

# **AIDS Foundation OF CHICAGO**

## **PERINATAL INITIATIVE FACTSHEET**

### **About the program**

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), in collaboration with the Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative (PACPI), provides financial and administrative support to a system of intensive case management services for HIV-positive, pregnant women. These services are aimed at improving the health of pregnant HIV-positive women and reducing the possibility that an infected mother will transmit the virus to her baby during pregnancy, labor, or delivery.

Clients are identified and referred to an intensive case manager, known as a maternal child health specialist, by obstetricians and other health care and social service providers, as well as by AFC-funded case managers. The specialist provides clients with intensive case management services throughout the term of their pregnancies and six-months after delivery. These services consist of linkages to primary, prenatal, and well-child care, as well as substance abuse treatment and other psychosocial services as needed. At the end of the six-month, post-partum period, clients are transferred from intensive to non-intensive HIV case management, for further health services needs.

### **Statistics on perinatal HIV transmission**

- Perinatal transmission of HIV from mother to child accounts for the vast majority of pediatric AIDS cases in Chicago.
- Every year, approximately 125 newborns in Chicago are born to HIV-positive mothers.
- With early prenatal medical interventions, a pregnant woman with HIV has a less than 2% chance of delivering a child with HIV.
- More than one-third of newborns who test positive for the presence of HIV antibodies can still be prevented from becoming HIV-infected if drug intervention is begun within 48 hours.

### **Illinois Legislation on Perinatal HIV Transmission**

This year, the Illinois legislature unanimously passed a bill requiring every prenatal healthcare provider to ensure that pregnant women under their care are provided with HIV counseling and offered HIV testing, and requiring routine HIV testing of newborns with the right of written refusal by mothers for newborns whose mothers' HIV status is unknown at the time of delivery. The bill is awaiting signature by the governor.

- Research shows that, when appropriately counseled, up to 95% of pregnant women will consent to HIV testing during prenatal care.
- A survey conducted of women who delivered their babies in 64 hospitals in the Chicago area found that only 61.5% of women recalled receiving HIV counseling.

- At least \$200,000 in lifetime healthcare costs will be saved for *each* perinatal HIV infection prevented.

### **History of the program**

The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) and PACPI introduced the perinatal initiative in 2002, with the University of Chicago's Children's Hospital and Mount Sinai Hospital as partners. The project originally began as a yearlong initiative, but received additional funding from AFC, PACPI, and other sources to continue providing intensive case management services to HIV-positive pregnant women in 2003.