

ACTION=LIFE

2004 HIV/AIDS Policy Priorities

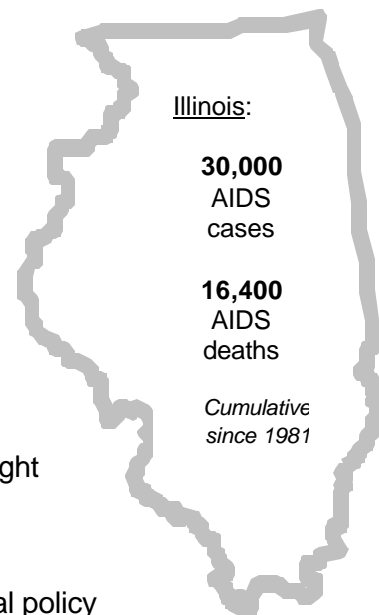
In the early days of the epidemic, the slogan SILENCE = DEATH galvanized a new activist movement of people affected by HIV/AIDS. They were determined to raise public awareness, spur government action, and make a difference in the lives of thousands of individuals affected by a mysterious and deadly new disease.

In spite of overwhelming hurdles, these early activists fought and won critical victories in the fight against AIDS. Today's activists continue that tradition in the hope of ending the epidemic.

In **ACTION = LIFE**, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) calls on government officials, community leaders, and people affected by the epidemic to continue to press forward in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

ACTION = LIFE outlines a package of federal, state, and local policy initiatives and budget priorities designed to expand AIDS prevention education and ensure access to high-quality AIDS care where it is most needed. We also provide information about our grassroots advocacy efforts and encourage everyone to join us.

Following the examples of courageous activists fighting AIDS over the past 23 years, we must continue to counter complacency with urgency, ignorance with knowledge, and silence with action.



Acknowledgements

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) thanks the thousands of Illinoisans in our Statewide Advocacy Network and the hundreds of lawmakers and community partners who work closely with us to advance sound government responses to the AIDS crisis.

Special thanks to AFC's Policy/Advocacy Committee, co-chaired by Charles Clifton, executive director of Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN), and Ann Fisher, executive director of the AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC), for informing AFC's public policy agenda.

AFC is Illinois' principal advocate for people living with and at risk for HIV disease. Established in 1985 to provide central leadership in the fight against the epidemic, AFC promotes sound HIV/AIDS public policy, funds HIV/AIDS prevention and care projects, and through its Service Providers Council, helps to coordinate the delivery of essential HIV/AIDS services.

The following AFC staff contributed to the development of this report:

Mark Ishaug
Executive Director

David Ernesto Munar
Associate Director—Policy & Communications

Karen A. Reitan
State Affairs Director

Sara Schmitt
Advocacy Coordinator

AIDS Foundation of Chicago
411 South Wells Street, Suite 300
Chicago, Illinois 60607
(312) 922-2322
(312) 922-2916 fax
policy@aidschicago.org

www.aidschicago.org

Introduction

In 2004, cumulative reported AIDS cases in Illinois surpassed **30,000**, making Illinois the **6th** most affected state in the nation. An estimated **1,600** Illinoisans become HIV-infected each year, and more than **35,000** Illinoisans are living with HIV/AIDS. Mirroring national trends, the AIDS epidemic in Illinois continues to disproportionately affect **African Americans** and **Latinos**, who account for just **27%** of the state's population, but who make up **70%** of recent AIDS cases. Sexual contact continues to be the primary mode of HIV transmission in Illinois, with over **40%** of recent AIDS cases attributed to male-to-male (MSM) sexual contact and **16%** of cases attributed to heterosexual contact. Injection drug use remains the second leading mode of transmission, accounting for more than **23%** of recent AIDS cases.

AIDS stigma and discrimination persist, creating innumerable barriers for those affected by the epidemic. Many people with HIV also face gender, sexual orientation, age, and income discrimination—factors that can limit their access to affordable housing, healthcare, and other vital services.

Past Successes, Future Challenges

Thanks to the tremendous efforts of Illinois' AIDS advocates, the Illinois General Assembly and Governor Rod Blagojevich last year enacted landmark legislation to curb injection-drug-related HIV infections. State lawmakers also passed a measure designed to reduce mother-to-child HIV infection by expanding HIV education and voluntary HIV testing for pregnant women. Another measure requires the state to make same-day, "rapid" HIV testing technology more readily available. In order to address the disproportionate impact of AIDS in communities of color, the state earmarked \$3 million for HIV prevention programs serving African Americans and Latinos.

In 2004, AFC will work diligently to monitor implementation of the gains made last year, and will pursue a comprehensive strategy to expand HIV-related programs and services. Everyone in Illinois has a stake in this fight. By working in coalition—and with our elected and appointed officials—we can and must make further progress against the epidemic.

