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Just Launched: Blue Ribbon Boys HIV Viral Suppression Campaign

***MSMGF and Hornet Use App-based Technology to Modernize Global HIV Prevention Messaging***

November 23rd, 2015 (San Francisco)--[MSMGF](http://www.msmgf.org) (The Global Forum on MSM & HIV), the largest global, advocacy network focused on HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM), has partnered with popular gay social app, Hornet, to launch the largest targeted, global HIV viral suppression campaign to date. The campaign that will directly reach over 7 million MSM around the world is called Blue Ribbon Boys ([BlueRibbonBoys.org](http://www.blueribbonboys.org)).

*\*\*\*In order to encourage global participation in Blue Ribbon Boys, Hornet is giving away* ***free*** *premium memberships to new users that sign up using this link: [http://hrnt.it/blueribbonboys](http://hrnt.it/blueribbonboys" \t "_blank) during November and December.*

Launching within the app on November 23rd, one week before World AIDS Day, the Blue Ribbon Boys campaign will prompt all Hornet users to answer a short series of yes or no questions about their sexual health. Questions will pertain to HIV and STI testing, ARV (anti-retroviral) treatment, PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), viral load, disclosure, stigma, condom and lubricant use, and other prevention methods.

Based on their answers, those who qualify will receive a blue ribbon icon on their profile photo signifying their personal commitment to sexual health, irrespective of their HIV status. Men who do not meet the standard will be offered recommendations for ways to protect and improve their sexual health so they can become a Blue Ribbon Boy. The campaign will grow and evolve over the coming months and adapt as treatment and prevention methods improve and become available in different regions.

“Blue Ribbon Boys modernizes sexual health messaging by asking Hornet users to be more mindful about their sex play given the effective prevention options at their disposal. It also invites men to take action in response to the unavailability of prevention and treatment tools they want and need,” said MSMGF Executive Director, Dr. George Ayala.

MSMGF and Hornet are tenacious advocates for unfettered access to and early initiation of antiretroviral medications for all MSM living with HIV. Both organizations are also campaigning for widespread availability and proper use of PrEP among HIV-negative men at significant risk for HIV, aligned with CDC and WHO guidelines. The goal of the BRB campaign is HIV viral suppression across all global communities.

“Leveraging social technology on such a massive scale is one of the ways we will be able to make a big difference in global health,” says Hornet founder Sean Howell. “As a large social media platform, we can be a megaphone to the good work that MSMGF is doing.”

Blue Ribbon Boys is breaking new ground in reaching MSM in many low- and middle-income countries where basic services may not be available but the prevalence of smart phones is widespread. It also directly targets young MSM who are early adopters of technology. Young people (under 25) are at increased risk for HIV, comprising over 40% of new HIV infections worldwide.

In cases where Hornet users hit a roadblock, where they are unable to access treatment or prevention services, they will be directed to two global petitions: [one](https://www.change.org/p/world-leaders-global-access-to-prep-pre-exposure-profylaxis-for-msm?recruiter=9969377&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=share_email_responsive&rp_sharecordion_checklist=control) is for HIV-negative men who want access to PrEP and the [other](https://www.change.org/p/world-leaders-global-access-to-arv-treatment-for-all-hiv-positve-msm?recruiter=9969377&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=share_email_responsive&rp_sharecordion_checklist=control) is for HIV-positive men who demand access to ARV treatment.

Although MSM represent only about 4% of the male population, they are disproportionately affected by HIV. In low- and middle-income countries they are 19 times more likely to be infected with HIV compared with the general population. HIV prevalence among men who have sex with men across North, South and Central America, South and Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa ranges from 14% to 18%. Even as HIV incidence is in decline worldwide, the rate of new HIV infections among men who have sex with men remains unchanged and is increasing in some high-income countries like the United States.

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About MSMGF: *Learn more about MSMGF at MSMGF.org*

*MSMGF has worked since 2006 to encourage targeted, tailored, better resourced, and rights- based sexual health services for gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) worldwide through its advocacy and technical support work. As a global network, MSMGF has successfully influenced HIV responses at the local level through shifts in global-level policies and has effectively utilized public health as an entry point for advancing the human rights of LGBT people. MSMGF currently supports programs in 15 countries.*

About Hornet*: Learn more about Hornet at hornetapp.com*

*Hornet is one of the world’s largest MSM social app and is the leading gay app in many countries where HIV is concentrated among MSM. Hornet is the most used gay app in Francophone countries, Brazil, Turkey, Russia, Thailand, Taiwan, and many others. Hornet also has a large footprint in Latin America, Asia. Since its launch in 2009, Hornet led several groundbreaking initiatives that aimed to address health and social issues among the LGBT community and gained popularity because of their Know Your Status campaign.*

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