



San Diego HIV
Community Consortium

Community Health Education

HIV & Aging Symposium 2026

February 7, 2026 · Annenberg Health Sciences Building · Eisenhower Health

Key Takeaways for Our Community

Advances in HIV Care for People Living and Aging with HIV



Presented by

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About the Symposium

What Was This Event?

Half-day symposium on HIV care for aging populations

Hosted at Eisenhower Health

February 7, 2026

Topics Covered

-  Brain Health
-  Heart Health
-  Metabolic Health
-  Trauma & Addiction
-  Bone Health
-  Cancer Risk and Screening
-  Prostate Health

Featured Speakers



Scott Letendre, MD

HIV & Brain Health

Professor of Medicine &
Psychiatry, UC San Diego
Owen Clinic



Dipti Itchhaporia, MD

**HIV & Cardiovascular
Health**

Past President, American
College of Cardiology ·
Hoag Heart & Vascular
Institute



**Joshua R. Gonzalez,
MD**

**Urology & Sexual
Health**

Board-Certified Urologist
· UCLA/San Diego Sexual
Medicine

Brain Health & Cognitive Wellness

Dr. Scott Letendre · UC San Diego Owen Clinic

 *Brain health is about more than memory — mood and daily function matter just as much.*



Vascular Depression

Blood vessel health directly affects mood and memory



Mood Changes Matter

Emotional shifts are early signs of brain stress, not just "feeling down"



Trauma's Long Reach

Past trauma and addiction leave lasting effects on the brain — even after recovery



Test Thoughtfully

"Don't test unless you know what to do with the result" — Dr. Letendre

Clinical Insight from
 **Scott Letendre, MD**
Board-Certified Infectious Disease

What This Means For You

-  Tell your doctor about mood changes, not just memory concerns
-  Share your full health history — including past trauma or addiction
-  Ask about CD₄/CD8 ratio as a marker of immune and brain health
-  Regular check-ins matter more than one-time tests

♥ Trauma, Addiction & Whole-Person Care

🕒 *Your history is part of your health. Trauma and addiction — even in the past — continue to shape your brain and body today.*



Trauma Effects

Past trauma raises chronic stress hormones, affecting the brain, heart, and immune system — long after the event



Addiction's Legacy

Substance use history leaves lasting changes in brain chemistry and increases risk for cognitive and cardiovascular issues



Recovery Matters

Recovery doesn't erase these effects — but it opens the door to healing and reduces ongoing risk



Whole-Person Care

Your care team should see all of you



Mental Health

Therapy, counseling, psychiatric care



Physical Health

HIV care, cardiology, primary care



Addiction Support

Non-judgmental substance use care



Community

Peer support, social connection



Spiritual / Cultural

Culturally affirming care

Ask your provider about integrated care options in San Diego

Urology and Sexual Health – Part 1

Clinical Insight from Dr. Joshua R. Gonzalez, MD, Board-Certified Urologist

💡 *Testosterone Therapy: What You Need To Know*

⚡ Why It Matters

Many people with HIV experience low testosterone (hypogonadism), which can affect:

- Energy levels and fatigue
- Muscle mass and strength
- Mood and mental health
- Sexual function and libido
- Bone Density

🕒 The Trade-Offs Continued...

Potential Risks:

- Cardiovascular effects
- Prostate health concerns
- Fertility impacts
- Sleep apnea worsening
- Mood changes or irritability
- Skin reactions (acne, oily skin)

⚠️ The Trade-Offs (Often Undiscussed)

Potential Benefits:

- Improved energy and mood
- Increased muscle mass
- Enhanced sexual function
- Better quality of life

🩺 Before Starting Testosterone

Have a careful conversation with your doctor:

- Discuss your symptoms and goals
- Review your complete medical history
- Understand the risks and benefits specific to you.
- Get baseline lab work (PSA, blood counts, lipids)
- Plan for ongoing monitoring

Recommended Reading:

“5 Things Doctors Wish Men Knew About Sexual Health”

New York Times, January 2026

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/21/well/live/mens-sexual-urologists-advice.html>

📝 Questions to Ask:

- 📝 What are my testosterone levels now?
- 📝 What are the specific risks for me given my health history?
- 📝 How will we monitor for side effects?
- 📝 What happens if I want to stop treatment?
- 📝 Are there alternatives to testosterone therapy?

