



CONTACT: Eric Pfeider
eric.pfleider@seroproject.com
www.seroproject.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SERO Announces 2023 HIV Is Not A Crime V Training Academy in Emory, VA

February 28, 2022-The SERO Project, in partnership with [Positive Women's Network - USA](#), [Positively Trans](#), [THRIVE SS](#), and [US PLHIV Caucus](#), announces the HIV Is Not a Crime V National Training Academy (HINAC V) will be held in person June 4 through June 7, 2023, at [Emory & Henry College](#) in Emory, VA.

"Emory and Henry College is invested in social justice issues," Andrew Spieldenner of the Venue & Logistics committee explained about the venue choice. "They were clear they could provide a safe space for our Training Academy folks - one that was supportive of LGBTQ issues and valued racial diversity. With the movements in Virginia on HIV criminalization - and nearby Tennessee's coalition - south Virginia seemed like an ideal place [for HINAC V]."

"HINAC III is where the Ending Criminalization and Over-incarceration in Virginia ([ECHO VA](#)) Coalition formally started. HINAC III provided ECHO VA with the space to organize, the tools to strategically plan, and supportive guidance to successfully execute modernizing Virginia's HIV specific criminalization laws." Deirdre Johnson continued, "I am excited to celebrate with the other states that have either reformed or modernized their HIV criminalization laws and provide encouragement to those that are in the midst of coalition building, drafting bills and creating change. What I am honestly looking forward to is the HIV criminalization community having the opportunity to experience the beauty of Virginia for HINAC V at Emory and Henry College! I am always screaming our state tourism motto, 'Virginia is for Lovers' and now the HIV criminalization community will get to witness first hand our passion for setting the standard of creating change, our Southern hospitality, and Virginia LOVE."

Justice Counsel Member of Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation ([ETAF](#)), Executive Director of Access Restoration Community Center ([ARCC](#)) Andre Leaphart, an HIV criminalization survivor, explains why HIV law reform is necessary. "HIV criminalization unjustly stigmatizes and punishes individuals who have chronic health conditions. HIV criminalization also disproportionately targets vulnerable populations with poor social determinants such as people of color. Modernization of HIV laws is not just an issue for those impacted by HIV, but it is also a human rights issue." Leaphart points out Virginia's 2021 HIV criminalization law reform, "As an

HIV activist who has testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee to decriminalize the law (misdemeanor-Non disclosure) that upended my life, I am very relieved that no one else in Virginia can be prosecuted for non-disclosure of a managed and untransmittable chronic health condition; HIV. We have a lot of work to do to continue to push for the modernization of HIV laws in Virginia, but we have made progress and we are on the right track.”

HIV is Not a Crime (HINAC) is a biennial gathering of people living with HIV (PLHIV), HIV policy leaders and other stakeholders, primarily from the U.S., that educates and trains advocates to mobilize to end HIV criminalization, support PLHIV empowerment, and facilitate intersectional coalition building. HINAC particularly focuses on uplifting the work of PLHIV and PLHIV networks, and grassroots activists and networks engaged in racial, social, economic and gender justice movements.

For further information about the HIV Is Not A Crime Training Academy, please contact Eric Pfeider, Communications Director at eric.pfleider@seroproject.com or Tami Haught, HINAC Director at tami.haught@seroproject.com.

###

