



September 21, 2006

Dear Colleague:

Today's release of the "Revised Recommendations for HIV Testing of Adults, Adolescents, and Pregnant Women in Health-Care Settings" (*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Recommendations and Reports*) signals an important step in addressing the ongoing HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States. The new recommendations, which replace the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 1993 "Recommendations for HIV Testing Services for Inpatients and Outpatients in Acute-Care Hospital Settings," advise HIV screening for adult, adolescent, and pregnant patients in the United States. Voluntary HIV screening will allow more people to know whether they are HIV infected—an important consideration for maintaining health and reducing the spread of the virus to others.

These recommendations come 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.

The recommendations are intended for all healthcare providers in the public and private sectors working in settings where other diagnostic and screening tests are performed routinely. These settings include hospital emergency departments, inpatient services (e.g., labor and delivery), correctional healthcare facilities, clinics (e.g., substance abuse treatment, public health, community, pediatric and adolescent care, prenatal care), and other primary care settings. These recommendations do not apply to non-medical settings, such as community outreach programs.

Many of CDC's professional partners, including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of HIV Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Medical Association, and the National Association of Community Health Centers, support these recommendations and will encourage their members to implement them as well as provide related training and information. Similarly, CDC will release implementation guidance for these recommendations in 2007 in addition to providing ongoing technical assistance to our partners.

You may visit our website (<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/testing/healthcare/>) for the following information: the published recommendations, frequently asked questions for professionals and the general public, and links to pertinent articles.

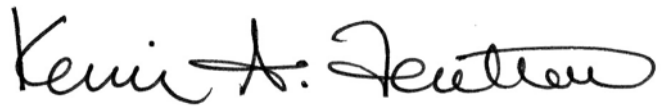
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We encourage you to support these recommendations in whatever capacity you serve. CDC considers these recommendations a milestone in public health relating to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, one that will enable us to better fulfill our mission of protecting and promoting the health of all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Louise Gerberding". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "G".

Julie Louise Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin A. Fenton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and "F".

Kevin A. Fenton, M.D., Ph.D.
Director
National Center for HIV, STD, and
TB Prevention