💬 Talk to Your Provider:

Sexual health is an essential part of overall health – don't hesitate to bring up concerns about:

- Sexual function
- Hormone levels
- Screening for cancers (anal, prostate)
- Any urological symptoms

🛡️ Urology and Sexual Health – Part 2

Anal Cancer Screening: High-Resolution Anoscopy (HRA)

⚡ What Is HRA?

A specialized procedure that detects precancerous cells in the anal canal before they become cancer.

How It Works?

- Uses magnification and special training to identify abnormal cells
- Detects HSIL (high-grade squamous intraepithelial lesions) – precancerous changes
- ♥️ • Abnormal blood vessels in HSIL lesions make them visible during HRA
- Serious enough to treat, but caught before cancer develops

The Transition Zone

HRA examines the transition from squamous to columnar cells in the anal canal - the area where precancerous changes most often occur.

The Paradox

HIV-positive men may be diagnosed with prostate cancer less often – but possibly because PSA screening isn't happening routinely enough.

The Problem

When prostate cancer is found, it's often caught later despite the high level of medical attention people with HIV receive.

🔑 Who Should Be Screened?

📦 Anal Cancer Screening (HRA)

- Men who have sex with men (MSM) with HIV – age 35+
- All other people living with HIV – age 45+
- Anyone with symptoms (pain, bleeding, masses)

✅ Prostate Cancer Screening (PSA)

- Men living with HIV over 50
- Earlier screening (age 40) if family history of prostate cancer
- Ask your provider about routine PSA testing

What You Can Do

- ✅ Ask your HIV provider about anal cancer screening if you are in a high-risk group
- ✅ Request a PSA test at your next visit if you are over 50 (or 40 with family history)
- ✅ Report any anal symptoms immediately – pain, bleeding, or masses
- ✅ Don't assume screening is happening automatically – advocate for yourself

🛡️ Bone Health — Protect Your Foundation

↗️ Significantly Higher Risk

Women living with HIV face elevated rates of osteopenia and osteoporosis compared to the general population

— HIV & Aging Symposium 2026

ⓘ Key Risk Factors

- 🕒 **Age** — Bone density naturally declines over time
- ☀️ **Low Vitamin D** — Common in people living with HIV
- **Low Body Weight** — Less mechanical load on bones
- 🔗 **Some HIV Medications** — Certain ART can affect bone density
- ⚡ **HIV Itself** — Chronic inflammation contributes to bone loss

📄 Recommended Screening

DXA Scan

(A painless bone density X-ray — ask your doctor if you qualify)

Especially recommended for women living with HIV, people over 50, and those with multiple risk factors

✅ What You Can Do

- ✅ Ask your HIV provider about a DXA bone density scan
- ✅ Get your Vitamin D levels checked at your next visit
- ✅ Consider weight-bearing exercise (walking, light weights)
- ✅ Discuss your ART regimen's effect on bone health
- ✅ Track immune health — CD4/CD8 ratio links to fracture risk

♥ Heart Health — Part 1

Why Cardiovascular Disease Matters More for People Living with HIV

Dr. Dipti Itchhaporia · Past President, American College of Cardiology

The Core Problem

HIV Increases CVD Risk

Even with an undetectable viral load, HIV raises the risk of heart disease

Aging Accelerated

People living with HIV often develop heart conditions 10+ years earlier than the general population

Invisible Inflammation

Chronic inflammation from HIV silently damages blood vessels over time



Chronic Inflammation

(Ongoing low-level "fire" in the body)

HIV triggers a continuous immune response that stresses the heart and arteries — even when the virus is suppressed



Immune Activation

(Your immune system stays in "fight mode")

A constantly activated immune system accelerates plaque buildup in arteries — a key driver of heart attacks and strokes

Dipti Itchhaporia, MD

 Interventional Cardiologist · Hoag Heart & Vascular Institute



"Early and sustained viral suppression is one of the most powerful tools we have to protect the heart."

