Gay and bisexual men – referred to in CDC surveillance systems as men who have sex with men (MSM)\(^1\) – continue to be the risk group most severely affected by HIV in the United States. However, from 2010 – 2016 the number of annual HIV infections among gay and bisexual men remained steady, an encouraging sign after more than a decade of increases. To sustain and accelerate this progress, there is an urgent need to expand access to proven HIV prevention programs for gay and bisexual men.

A Snapshot

- Overall, gay and bisexual men account for:
  - More than half of the estimated 1.1 million people with diagnosed and undiagnosed HIV in the United States (57 percent, or an estimated 648,500 gay and bisexual men in 2016).
  - Two-thirds of all new HIV infections each year (68 percent, or an estimated 26,400 infections in 2016).
- While CDC estimates that 4 percent of men in the United States are gay or bisexual, the rate of new HIV diagnoses among them is more than 44 times that of other men.
- Stage 4 HIV, or AIDS, continues to claim the lives of too many gay and bisexual men. Since the beginning of the epidemic, more than 325,000 gay and bisexual men with AIDS have died.

A recent CDC analysis of annual HIV infections 2010-2016 shows:

- **Overall:**
  - HIV infections stabilized among gay and bisexual men at about 26,000 annual infections.
- **By race/ethnicity, annual HIV infections:**
  - Stabilized among African American gay and bisexual men (about 9,800 infections).
  - Increased 30 percent among Latino gay and bisexual men (from 6,400 to 8,300 infections).
  - Declined 16 percent among white gay and bisexual men (from 8,000 to 6,700 infections).
- **By age, annual HIV infections:**
  - Decreased 30 percent among 13- to 24-year-olds (from 9,400 to 6,600 infections).
  - Increased by 47 percent among 25- to 34-year-olds (from 7,600 to 11,200 infections).
  - Remained stable among 35- to 44-year-olds (from 4,700 to 4,400 infections\(^2\)).

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\(^1\) The term men who have sex with men is used in CDC surveillance systems because it indicates the behaviors that transmit HIV infection, rather than how individuals self-identify in terms of their sexuality.

\(^2\) Not statistically significant.
Among gay and bisexual men, African Americans continue to represent the largest number of new HIV infections (9,800), followed by Latinos (8,300) and whites (6,700).

Young African American gay and bisexual males ages 13 - 24 accounted for more HIV diagnoses in the United States in 2016 than any other group by race/ethnicity, age and sex (3,707 diagnoses in 2016).

If current diagnoses rates persist, CDC projects that approximately one in six gay and bisexual men are at risk of being diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime and that African American gay and bisexual men (one in two) and Latino gay and bisexual men (one in four) could be particularly impacted.

Data suggest young gay and bisexual males and African American gay and bisexual men are the least likely to know their HIV status and to receive care and treatment.

**Complex Factors Increase Risk**

- **High prevalence of HIV:** The existing high prevalence of HIV among gay and bisexual men means they face a greater risk of being exposed to infection with each sexual encounter, especially as they get older. For young African American gay and bisexual males, partnering with older African American men — among whom untreated HIV prevalence is high — may also lead to increased risk.

- **Don’t know HIV status:** Studies show that people who know they have HIV take steps to protect their partners. Yet many gay and bisexual males don’t know their status and may unknowingly transmit the virus to others. Some gay and bisexual men may also falsely assume or have inaccurate information about their partner’s HIV status. CDC recommends that sexually active gay and bisexual men get tested for HIV at least annually, or more frequently as needed.

- **Social discrimination and cultural issues:** For some gay and bisexual men – especially those of color – social and economic factors, including homophobia, stigma and lack of access to health care may increase risk behaviors or be a barrier to receiving HIV prevention services.

- **Substance use:** People under the influence of alcohol and illegal drugs are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors. Additionally, HIV can be spread by sharing needles or other illegal drug injection equipment. For these reasons alcohol and illegal drugs can contribute to increased risk for HIV and other STDs. This risk is especially concerning for gay and bisexual men who use, as there is a high prevalence of HIV among gay and bisexual men, meaning they face a greater risk of being exposed to infection with each sexual encounter.

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