

Fighting the HIV Epidemic Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Our partner [BU Wellness Network](#) spent the last year continuing to fight the ongoing HIV epidemic, while also supporting marginalized communities through a global pandemic. The Indianapolis-based nonprofit is the largest African American AIDS service organization in the state of Indiana, providing services to more than 35 percent of all African Americans living with HIV in the state.

Last year, we chose BU Wellness Network to share in a \$5 million investment in bringing about a future of hope, equality and respect in our Black and African American communities.

“We wanted to tap into organizations that are vital to our communities that we hadn’t necessarily partnered with before,” Meijer Central Market Director Nick Pronesti said. “When we discovered BU Wellness, it was clear they share our values when it comes to inclusive health in our community. We especially appreciate their focus combatting the stigma around HIV.”

The organization’s services are rooted in HIV care, education and community engagement. In addition to supporting physical health, they also provide mental health services and community outreach that combats stigma, discrimination, and oppression among those who are affected by and living with HIV.

“BU Wellness Network appreciates the support from Meijer to address health disparities and inequities in Central Indiana,” said Dr. Darrin Johnson, Executive Director of BU Wellness Network. “BU Wellness Network is the only HIV service organization whose mission is to enhance the health and wellness of Black people in Indiana.”

Our support represents a 20 percent increase in the organization’s annual budget, which they are using to expand their programs across the state of Indiana.

“The contribution from Meijer allows BU Wellness Network to provide vital services to individuals and families impacted by HIV,” Dr. Johnson said. “These services help us continue support groups, assist with healthcare navigation, provide housing and utility assistance, nutrition education and healthy food options; and operational functions for our organization. Thus, the support from Meijer is helping BU Wellness Network work to End the HIV Epidemic.”

Additional assets available online: [Photos^{\(1\)}](#)

<https://meijercommunity.com/Fighting-the-HIV-Epidemic-Amidst-the-COVID-19-Pandemic>