— HIV & Aging Symposium 2026

The Good News

Staying undetectable directly reduces the inflammation that harms your heart

↪ Heart Health — Part 2

Practical Steps to Protect Your Heart

Statins Significantly Reduce Heart Attack Risk

Strong evidence for people living with HIV — ask your doctor



Relative risk index — 100 = baseline risk without statins (per symposium data)



Statins

Ask your doctor about statins — they cut heart attack risk by ~40% in high-risk individuals

Strong Evidence



Exercise

Regular cardiovascular exercise (walking, swimming, cycling) significantly reduces mortality risk

Do It Daily



ART Selection

Talk to your provider about choosing HIV medications with fewer metabolic side effects

Ask Your Provider



Manage Risk Factors

Aggressively control blood pressure, cholesterol, and smoking. These multiply heart risk.

Take Control

Metabolic Health & Modern Treatments

Treatment Breakthrough

GLP-1 Medications

(e.g., Semaglutide / Ozempic® / Wegovy®)

A new class of medications transforming care for people living with HIV who struggle with weight or metabolic syndrome

-  Significant, sustained weight loss
-  Improved heart and metabolic health
-  Reduces cardiovascular risk factors
-  Better quality of life

Talk to your HIV provider about whether GLP-1 medications may be right for you

HIV Treatment Has Come a Long Way

Then

Multiple pills, multiple times a day — complex schedules, significant side effects, difficult to maintain

Now

Once-daily single-pill regimens — simpler, more tolerable, and just as effective

Why It Matters

-  Better medication adherence (taking pills consistently)
-  Fewer metabolic side effects
-  Improved quality of life
-  ART selection now includes cardiovascular risk assessment

Today's HIV medications are more effective and better tolerated than ever before.

✔ What You Can Do — Starting Today



Talk to Your Doctor

- ✔ Ask about your CD4/CD8 ratio at your next visit
- ✔ Request a DXA bone density scan if you're at risk
- ✔ Discuss statin therapy for heart protection
- ✔ Ask if GLP-1 medications could help with weight or metabolic health
- ✔ Review your ART regimen for cardiovascular safety



Lifestyle Steps

- ✔ Move your body daily — even a 30-min walk counts
- ✔ Quit or reduce smoking — it multiplies heart risk
- ✔ Eat heart-healthy: more plants, less processed food
- ✔ Get enough sleep — it affects brain and immune health
- ✔ Stay consistent with your HIV medications



Mind & Community

- ✔ Tell your provider about mood changes and stress
- ✔ Share your trauma and addiction history with your care team
- ✔ Join a peer support group in San Diego
- ✔ Ask about mental health counseling referrals
- ✔ Stay connected — social support protects your health

📍 San Diego Resources & Next Steps

HIV Specialty Care



UC San Diego Owen Clinic

Comprehensive HIV care and research. San Diego's leading HIV clinic.

<https://health.ucsd.edu/care/hiv/>

Community Support



San Diego HIV Community Consortium

Education, advocacy, and connection for people living with HIV in San Diego.

Your community home base

Immediate Help



HIV Care and Services Resources – County of San Diego

General Info Line: (619) 293-4700

California Office of AIDS – HIV Care Program (HCP)

Phone: (916) 449-5900

Community Connection



Peer Support Programs

Connect with others who understand your journey — ask your care team for local referrals.

Ask your Care Team for referrals



You Are Not Alone

Living with HIV today means living with more knowledge, better tools, and a community that has your back.

- ✔ Ask questions at every appointment
- ✔ Know your numbers — CD4, viral load, cholesterol
- ✔ Bring a support person to medical visits
- ✔ Stay engaged with your community

Knowledge is power. Community is strength. You deserve the best care.

Thank you for being here today.