive Health Connection to establish the first ever HIV Medical Home in Kansas City. The merger will assure greater access to HIV prevention, care and treatment to thousands of people in the area.

“We are at a remarkable moment in the fight to end the HIV epidemic. Every tool we need, save a vaccine, is available to us. Together we can achieve our collective goal to rid the world of AIDS. The question before us is simple: Will we do just that?,” said Michael J. Gifford, President and Chief Executive Officer of Vivent Health. “The merger and the creation of the first HIV Medical Home in Kansas City will assure we rise up to this moment in relentless pursuit of a world without AIDS.”

Vivent Health, a leading national HIV health care provider, is committed to serving everyone affected by HIV/AIDS with locations already in St. Louis, Missouri; Denver, Colorado, Austin, Texas and 10 cities throughout Wisconsin. The nationally renowned Vivent Health HIV Medical Home is a patient-centered model of care that allows individuals living with HIV access to integrated health and social services to achieve the best health outcomes possible. Building upon the strong case management, mental health and prevention services historically offered by Thrive Health Connection, the merger will expand care to include integrated medical and dental care, an onsite HIV specialty pharmacy and food pantry.

“This merger continues the work that Thrive Health Connection, formerly Good Samaritan Project, started at the beginning of the HIV epidemic. People living with HIV will now have a medical home that is tied to other support services,” said Frank Thompson, Kansas City Health Department deputy director. “This is one more critical piece in ending the epidemic.”

In recent years, Kansas City has seen an increase in the demand for services for individuals living with HIV/AIDS. There are approximately 4,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Kansas City and an estimated 150 new HIV cases reported annually, according to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. In Kansas City, people of color, particularly African Americans and Latinos, are

disproportionately affected and have some of the highest infection rates. At the end of 2018, the rate of new HIV diagnoses among blacks/African Americans was 4.6 times as high as the rate among whites, and 2.1 times as high among Latinx individuals compared to whites.

There is a high need for increased PrEP services, which is one of the most powerful HIV prevention tools available. PrEP is a one pill, once a day medication that is more than 90% effective at reducing the risk of contracting HIV via sexual activity. A number of significant societal,

institutional and financial barriers need to be overcome to increase the number of people who access PrEP. The Vivent Health HIV Medical Home model is equipped to provide comprehensive care that helps Missourians live long, healthy lives.

“We are excited to bring the HIV Medical Home model of care to the Kansas City community so the individuals we serve can thrive,” said Caroline Huffman, Chief Executive Officer at Thrive Health Connection. “We’re looking forward to increasing our current programs and services in the months to come, which will allow us to stay committed to the health and well-being of anyone impacted by HIV/AIDS in Kansas City well into the future.” Huffman will continue to lead efforts in Kansas City as the Vivent Health Vice President of Operations.

Individuals living with or at risk for HIV in Kansas City, donors and other public health stakeholders who want to learn more can visit Vivent Health at [viventhealth.org](http://viventhealth.org).