



January 14, 2011

Dear Colleague,

There are more than 1 million people living with HIV in the United States, and more than 50,000 become newly infected each year. Yet as many as one in five Americans living with HIV are unaware of their infection.

One of our highest priorities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is to prevent new HIV infections. Our prevention efforts have averted more than 350,000 HIV infections in the U.S. and saved more than \$125 billion in medical costs from 1991-2006. But more must be done.

That's why CDC has identified HIV prevention as a winnable battle. With additional effort and support for evidence-based, cost-effective strategies that we can implement now, we will have a significant impact on our nation's health.

HIV testing is central to HIV prevention. People who learn they are living with HIV take steps to protect their health as well as that of their partners. From 2007-2009, CDC grantees conducted more than 1.4 million HIV tests and identified more than 10,500 persons newly diagnosed with HIV infection.

CDC's comprehensive HIV surveillance systems monitor changes in HIV incidence, prevalence, and mortality, and provide insights into risk factors for HIV infection. These data are used to direct programs and resources to communities most affected by the epidemic. Our surveillance systems also help to illustrate the alarming disparities suffered by many communities and populations in the United States.

Overall, our collective prevention efforts have resulted in fewer new HIV infections. Through successful prevention efforts – such as increased testing, access to preventive services, and safer sexual practices – new infections have decreased more than 60% since the peak of the epidemic in the 1980s. As the number of people living with HIV continues to grow, however, so will the need for prevention, HIV treatment, and ongoing medical care.

Successfully addressing this epidemic will require ongoing effort from all communities. Thank you for your continued commitment to HIV prevention.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention