

HIV/AIDS SURVEILLANCE

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

HIV/AIDS surveillance is the tool CDC and state and local health departments use to track the epidemic. Surveillance provides demographic, laboratory, clinical, and behavioral risk data used to identify populations at greatest risk for HIV infection. These data also help CDC to estimate the size and scope of the epidemic at the national level.

- Through 2002, 859,000 persons in the United States had been reported having AIDS; an estimated 501,669 persons had died.
- During 2002, 43,950 AIDS cases were reported from 39 states and territories; 35,147 HIV cases among persons who had not yet developed AIDS were reported from 39 states and territories with confidential named-based HIV infection reporting.
- Women account for an increasing proportion of the epidemic. In 2002, 32% of reported HIV infections and 26% of AIDS cases were among women.
- There are racial/ethnic disparities among persons with HIV and AIDS. In 2002, 64% of men diagnosed with AIDS were African American and Hispanic/Latino. Among women, 81% were African American and Hispanic/Latino.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

CDC gathers, compares, and publishes data from several sources to evaluate the status of the HIV epidemic. These sources include case reports of HIV and AIDS, special surveys of infected and high-risk populations, mortality data from the national vital statistics systems, and surveys of the general population. Every state requires reporting of the number of people diagnosed with and the number who die from AIDS each year. This information is critical to identify those in need of services and care, allocate prevention and treatment resources, and track the course of the epidemic over time. However, AIDS cases alone are not indicative of recent trends in the epidemic. All states and the District of Columbia have regulations in place to receive reports about newly diagnosed HIV-positive persons. HIV reporting has become a critical factor to capture HIV disease case counts which would encompass all HIV infections including those which have progressed to AIDS. CDC's 2002 *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report* has been revised to present data on persons with HIV infection, including those in whom HIV infection has progressed to AIDS. Surveillance data on HIV infection provides a more complete picture of the epidemic and the need for prevention and care services than that provided by AIDS data alone. Such comprehensive information is also needed to allocate resources and evaluate program effectiveness.

Example of Program in Action

CDC has taken several steps towards creating a national population-based surveillance system to provide estimates of HIV incidence through the serologic testing algorithm for recent HIV seroconversion. Five areas were funded in 2002 to pilot this method, and 19 additional areas were funded in 2003. In 2004, CDC added 10 new HIV Incidence sites and has 33 areas funded for incidence surveillance. The monitoring of HIV incidence will be critical in evaluating progress toward CDC's goal of reducing the number of new HIV infections in the United States from 40,000 to 20,000 per year by 2005.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC will continue to monitor the HIV/AIDS epidemic by working to enhance and expand existing surveillance programs and surveys. Efforts will include continued assistance to states with the implementation of HIV reporting and interpretation of data; expansion of surveys to gather information about the characteristics and behaviors of those who are HIV positive or are at high-risk of infection; and development of systems to better measure HIV incidence and prevalence.