

FACT SHEET:

August 2, 2008

Estimating the number of people infected with HIV in 2006

- On August 3, 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released an estimate of the number of people newly infected with HIV in the United States during 2006 (*Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*. Volume 300; page 520; 2008).
- It was reported that 56,300 (22.8 per 100,000; 95% CI 19.5-26.1) people were newly infected with HIV in the United States during 2006. The estimate is based on information collected by health departments in 22 states, including Connecticut. This information was released after an extensive review of the methods by CDC and by the journal publishing the results. 45% of new infections were among blacks and 53% in men who have sex with men. Back calculations indicated the HIV infection rate has held steady since 1999. Estimates for subsequent years will be released as the data becomes available.
- Estimates for Connecticut and the other participating states were also released but not included in the JAMA article. It was estimated that 600 (20.5 per 100,000) people in Connecticut were newly infected with HIV in 2006. There is not a statistically significant difference between the US and Connecticut rates. CDC will be assisting states in conducting further analysis of their rates.
- The estimate was made possible by the development of a laboratory test at CDC that distinguishes recent (i.e., occurring within the past five months) and long-standing HIV infections. The name of the test is *BED HIV-1 Capture EIA*. The test has been FDA-approved for public health surveillance use only and cannot be used for routine clinical or diagnostic testing.
- A complex statistical method was used to calculate the estimate, taking into account various characteristics of the patient including previous testing for HIV and the probable source of HIV infection. The statistical methods were published separately (*Statistics and Medicine*. 2008).
- The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program collected information used in developing the estimate as part of required disease-reporting methods routinely used by DPH to monitor HIV infection in Connecticut. AIDS has been a reportable condition since 1982.
- The HIV estimate will be used to enhance analysis of HIV infection trends and will allow public health officials to plan, implement, and evaluate HIV prevention programs more effectively.
- The previous estimate of 40,000 HIV infections per year in the US was derived using indirect methods and had not changed in 14 years. The methods used to calculate the two estimates are entirely different, making comparisons inappropriate.
- Routine HIV testing does not indicate that a person is newly infected with HIV. Recent CDC recommendations suggest all adolescents and adults (aged 13-65) should be tested routinely.
- CDC estimates that 1 to 1.2 million persons are currently infected with HIV in the US.
- Since 1982, 18,950 Connecticut HIV/AIDS cases have been reported with 43% having died. Connecticut HIV/AIDS statistics and a link to this fact sheet can be found on the DPH website. <http://www.ct.gov/dph>
- CDC has made additional information available on its website. <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/factsheets/surveillance.htm>
- Questions? Call the Connecticut Department of Public Health at (860) 509-7900.