

## FACT SHEET

### The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States

November 2010

The first cases of what would later become known as AIDS were reported in the United States in June of 1981.<sup>1</sup> Since then, 1.7 million people in the U.S. are estimated to have been infected with HIV, including nearly 600,000 who have already died and more than 1.1 million estimated to be living with the disease today.<sup>2,3</sup> Every 9½ minutes, someone in the U.S. is infected with HIV.<sup>4</sup> The response to the U.S. epidemic has yielded numerous successes, but challenges remain:

- While the number of new HIV infections (incidence) is down from its peak in the 1980s, estimates indicate that HIV incidence in the U.S. is higher than previously thought.<sup>5,6</sup>
- HIV testing is important for both prevention and treatment efforts and rapid testing is now much more widely available. Routine HIV testing is now recommended for all people ages 13–64, yet 21% of those infected with HIV don't know it,<sup>3</sup> and many people with HIV (32%) are diagnosed late in their illness.<sup>2</sup>
- Treatment advances have substantially reduced AIDS-related morbidity and mortality and extended the lives of many. Still, not all who need treatment have access to it and treatment is not a cure.<sup>7</sup>
- The epidemic continues to have a disproportionate impact on certain populations, particularly racial and ethnic minorities and gay and bisexual men.

#### Figure 1: Key Snapshot of the U.S. Epidemic Today<sup>2,3,5,6</sup>

- Number of new HIV infections, 2006: **56,300**
- Number of people living with HIV/AIDS: **1.1 million**, including nearly 471,000 with AIDS
- Number of AIDS deaths since beginning of epidemic: **597,499**, including more than 18,000 in 2007
- Percent of people infected with HIV who don't know it: **21%**

#### Overview and Key Trends

- Estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that there were 56,300 people newly infected with HIV in 2006, higher than previously thought. HIV incidence was highest in the 1980s, reaching 130,000, followed by declines. It has remained stable since 2000.<sup>5,6</sup>
- More than 1.1 million people are estimated to be living with HIV (including those with AIDS) today, representing a slight increase over time as people are living longer with HIV disease and new infections remain relatively stable.<sup>3</sup>
- There are several different kinds of HIV and AIDS data available to assess the epidemic — *AIDS diagnoses*, *HIV diagnoses*, and *new HIV infections*, including those that have been diagnosed and those that have not.
- The AIDS case surveillance system, one of the most complete in the U.S., provides data from all states and represents diagnoses of the most advanced stage of HIV disease. By the end of 2008, cumulative AIDS diagnoses reached an estimated 1,106,391, including 37,991 in 2008.<sup>2</sup>
- AIDS diagnoses, however, do not provide a current or full understanding of the epidemic, given the lag time between HIV infection and progression to an AIDS diagnosis, particularly since the introduction of ARVs. Therefore, all states now conduct

confidential name-based reporting of HIV diagnoses. As these systems have matured (for counting purposes) and HIV testing efforts have expanded, the number of HIV diagnoses in the U.S. has increased, and rose 7% between 2005 and 2008 among 37 states and 5 dependent areas with mature HIV surveillance systems. It is not yet possible, however, to rule out whether new HIV infections played any role in the increase in diagnoses.<sup>2</sup>

- Estimated HIV incidence provides the fullest picture of the current epidemic since it captures both infections that have been diagnosed and those estimated to have occurred but have yet to be diagnosed.<sup>2</sup>
- Despite advances in combating HIV, thousands have already died from the disease, and cumulative deaths among people with AIDS reached 597,499 by the end of 2007.<sup>2</sup> Still, HIV-related mortality rates, which rose steadily through the 1980s and peaked in 1995,<sup>8</sup> have declined significantly; the age-adjusted HIV death rate dropped by 77% since then, including by more than 7% between 2006 and 2007.<sup>8</sup> This is largely due to HAART but also to decreasing HIV incidence after the 1980s. In 2006, HIV was the 6th leading cause of death for those ages 25–44, down from #1 in 1994 and 1995.<sup>9</sup>
- HIV transmission patterns have shifted over time. Most new HIV infections are among gay and bisexual men (53% in 2006), a smaller share than earlier in the epidemic but the only group for which new infections are on the rise. Heterosexual transmission has accounted for a growing share of new HIV infections over time, representing 31% in 2006. New infections due to injection drug use have declined significantly over time – by approximately 80% – and accounted for 12% of new infections in 2006.<sup>5,6</sup>

