

Support HB 1748 (Lilly)
Improve Prison HIV Education and Testing
Reduce Post-Release HIV Transmission

IDOC has made great strides in increasing HIV testing rates in prison. A 2005 law increased HIV testing by 450% in Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) prisons. However, testing rates have flattened, and over half of inmates decline HIV testing.

HIV rates are high among inmates. Many may be infected but not know it. HIV rates among inmates are 2-3 times higher than among community members. As many as 250 inmates may have HIV but not know it, leading to poor health outcomes and HIV transmission when they are released in the community.

HB 1748 will increase HIV testing rates. The bill will give IDOC and Cook County Jail the option of implementing opt-out HIV testing. Opt-out HIV testing increased HIV testing rates from 57% to 91% in a North Carolina prison.

HB 1748 will reduce HIV in the community. Identifying inmates with HIV will allow linkage to community-based services that will stabilize their lives when they are released, reducing the likelihood of transmitting HIV in their neighborhoods.

What's opt-out HIV testing?

Under opt-out HIV testing, individuals are informed that they will be tested for HIV unless they refuse. They must be told that they have the right to refuse testing and told how to refuse. Opt-out testing is recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It's allowed everywhere in Illinois except prisons.

Expanded HIV testing will promote early intervention and reduce IDOC acute care costs by reducing the number of inmates who develop a costly AIDS diagnosis.

HB 1748 will provide inmates with full HIV information: HB 1748 will ensure that inmates receive full HIV pre-test information as required by the AIDS Confidentiality Act, just like any person in the community. Testing must be conducted by medical staff, not correctional officers, to ensure testing is not coercive.

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