

# AIDS Foundation OF CHICAGO

411 South Wells Street      Tel      (312) 922-2322  
Suite 300                      Fax      (312) 922-2916  
Chicago, IL 60607            TDD      (312) 922-2917

## **Support Senate Bill 263**

**SB 263** (McKeon), the Perinatal HIV Prevention Act, aims to prevent mother-to-newborn transmission of HIV by (1) requiring every prenatal healthcare provider to ensure that pregnant women under their care are provided with HIV counseling and offered HIV testing; (2) requiring every healthcare provider who provides labor and delivery services to ensure that pregnant women under their care are provided with HIV counseling and offered HIV testing; and (3) 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.

### **HIV counseling and voluntary HIV testing give pregnant women the opportunity to receive treatments that are extremely effective in preventing perinatal transmission of HIV:**

- With early prenatal medical interventions, a pregnant woman with HIV has a less than 2% chance of delivering a child with HIV (CDC, 2002).
- Research shows that, when appropriately counseled, up to 95% of pregnant women will consent to HIV testing during prenatal care (CDC, 2001).
- 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 (IDPH/PACPI).
- HIV counseling of pregnant women may reduce the likelihood that a woman and any of her future children are infected with HIV.

### **Identifying newborns who test positive for the presence of HIV antibodies will permit doctors to administer drugs that may prevent the newborn from becoming HIV-infected:**

- Perinatal transmission of HIV from mother to child accounts for more than 90% of pediatric AIDS cases in Illinois.
- Every year, approximately 50,000 newborns in Illinois are born to mothers whose HIV status is unknown. 150 to 200 of these newborns will test positive for the presence of HIV antibodies.
- 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.
- Each year more than 10 newborns born in Illinois can be saved from HIV infection by this early drug intervention.
- At least \$200,000 in lifetime healthcare costs will be saved for *each* perinatal HIV infection prevented. In other words, at least \$2 million in healthcare costs will be saved *each year* that the act is in effect.

For more information, contact Karen Reitan at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago: 312-922-2322 ext. 330 or [kreitan@aidschicago.org](mailto:kreitan@aidschicago.org) or Susan Hayes Gordon at Children's Memorial Hospital: 773-880-6854 (office phone) or 847-320-8073 (cell phone) or [sgordon@childrensmemorial.org](mailto:sgordon@childrensmemorial.org).

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