For the Record

CARE Act Faces Funding Crisis

Despite the well-established need for funding increases, Congress and President Bush severely under-funded Ryan White CARE Act programs this year, limiting access to AIDS medications, medical monitoring, and other essential services for tens of thousands of HIV-positive individuals.

ADAP at the Brink

Some 3,700 Illinoisans received AIDS medications through the Illinois AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) last year. The number of clients using ADAP was 11% higher in FY03 than in FY02, while the cost of medications rose 12%. With enrollment rising, the program will need increased funding to sustain services and meet new needs.

State HIV/AIDS Funding Is Critical

States must fill the gap created by inadequate federal funding. Not only is the federal government under-funding AIDS prevention and care services, including ADAP, but a new focus on HIV testing (at the expense of HIV prevention funding) puts new pressure on states to sustain HIV prevention education and meet the needs of people newly identified as HIV-positive.

Fighting AIDS Must Be a National Priority

Slowing the spread of HIV and meeting the needs of people affected by the disease at home and abroad must become a national priority. The growing AIDS epidemic in America is outpacing the programs and services available to address it, threatening the health and welfare of millions of people. The AIDS epidemic in the developing world continues unabated, and our nation's economy, security, and stability will depend in part on our response to this global crisis.

The federal government should combat AIDS by doing the following:

- **Adequately fund AIDS prevention, care, housing, research, and substance-use programs in FY05:**

- HIV prevention programs lack sufficient funds to fight an expanding and increasingly complex epidemic. Without new funding, new CDC mandates will not be effective.
- Funding for Ryan White CARE Act programs, including the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), medical and social services, and physician training, must increase in order to meet current needs. Across the country, state ADAPs increasingly turn people away due to a lack of funds.
- Housing, research, and substance abuse services—also essential to people with AIDS—require fair funding to help America's poorest, sickest, and most vulnerable residents.

AFC supports the following funding levels for FY 2005 (in millions):	
Domestic HIV prevention:	\$ 1,062
Ryan White CARE Act: ADAP	\$ 2,567 \$ 1,067.9
Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS:	\$ 350
NIH Office of AIDS Research	\$ 3,190
Minority AIDS Initiative	\$ 610
Global AIDS Initiative	\$ 3,500
Global Fund	\$ 1,200

- **Pass the Early Treatment for HIV Act** so that states can provide low-income, HIV-positive residents healthcare coverage through Medicaid. Early access to Medicaid will prevent HIV-positive people from becoming disabled, saving money in the long run for state and federal governments.
- **Pass the Microbicide Development Act** to promote and support research toward the development of anti-HIV topical products to provide individuals, and women especially, new HIV prevention tools they can control.
- **Address the flaws in the recently passed Medicare bill** that could negatively impact 50,000 people with HIV/AIDS.
- **Fully fund the President's Global HIV/AIDS Initiative** at \$3.5 billion in keeping with the U.S. government's five-year, \$15 billion pledge.

Fighting AIDS Must Be a Statewide Priority

The number of new infections in Illinois remains unacceptably high, and complacency about HIV/AIDS and risk-reduction remains a formidable challenge. Many Illinoisans do not know their HIV status, and others at-risk lack adequate education and support to prevent new infections. Without additional resources, HIV infections will increase and people living with HIV will be denied services.

The state government should aggressively combat AIDS in Illinois by doing the following:

- **Appropriate no less than \$3 million for HIV prevention services in communities of color** to respond to the AIDS crisis among African Americans and Latinos.
- **Increase funding by \$6 million for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program** in order to provide uninsured and low-income Illinoisans with uninterrupted access to lifesaving HIV medications that prevent disability and help individuals remain independent and productive.
- **Pass legislation to:**
 - Increase HIV prevention and care services in diverse settings, including **correctional facilities**.
 - **Prevent housing discrimination** based on a person's source of income.
 - Improve the state's **stand-by guardianship** program, which helps terminally ill parents plan for the future care of their children.

ADAP Needs \$6M Increase

Enrollment is growing—Illinois ADAP helped 11% more people last year than the year before.

Drug costs are skyrocketing—The cost of medications to ADAP increased 12% last year alone.

The need for ADAP is rising—New federal testing initiatives will result in more people knowing their HIV-positive status and needing medication assistance.

Regulatory Advocacy

AFC and its statewide allies will work closely with the Blagojevich administration to advance several regulatory issues:

- Create new regulations to make new, same-day “rapid” testing technology available statewide
- Develop a federal waiver application to extend Medicaid to HIV-positive, non-disabled people
- Strengthen the capacity of local health departments to conduct HIV testing, disease surveillance, and public education

ACTION = LIFE

Fighting AIDS Must Be a Community Priority

From Rockford to Cairo, Chicago to East St. Louis, and everywhere in between, Illinois AIDS advocates are making a difference. Only by educating our elected and appointed officials can we garner the support we need for a vigorous, statewide response to HIV/AIDS. People affected by the epidemic must continue to raise their voices, share their experiences and concerns, and demand action. You can help!

