



August 28, 2013

Dear Colleague:

More than 1.1 million people in the United States are living with HIV and nearly one in five are unaware of their infection. The most recent CDC HIV surveillance data show that HIV continues to disproportionately affect Black/African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos, accounting for 44 percent and 21 percent of new HIV infections, respectively. Furthermore, 31 percent of Black/African Americans and 36 percent of Hispanic/Latinos were diagnosed with AIDS within 1 year of initial HIV diagnosis. Had these individuals been tested earlier in the course of their HIV infection, they may have benefitted from early antiretroviral therapy to help protect their health and reduce the chance of HIV transmission to partners

The influence of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino providers on minority patients is paramount. Surveys conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation demonstrated that many African Americans patients are not tested for HIV because their healthcare provider did not recommend it. To help increase voluntary HIV testing and linkage to care of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino patients, CDC is partnering with the National Medical Association (NMA), the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA), and the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) to promote CDC's campaign, *HIV Screening. Standard Care: Testing and Linking African American and Hispanic/Latino Patients to Care™*. This campaign was designed to help improve earlier HIV diagnosis and antiretroviral treatment through HIV screening. Additional materials may be ordered free of charge by calling 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or visiting www.cdc.gov/actagainstaids/tlc to order online.

The *HIV Screening. Standard Care: Testing and Linking African American and Hispanic/Latino Patients to Care™* campaign is based on CDC's 2006 "Revised Recommendations for HIV testing of Adults, Adolescents, and Pregnant Women in Health-Care Settings." These recommendations call for routine HIV screening of all patients aged 13–64. Recently, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued a similar recommendation promoting HIV screening for everyone aged 15-65 and all pregnant women. Many medical associations have adopted position statements supporting the CDC recommendations including NMA, NHMA, and many others.

Routine HIV screening will help bring us one step closer to achieving one of the critical goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy -- to reduce HIV-related disparities and health inequities. Please join us to help make this important goal a reality.

Sincerely,

/Jonathan H. Mermin/

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