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ACT UP Dublin Applauds New HSE Statement: People on Effective Treatment Can't Pass on HIV

New language recently added to the HSE's "Health A-Z" [HIV and AIDS information page](#)¹ offers the strongest statement yet from the Health Service Executive on the prevention power of HIV treatment. Joining UNAIDS, the US CDC, the Lancet journal, Public Health England, and other health authorities, the HSE has placed its official imprimatur on the medical consensus that when a person is on effective HIV treatment there's "effectively no risk" that they will pass on the virus to a sexual partner.

In the "Treating HIV" section of the revised page the HSE writes that treatment not only "enables most people with HIV live a long and healthy life," but that "[w]hen the treatment is working properly, there is effectively no risk that a person with HIV can pass on HIV to another person."

ACT UP Dublin member, Thomas Strong, said, "Knowing that treatment not only keeps us healthy but keeps our partners safe is of enormous value to people like me living with HIV. The risk of passing on the virus is something that weighs heavily on us. It's reassuring to know that there's something we can do to eliminate that risk."

The HSE's new statement builds on last year's "[Antiretroviral Therapy for People Living with HIV in Ireland](#)" booklet, which noted that "HIV treatment is also beneficial from a population perspective in that it prevents HIV being passed on to others," and that "for many people living with HIV, the reduction of infectiousness and relief from anxiety about passing on HIV are very important benefits of HIV treatment."

That publication explained that in the large-scale [PARTNER study](#) "people with HIV who were taking treatment with an undetectable viral load did not pass on HIV to their partner." The [Opposites Attract study](#)—which looked specifically at gay male couples—found the same result: no HIV transmissions from someone on effective HIV treatment to partner who was HIV-negative.

ACT UP Dublin was the first organisation in Ireland to become a [community partner](#) with the [Prevention Access Campaign's](#) "Undetectable=Untransmittable" initiative. To promote this information, we have organised direct actions, produced educational materials, published articles and produced a short video called [Love & Suppression](#) which features a Dublin couple who were part of the PARTNER study.

This news underscores the importance of testing and treatment in an over-all strategy to reduce new HIV transmissions in Ireland.

¹ www.hse.ie/eng/health/az/h/hiv-and-aids/