Figure 2: Top Ten States by Cumulative AIDS Diagnoses and by AIDS Diagnosis Rate Per 100,000<sup>2</sup>

State	Cumulative AIDS Diagnoses through 2008	State	AIDS Diagnosis Rate 2008
New York	192,753 (17.4%)	District of Columbia	93.3
California	160,293 (14.5%)	Maryland	27.6
Florida	117,612 (10.6%)	Florida	26.0
Texas	77,070 (7.0%)	Louisiana	24.0
New Jersey	54,557 (4.9%)	New York	23.5
Georgia	38,300 (3.5%)	Puerto Rico	20.7
Pennsylvania	38,217 (3.5%)	Georgia	19.7
Illinois	37,880 (3.4%)	New Jersey	17.6
Maryland	35,725 (3.2%)	Delaware	16.8
Puerto Rico	32,463 (2.9%)	South Carolina	15.5
Subtotal	784,870 (70.9%)	—	—
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>1,106,391 (100%)</b>	<b>U.S. Diagnosis Rate</b>	<b>12.3</b>

#### Impact Across the Country

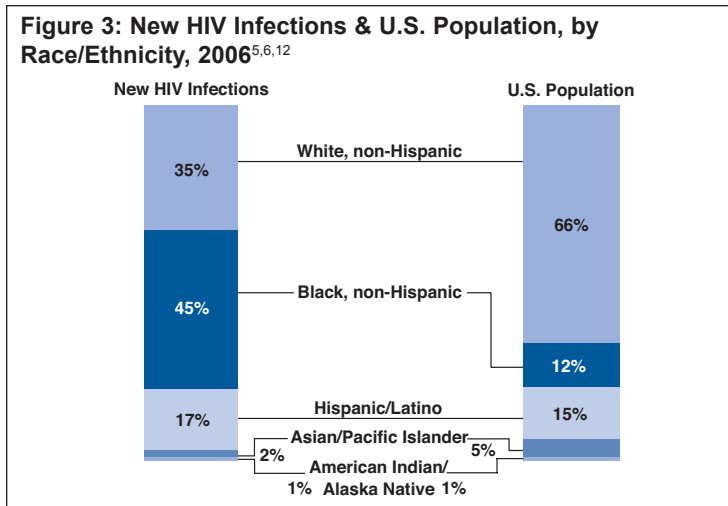
- AIDS diagnoses have been reported in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. dependencies, possessions, and associated nations. Ten states account for 71% of AIDS diagnoses reported since the beginning of the epidemic (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> Nine of these states also rank in the top 10 for new diagnoses.<sup>2</sup> Diagnosis rates per 100,000 provide a different measure of the epidemic's impact, since they reflect the concentration of diagnoses after accounting for differences in population size across states.<sup>2</sup> The District of

Columbia has the highest AIDS diagnosis rate in the nation. Seven of the top 10 states by AIDS diagnosis rate are in the South.<sup>2</sup>

- By region, the South had the highest AIDS diagnosis rate per 100,000 in 2008 (15.6), followed by the Northeast (15.3), West (9.9), and Midwest (6.4). The South accounted for almost half (47%) of new AIDS diagnoses in 2008 and has the greatest number of people estimated to be living with AIDS, followed by the Northeast, West, and Midwest.<sup>2</sup>
- AIDS diagnoses are concentrated primarily in large U.S. metropolitan areas (84% cumulatively, 81% in 2008).<sup>2</sup>
- A recent analysis showed that 2.1% of heterosexuals living in high-poverty urban areas are infected with HIV. The study also showed that poverty is the most important demographic factor associated with HIV infection among inner-city heterosexuals.<sup>10</sup>

