



# Fact Sheet: The AIDS Crisis in the United States

## A Look at the Disease on World AIDS Day 2010

Jerome Hunt and Carlos Maza | December 2010

On this 22nd annual World AIDS Day 33.4 million people worldwide live with HIV-AIDS. At home, the HIV-AIDS crisis continues to affect many Americans. More than 1 million people are estimated to be living with HIV in the United States while an astounding 56,300 Americans become infected with HIV each year. We need to do more to help the communities and people most in need.

This fact sheet documents how HIV-AIDS is affecting the United States, which communities see the highest rates of infection, and what we can do to stop the spread of this disease. The government is stepping up in this regard, but action at the federal level won't be enough.

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### Gay and bisexual men still make up a large percentage of those diagnosed with HIV-AIDS

- Gay and bisexual men from all races and ethnicities made up 54 percent of those diagnosed with HIV in 2008, a percentage on the rise since 2005.
- Men who have sex with men in 2007 were 44 to 86 times as likely to be diagnosed with HIV compared to other men.
- Approximately 17,940 men who have sex with men were diagnosed with AIDS in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the United States dependent areas in 2008. This is a 6 percent increase from 2005.

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## Minorities are the hardest hit

### African Americans

- African Americans, who represent 12 percent of the U.S. population, made up 52 percent of all diagnoses of HIV in 2008. They encompass 46 percent of people living with HIV in the United States.
- African Americans experienced the largest increase in rates of HIV diagnoses by ethnicity or race from 2005 to 2008—with the rate increasing from 68 per 100,000 to 74 per 100,000.
- AIDS is the number one killer of black women between the ages of 25 and 34.

### Hispanics

- Hispanics, who make up 16 percent of the U.S. population, represent an estimated 18 percent of people living with HIV in the United States and approximately 17 percent of new infections each year.
- Most new infections of HIV among Hispanic men (72 percent) occur among men who have sex with men, while the rate of new infections among Hispanic women is almost four times that of white women.

### Asians and Pacific Islanders

- Asian and Pacific Islanders make up 0.6 percent of people living with HIV-AIDS in the United States. But this number may be larger because of the underreporting or misclassification of Pacific Islander and Asians.
- Asian Americans have lower AIDS rates than whites, and they're less likely to die of HIV-AIDS than their white counterparts.
- Asian Americans are less likely to get tested for HIV-AIDS while the number of reported AIDS cases continues to increase in this population.

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## The nation's capital faces an epidemic but is fighting back

- HIV-AIDS has reached an epidemic rate of infection in Washington, D.C., with 3 percent of D.C. residents older than 12 living with HIV or AIDS.

- Approximately 16,513 D.C. residents in 2008 were aware that they had HIV or AIDS through testing—a 9 percent increase from 2007.
- Earlier this year the D.C. government partnered with the National Institutes of Health to launch a \$26.4 million initiative to expand testing and treatment of HIV-AIDS, which will hopefully decrease D.C. residents' chances of acquiring and spreading the disease.
- Washington, D.C. is also the first city in the nation to provide free HIV testing at the DMV, with an added bonus of participants receiving \$15 to defray some of their DMV cost just for getting tested.

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### An all-hands-on-deck approach is needed to battle this crisis

The White House released an ambitious plan, the National HIV-AIDS Strategy, in July. It is the first-ever comprehensive, coordinated HIV-AIDS strategy with clear and measurable targets.

The strategy seeks to:

- Reduce new HIV infections by 2015
- Increase access to care while improving health outcomes for people living with HIV by 2015
- Reduce HIV-related health disparities by 20 percent by 2015

Federal funds for HIV-AIDS research totaled \$2.8 billion in 2009. But it will take more than government efforts to stop the spread of HIV-AIDS. State, local, and tribal governments, educational institutions, people living and affected by HIV, faith communities, philanthropic communities, and the medical and scientific community all have a part to play.

Together these entities can take on many of the complex factors—poverty, discrimination, violence, homophobia, and racial and gender inequalities—that are root causes of the AIDS crisis in the United States.

Serious steps are being taken to reverse the impact that HIV-AIDS has on this country. But the work must continue well beyond the White House's 2015 deadline if we want to stop the spread of HIV-AIDS for good.

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