

A message from Dr. Avery

Good things are happening.

Positive Peers arose from concerns voiced by the young adults living with HIV we care for daily: social isolation and stigma adversely affecting their lives and health outcomes.

In 2015, we envisioned a private social network built to facilitate social connection and health care engagement among young people with HIV. We launched in Fall of 2016 with a small group of individuals in Cleveland, Ohio. Over four years, we learned that our online community was 4.2x more likely to achieve sustained viral suppression and benefit from reduced stigma.

While this was a remarkable accomplishment, it was only the beginning of the initiative. Our team has worked hard, scaling up to nationwide enrollment. We've only made it here because of forward-thinking public health organizations like yours, working hard to End the Epidemic.

Since March of 2020, overall app users have more than doubled, now supporting individuals across 28 states. We continue to grow, month after month.

Just as we intervene rapidly when someone tests positive for HIV, we must also work quickly to provide social support to app users. Let's work together to be responsive in our online community, offering support to those who need it most.

Throughout this first edition of our newsletter, you will find helpful information on supporting our user base. In addition, we offer advice on how to use our brand assets, incentives, and cross-promotional items. Learn how to introduce Positive Peers to eligible people in your region, especially those newly diagnosed. We've included some great articles with tips for support groups, along with some research information you can share with your team.

It's been remarkable to watch our expansion so far. Let's keep this momentum going! There are hundreds of thousands of young people living with HIV throughout the country, and we need your help and participation to get the word out.

Keep up the good work,

Ann K. Avery, MD

The MetroHealth System
Division Director of Infectious Disease
Positive Peers Principal Investigator

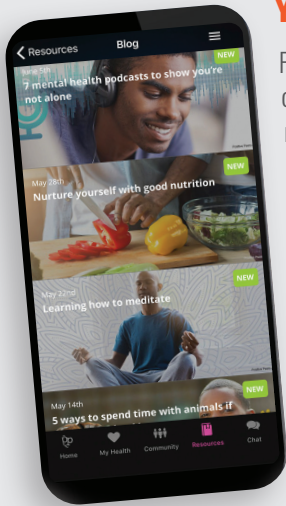
Do eligible users need help getting through registration? Incentives can help.

Unlike most popular phone apps, users can't just download and immediately interact. For the safety and privacy of all users, registration is required to gain access to the full app. Registration is a 5-step process and takes 15-30 minutes. However, registration is not always easy for all users. We highly recommend taking the time to sit with eligible users and offer to help with enrollment. We find that one of the best times to present the app is the same day one receives their diagnosis or at their first clinic appointment.

Please remind users that they receive e-gift cards after completing periodic surveys.

Mary Step, Ph.D., is our social scientist for Positive Peers. She focuses on evaluating the app, measuring its effectiveness as a support tool. Periodic surveys allow us to collect data at baseline plus intervals of 3, 6 and 12 months after registration, measuring success and continuously improve our application. Soon, your organization will receive aggregate data from surveys, and will continue to receive updates on a quarterly basis.





Your participation in the app is needed

For a community to indeed be called a community, there needs to be a continuous stream of engaging, interesting conversation. The best communities are sustained by their members, for one another. They become a place of mutual respect, collaboration, and discussion.

Here are a few ways you should, as an admin, participate in the app:

Add events to the calendar

Remember to add events to the calendar. Please let us know if you have virtual events that are appropriate for the global community so we can push out notifications to all app users. Send information for these special events to: positivepeers@metrohealth.org.

Welcome your new members to the app:

Post welcome messages for new members of your community. Tagging in the app will happen with the new rollout in 2023, so start practicing now. Example: Let's welcome @NewUser to Positive Peers! So excited that you are part of the community!

Provide links to valuable content

In Positive Peers 2.0, admins will be able to post content with clickable links. This will be a great way to highlight events or post additional content you wish to share with the entire community.

Use the swag

Stickers

Collectable stickers make people feel like they are part of a larger group. These feelings of inclusion are essential to those living with HIV. Ask employees to proudly sticker their notebooks, water bottles, notebooks, and more to create an atmosphere of inclusion.



Pins

The first rollout of the app only allowed users to choose from premade avatars. These avatars inspired our Positive Peers pins and have been a hit! Have your team choose pins to wear on their lanyards.



Just like the stickers, gift your peeps with their pin choice. It's a fun way to introduce Positive Peers.

Bring these assets to your local events and support group meetings as well. These small gifts are always a big hit!

Need more swag? Place your request with positivepeers@metrohealth.org.

Handouts

Fliers

Fliers are available for download at: <https://positivepeers.org/health-partner/key-health-partner-resources/>

Palm Cards

Palm Cards have been used in marketing for years because they easily fit into a pocket, especially for discrete carrying. Keep Palm Cards prominently displayed in your lobby and exam rooms.

Need more? Place your request with positivepeers@metrohealth.org.



Key Health Partner badges

Our Key Health Partner badges are available for download and ready to be used on your website. Posting to your site boosts awareness, attracts new users, and gets more people into care. Please link to [positivepeers.org](https://positivepeers.org/health-partner/key-health-partner-resources/)

Download here: <https://positivepeers.org/health-partner/key-health-partner-resources/>

Get Social!

Follow us

Follow us on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn) and tag us in your posts using @positivepeers4u and #positivepeers

Not socially savvy? We are.

Ask us how we can run social advertising in your community to help promote your services and partnership in our Positive Peers social accounts.

For more information, contact positivepeers@metrohealth.org.

Invite us to present about Positive Peers

We are willing to participate in virtual meetings with your Ryan White Planning Council or other community planning groups, staff meetings in HIV clinics, and HIV social work networks. Consider inviting us to your groups.

If you are interested, please contact positivepeers@metrohealth.org.



GET SOCIAL:
@PositivePeers4U