Take Action:

- **Know your elected officials:** Download AFC's easy-to-follow guide to knowing your elected officials, complete the form, and keep it as a reference for future AIDS advocacy. Go to: www.aidschicago.org/advocacy/know_your_officials.php.
- **Register to vote:** If you are eligible, make sure you are registered to vote, and help us register thousands more. Learn about AFC's voter registration campaign at: www.aidschicago.org/advocacy/vote.php.
- **Endorse AIDSVote.org:** Join a national effort to educate presidential candidates, voters, and the media about important domestic and international AIDS initiatives. See: www.aidsvote.org.

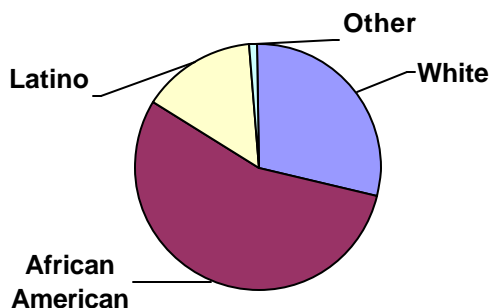
Join Us:

- **Action Alerts:** Sign up to receive free Action Alerts about pressing local, state, and federal AIDS policy developments. See: www.aidschicago.org/advocacy/join_network.php.
- **HIV/AIDS Advocacy Forum:** Advocacy Forum participants meet monthly in Chicago to learn about current AIDS advocacy issues and help get others involved. The Advocacy Forum is a joint project between AFC and EASE (Empower, Advocate, Support & Mentor, Educate), Chicago's HIV-positive coalition.
- **Regional AIDS Advocacy Training Sessions:** Participate in one of AFC's advocacy training sessions held quarterly in a different region of the state.
- **HIV/AIDS Advocacy Training & Springfield Lobby Days, March 30-31:** Meet with and educate state lawmakers about local HIV/AIDS policy issues.
- **AIDSWatch, May 17-19, Washington DC:** Be a part of the largest federal HIV/AIDS lobbying and education event in the nation run by, for, and with people living with HIV/AIDS.

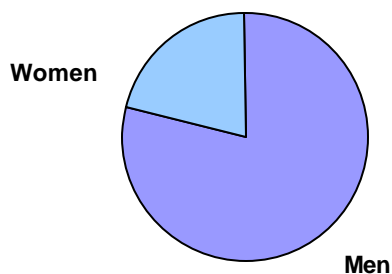
For more information, go to www.aidschicago.org/events/advocacy_events.php, or contact Amy LaMantia at (312) 922-2322 for faxed or mailed materials.

HIV/AIDS in Illinois

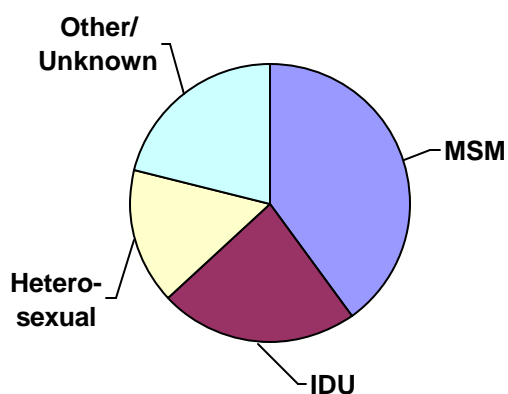
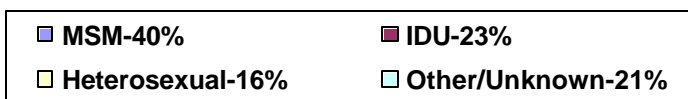
Reported AIDS cases by race – 2002:



Reported adult AIDS cases by gender – 2002:



Reported adult AIDS cases by transmission – 2002:



For the Record

- More than 30,000 AIDS cases and more than 16,400 AIDS deaths have been reported in Illinois since 1981.
- 70% of AIDS cases reported in 2002 are among people of color.
- African-American women account for 64% of all reported female AIDS cases in Illinois.
- Men who have sex with men (MSM) account for the majority of AIDS cases since 1981, and the majority of cases among men in 2002.
- Injection drug use (IDU) is the mode of transmission for more than a third of all AIDS cases since 1981.
- Epidemiologists estimate that at least half of all female heterosexual AIDS cases resulted from sexual contact with a male injection drug user.

Source: Illinois Department of Public Health. For more information about HIV/AIDS in Illinois, go to:
www.idph.state.il.us/aids/stats.htm.