### Impact on Racial and Ethnic Minorities<sup>11</sup>

- Racial and ethnic minorities have been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic, and represent the majority of new AIDS diagnoses, new HIV infections, people living with HIV/AIDS, and AIDS deaths.<sup>2,3,5,6</sup>
- Blacks and Latinos account for a disproportionate share of HIV infections, relative to their size in the U.S. population (Figure 3).<sup>5,6,12</sup>
- Based on the CDC's estimate of HIV/AIDS prevalence,<sup>3</sup> there are more than 500,000 Blacks living with HIV and AIDS in the U.S. Analysis of national household survey data found that 2% of Blacks in the U.S. were HIV positive, higher than any other group.<sup>13</sup>
- Blacks also have the highest rate of new HIV infections and new AIDS diagnoses of any racial/ethnic group. The AIDS diagnosis rate per 100,000 for Blacks in 2008 was more than 9 times that of whites.<sup>2</sup> The HIV rate was 7 times greater among Blacks than whites in 2006.<sup>5</sup>



- Blacks accounted for 57% of deaths due to HIV in 2007; Latinos accounted for 13%.<sup>14</sup> Survival after an AIDS diagnosis is lower for Blacks than other racial/ethnic groups, and Blacks have had the highest age-adjusted death rate due to HIV disease throughout most of the epidemic.<sup>2,8,9</sup>
- HIV was the 4th leading cause of death for Black men and 3rd for Black women, ages 25–44, in 2006, ranking higher than their respective counterparts in any other racial/ethnic group.<sup>9</sup>

### Impact on Women and Young People

- Today, women represent a larger share of new HIV infections compared to earlier in the epidemic. HIV incidence among women increased gradually until the late 1980s, declined during the early 1990s, and has remained relatively stable since, at approximately 27% in 2006.<sup>5,6</sup> Based on the CDC's most recent estimates,<sup>3</sup> close to 280,000 women are living with HIV and AIDS in the U.S.
- Women of color are particularly affected. Black women accounted for two thirds (65%) of new AIDS diagnoses among women in 2008; Latinas represented 17% and white women, 16%.<sup>2,11</sup> Black women

also accounted for the largest share of new HIV infections among women in 2006 (61%).<sup>15</sup>

- Young adults and teens, under the age of 30, continue to be at risk, with those between the ages of 13 and 29 accounting for 34% of new HIV infections in 2006, the largest share of any age group.<sup>6</sup> Most young people are infected sexually.<sup>16</sup>
- Among young people, minorities have been particularly affected. Black teens represented 70% of diagnoses among 13–19 year-olds; Latino teens represented 17%.<sup>2</sup>
- Perinatal HIV transmission, from an HIV infected mother to her baby, has declined significantly in the U.S., largely due to ARVs which can prevent mother-to-child transmission.<sup>2,17</sup>

### Impact on Gay and Bisexual Men

- Despite declines in HIV infection rates among gay and bisexual men since the early years of the epidemic, they continue to be at high risk for HIV. Gay and bisexual men accounted for an estimated 53% of new HIV infections in 2006, and are the only group for which new infections are on the rise.<sup>5,6</sup>
- Younger gay and bisexual men and those of color are at particularly high risk. Young men between the ages of 13 and 29 accounted for 38% of infections among gay and bisexual men, a share that was even higher among young Black men (52%).<sup>15</sup> Studies have also found high HIV incidence and prevalence among gay and bisexual men in some cities, particularly Black and Latino men, many of whom did not know they were infected.<sup>18</sup>

### The U.S. Government Response

- In FY 2010, U.S. federal funding to combat HIV totaled \$26 billion. Of this, 51% is for care, 11 % for research, 10% for cash and housing assistance, 3% for prevention, and 25% for the international epidemic.<sup>19</sup>
- Key programs that provide health insurance coverage, care, and support to people with HIV in the U.S. include Medicaid, Medicare, the Ryan White Program, and HOPWA, the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS Program. Social Security's income programs for those who are disabled (SSI and SSDI) are also important sources of support.
- A variety of federally and state-supported prevention services are provided by state and local health departments and community organizations.
- In July 2010, the U.S. Government released the *National AIDS Strategy*, the first comprehensive plan for addressing the epidemic in the U.S. The strategy has three primary goals: reduce new HIV infections; increase access to care and improve health outcomes; and reduce HIV-related health disparities.<sup>20</sup>

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