

Moscow Launches HIV Prevention Week

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Moscow is set to launch a city-wide HIV prevention week in a bid to battle the disease in the Russian capital.

Free HIV testing and advice will be available at all Moscow hospitals and health clinics from Nov. 28 to Dec. 4.

The initiative is part of a national program to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Read more: [How Russia is trying to wish its HIV problem away.](#)

Russia's Health Ministry has recently [faced criticism](#) for cutting the budget allocated for buying HIV medications by 13.5 percent in 2017 — from 20.8 billion rubles (\$320 million) spent in 2016 to 18 billion rubles (\$277 million) in 2017.

Russia's Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova announced on Nov. 10 that the spread of HIV has become “critical” in 10 Russian regions.

HIV is spreading fastest in regions where drugs are routinely trafficked, with the injection of

narcotics causing 57 percent of all new cases, Skvortsova said. The problem was also growing rapidly among heterosexual couples, she said.

The number of new cases of HIV in Russia has been growing since the late 1990s, according to statistics of the Moscow-based Federal Center for Fighting AIDS. The number of cases of HIV registered in Russia reached one million in December 2015. Currently, there are more than 854,000 people living with the HIV diagnosis. Only 261,000 of them are on treatment due to limited funds.

UNAIDS has reported that Russia has the largest HIV epidemic in the European region, and one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics in the world.

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