



December 4, 2008

Dear Colleague:

In early 2009, the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes (JAIDS)* will publish a research letter authored jointly by researchers at Johns Hopkins University and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The letter will provide an updated estimate of the HIV transmission rate in the United States from 1977 through 2006 and offers an innovative way to measure the success of HIV prevention efforts nationwide. The on-line version of this letter was posted last week and can be found at www.jaids.com in the *Publish Ahead of Print* section for November 22, 2008.

The letter published in *JAIDS* explains how declines in the rate of HIV transmission represent a major success in HIV prevention. The analysis found that the rate of HIV transmission has declined by 89% since the peak of the epidemic and just in this past decade, the transmission rate has declined by 33%. This represents major successes in HIV testing and prevention that have resulted in reductions in the percentage and number of persons with undiagnosed HIV infection. It also likely reflects the effects of evidence-based behavioral interventions with people living with HIV and the increased availability of life-saving highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). These data provide further evidence that prevention does work when we apply what we know, and underscore the need to make HIV testing and effective interventions available to those who are living with HIV and at-risk for contracting the virus.

It is important to note, however, that despite prevention successes, we are facing an uphill battle. Due to successful prevention efforts and treatments such as HAART, many more people are living longer with HIV than ever before. As the number of people living with HIV continues to grow, so will the need for prevention, medical care, and HIV treatment. Successfully fighting this battle will require continued commitment from all communities—and from the nation as a whole.

To help you further understand the significance of these data, as well as explain in greater detail how the transmission rate serves as an indicator of the success of our collective HIV prevention efforts, CDC has developed a podcast and a fact sheet available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance>. We hope that you will find this information useful to the HIV prevention work you do in your community.

Thank you for your continued commitment to HIV/AIDS prevention.

Sincerely,

/Richard J. Wolitski/

Richard J. Wolitski, Ph.D.
Acting Director
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis,
STD, and TB Prevention