

AIDS Foundation OF CHICAGO

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Expand Voluntary HIV Testing in Healthcare Settings; \$2 Million State Appropriation Needed *10,000 Illinoisans do not know they are HIV-positive*

An estimated 40,000-42,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS in Illinois. About 10,000 of them (one in four) do not know they are infected with HIV, and are without specialized medical care for HIV disease that would help many to live longer, healthier lives. Many undiagnosed individuals with HIV are people of color.

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) therefore urges Illinois lawmakers to appropriate \$2 million in new FY09 funding for the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to implement a coordinated campaign to Expand Voluntary HIV Testing in Healthcare Settings.

Key components of this funding request:

1. Create a grants program to identify people with HIV in medical settings. IDPH could award targeted grants to increase the offer of voluntary HIV testing in healthcare settings where doctors are most likely to identify individuals with undiagnosed HIV infection. Supported activities could include:

- Purchasing rapid HIV test kits and supporting staff to expand testing.
- Training healthcare providers to develop systems for expanded HIV screening programs.
- Providing technical assistance to health facilities to develop protocols to expand the offer of voluntary HIV testing.
- Conducting research to evaluate the effectiveness of these grants and expanded testing.

2. Streamline the HIV testing process.

- IDPH could develop patient education tools to help doctors provide pre-test HIV information. Materials should help doctors provide information in writing, verbally, by video, or electronically so that clinicians have multiple options to meet the many needs of diverse patient populations in Illinois.
- IDPH could disseminate examples of streamlined consent procedures to help medical facilities obtain greater acceptance for HIV testing.
- Assistance should also be provided to clinicians new to HIV screening on best-practice methods in delivering HIV-negative and HIV-positive test results.

3. Connect HIV-positive individuals with needed medical care and counseling.

- Ensuring that individuals newly diagnosed with HIV are linked to appropriate healthcare and support services will be essential to the state's testing-expansion plans.
- The new appropriation would allow IDPH to develop new linkage and referral tools and train clinicians on ways to meet the needs of people with newly diagnosed HIV infection.

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