



HIV/AIDS

AMONG

# AMERICAN INDIANS/ ALASKA NATIVES



Today there are an estimated **1.039 million to 1.185 million** HIV-positive individuals living in the United States—the largest number ever according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Of these, **between 252,000–315,000** people do not know they are infected, and thus are suffering from a lack of treatment, while at the same time may be unknowingly spreading the virus.<sup>1</sup> About **225,000** more who do know their status are not getting the care they need. These numbers will continue to grow unless everyone takes decisive action against the disease.<sup>2</sup>

**HIV/AIDS is taking a devastating and disproportionate toll on people of color in the United States. Community leaders and organizations can play a critical role in fighting the disease in their neighborhoods, and The Leadership Campaign on AIDS (TLCA) is dedicated to helping them do it.**

## TLCA: Fighting HIV/AIDS in Communities of Color!

Within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of HIV/AIDS Policy's The Leadership Campaign on AIDS (TLCA) is working externally and internally to support the fight against HIV/AIDS in communities of color. TLCA reaches out to community leaders and local and national organizations to improve education, awareness, and action against the disease. TLCA wants to help minority leaders fight the stigma, fear, and denial that exacerbate the problem, and to help build partnership that will promote education, prevention, testing, vaccine awareness, and treatment. TLCA also reaches internally to help improve the coordination, information-sharing, communication efforts, and effectiveness of the Department's HIV/AIDS initiatives and programs.

Know the facts and  
Educate,  
Motivate, and  
Mobilize against  
HIV/AIDS!

### What We Know:

- A total of **3,084** estimated cases of AIDS among American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have been diagnosed in the United States since the beginning of the epidemic through 2004. Of those cases, **193** were newly diagnosed in 2004.<sup>3</sup>
- Like other racial and ethnic groups, the estimated number of AI/AN persons living with AIDS continues to rise. An estimated **1,506** AI/AN were living with AIDS at the end of 2004.<sup>3</sup>
- Of adults and adolescents diagnosed with AIDS in 2004, **67 percent** were among men and **23 percent** were among women.<sup>3\*</sup>
- AIDS rate (per 100,000 population) for AI/AN is **9.9** for adults and adolescents, compared to **7.1** for Whites, **72.1** for Blacks, **25.0** for Hispanics, and **4.4** for Asian/Pacific Islanders.<sup>3</sup>
- Ten states account for nearly two-thirds of the AI/AN population (OK, CA, AZ, NM, AK, WA, NC, TX, NY, MI). Of these states, eight had reported HIV data to the CDC as of December 2004.<sup>3</sup>

### Most Common Modes of Transmission of HIV within AI/AN Communities:

- Among AI/AN men living with HIV/AIDS in 2004, **61 percent** were men who have sex with men and an additional **13 percent** were men who have sex with men who inject drugs.<sup>3\*</sup>
- Among AI/AN women living with HIV/AIDS, **66 percent** were infected through heterosexual contact and **32 percent** through injection drug use.<sup>3\*</sup>
- **15 percent** of AI/AN men living with HIV/AIDS were infected through injection drug use.<sup>3\*</sup>

### Major Obstacles in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in AI/AN Communities Are:

- Frequent misclassification of an individual's ethnicity as Latino, White, or Asian.
- Lack of access to confidential testing and care, and lack of culturally competent health care providers.
- HIV diagnoses that are often made late in the disease's progression.
- People not recognizing themselves or their partners as being at risk of HIV infection.
- Taboos about discussing sexuality, homophobia, and the stigma associated with HIV infection.

# Did you know?

- An estimated **944,306** Americans have been diagnosed with AIDS from the beginning of the epidemic through 2004. Of the **42,514** estimated new diagnoses in 2004, **73 percent** were male and **27 percent** were female. Less than **one percent** were children under 13.<sup>3</sup>
- **African Americans** account for **40 percent** of total estimated AIDS diagnoses through 2004,<sup>3</sup> though they make up only **12.2 percent** of the population.<sup>4</sup> They also represent an estimated **50 percent** of persons newly diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in 2004.<sup>3\*</sup>
- **Hispanics** account for **19 percent** of total estimated AIDS diagnoses through 2004,<sup>3</sup> though they make up only **14.2 percent** of the population.<sup>4</sup>
- **Women of color** account for **80 percent** of all women estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS. Women across racial/ethnic groups most commonly report heterosexual contact or injection drug use as their primary modes of exposure to HIV, while males most commonly report homosexual contact and injection drug use.<sup>3\*</sup>

\* In the 35 areas with longstanding HIV reporting

The terms "African American" and "Black" are used interchangeably to include those individuals who self-identify as either. The term "Hispanic" includes those individuals who self-identify as "Latino/a" or "Hispanic."

<sup>1</sup> Glynn M., Rhodes P. Estimated HIV prevalence in the United States at the end of 2003. National HIV Prevention Conference; June 2005; Atlanta. Abstract 595.

<sup>2</sup> Fleming, P.L., et al., "HIV Prevalence in the United States, 2000," 9th Annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, Feb. 24-8, 2002, Seattle, WA, Abstract 11.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2004, Vol. 16. Available at : [www.cdc.gov/hiv/stats/2004surveillancereport.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/stats/2004surveillancereport.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2004. Available at <http://factfinder.census.gov>, Accessed Nov. 2005.

The Leadership Campaign on AIDS is a program of the Office of HIV/AIDS Policy—202-690-5560—[www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)  
Note: The models shown are for illustrative purposes only.



# What Can You Do?

- Learn more about HIV/AIDS and its impact on your community.
- Protect yourself against HIV infection. Know the risks associated with sex and drug use.
- Get tested. It's important to know your HIV status to protect yourself and others.
- Get medical care and support if you're living with HIV. Effective treatments exist.
- Educate others about HIV/AIDS. Talk openly and honestly about prevention and treatment.
- Volunteer at a local HIV/AIDS organization.
- Post fact sheets about HIV/AIDS on bulletin boards and in local newsletters.
- Organize a community meeting. Invite educators, faith and business leaders, health care professionals, neighbors, and friends to talk about HIV/AIDS and its impact locally. Even if three people show up, change can happen!
- Help someone living with HIV/AIDS by being a friend.
- Help end the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS.
- Implement an activity to support HIV/AIDS observances such as World AIDS Day on December 1 or National HIV Testing Day on June 27. Visit [www.omhrc.gov/hivaidsobservances](http://www.omhrc.gov/hivaidsobservances) for more ideas.

## To Learn More

- Visit the CDC National Prevention Information Network at [www.cdcnpin.org](http://www.cdcnpin.org) or call 1-800-458-5231.
- Visit the HIV/AIDS Observance Days Web site at [www.omhrc.gov/hivaidsobservances](http://www.omhrc.gov/hivaidsobservances).
- Call the CDC-INFO (formerly the CDC National AIDS Hotline) at 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636), TTY 1-888-232-6348.
- Call your doctor or other health care provider.
  - Contact your local or state public health department.