



December 18, 2006

Dear Colleague:

We would like to call your attention to this week's release of the CDC report, *HIV Counseling and Testing at CDC-Supported Sites—United States, 1999–2004*. This report presents data about counseling and testing services that were supported with CDC funds from 1999 through 2004. Counseling and testing is a critical component of CDC's 2003 Advancing HIV Prevention (AHP) initiative, which emphasizes increasing availability of, and access to, HIV prevention services including routine testing and early identification of new HIV cases, partner notification, referral to services and counseling, and care and treatment for HIV-infected persons [1].

During the period covered by *HIV Counseling and Testing at CDC-Supported Sites—United States, 1999–2004*, CDC funded 59 health departments to provide counseling and testing services to 50 state health departments, 6 municipal or county health departments, and the health departments of the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These health departments provided services directly to persons or indirectly through contracts with local health departments or community-based organizations. Health departments could also provide tests or laboratory services to local health departments or community-based organizations.

This report presents data on the number of HIV tests conducted, percentage of HIV tests that were positive, and percentage of tests for which results were received. The data, which are stratified by demographic and risk characteristics, come from counseling and testing services conducted at a variety of sites, including HIV testing centers, sexually transmitted disease clinics, prisons, drug treatment centers, and community health centers. Note that this report does not account for HIV testing not supported by CDC, in places such as health maintenance organizations and blood donation facilities.

Key conclusions of this report covering 1999 through 2004 include:

- the reported number of HIV tests provided at CDC-supported sites remained relatively stable from 1999 through 2004 at approximately 1.9 million tests per year.
- the rate of positive test results decreased from 1.5% in 1999 to 1.3% in 2004.
- the largest number of HIV tests were conducted among persons aged 19–34 years; however, the largest number of HIV-positive test results was found for persons aged 35–44.
- the number of HIV tests provided consistently declined among whites and increased among blacks. Blacks accounted for more than half of HIV-positive test results from 1999 through 2004.



- the number of HIV tests reported for females exceeded those reported for males by approximately 6%, but the reported number of test results that were HIV-positive for males was more than double that for females.

This report comes at a time when approximately 25 percent of the more than one million persons infected with HIV in this country are unaware of their infection. People who are infected but not aware of their condition are unable to take advantage of the therapies that can keep them healthy and extend their lives, or have the knowledge to protect their sex or drug-use partners from becoming infected. Knowing if one is HIV-infected or HIV-negative confers great benefits in healthy decision making. For these reasons, HIV testing is a top priority for CDC, its grantees, and others engaged in HIV prevention. We hope this report will be useful in measuring the reach and impact of CDC-supported HIV testing in the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert Janssen", is centered below the word "Sincerely,".

Robert Janssen, M.D.
Director, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention

1. CDC. *HIV Counseling and Testing at CDC-Supported Sites—United States, 1999–2004*. 2006:1-33.
Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/testing/reports.htm>.