



North Carolina and the Problem of AIDS: Advocacy, Politics, and Race in the South

Stephen J. Inrig

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Thirty years after AIDS was first recognized, the American South constitutes the epicenter of the United States' epidemic. Southern states claim the highest rates of new infections, the most AIDS-related deaths, and the largest number of adults and adolescents living with the virus. Moreover, the epidemic disproportionately affects African American communities across the region. Using the history of HIV in North Carolina as a case study, Stephen Inrig examines the rise of AIDS in the South in the period from the early spread and discovery of the disease through the late nineties.

Drawing on epidemiological, archival, and oral history sources, Inrig probes the social determinants of health that put poor, rural, and minority communities at greater risk of HIV infection in the American South. He also examines the difficulties that health workers and AIDS organizations faced in reaching those communities, especially in the early years of the epidemic. His analysis provides an important counterweight to most accounts of the early history of the disease, which focus on urban areas and the spread of AIDS in the gay community. As one of the first historical studies of AIDS in a southern state, *North Carolina and the Problem of AIDS* provides powerful insight into the forces and factors that have made AIDS such an intractable health problem in the American South and the greater United States.

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