



July 22, 2008

Dear Colleague:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is preparing for the release of HIV incidence estimates for the United States from the first national HIV incidence surveillance system of its kind in the world. These new incidence estimates are based on direct measurement of new HIV infections and will provide the clearest picture to date of incidence (or the number of new HIV infections in a given year). These more precise estimates are possible now only because of breakthrough technology developed by CDC that can distinguish recent from long-standing HIV infections.

As many of you are aware, CDC has been working for several years to plan, establish and evaluate this critical surveillance system. Once the surveillance system was mature enough to produce incidence estimates, it was imperative for these estimates to receive rigorous scientific review. This process took longer than we anticipated, but, in the end, it has produced estimates that are more reliable and scientifically sound than would have occurred without the independent review.

The manuscript containing the estimates has been accepted for publication by the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* and is scheduled to be released on August 3, 2008. To prepare for the upcoming release of new HIV incidence estimates, CDC has developed a fact sheet on HIV/AIDS surveillance, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/factsheets/surveillance.htm>. Each of the components of CDC's gold-standard HIV surveillance portfolio—AIDS diagnoses, HIV diagnoses, incidence estimates, and prevalence estimates—work together to provide the most complete profile of the epidemic that is currently possible. This fact sheet aims to better explain the utility of CDC's HIV/AIDS surveillance systems and the various methods for measuring the HIV epidemic. We hope that this fact sheet will help you put the new HIV incidence estimates in proper context.

CDC will send another Dear Colleague letter and fact sheet on the new HIV incidence estimates immediately upon their release. Additionally, a series of briefings are planned to keep prevention partners and practitioners informed about the estimates and their significance to HIV prevention in the United States. An advisory will be sent to you before these estimates are released alerting you of the impending release, advising you about briefing times, and indicating where you can

access Web-based resources and materials. Please stay tuned for detailed information in the coming weeks and thank you for all that you do in support of HIV prevention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Wolitski', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Wolitski, Ph.D.
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Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral
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