



AKOMA FACT SHEET

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**CDC's New HIV Initiative Advancing HIV Prevention:
New Strategies for a Changing Epidemic United States
Questions & Answers**

- **The *Advancing HIV Prevention Initiative* seems to focus on increased testing in medical settings. How is CDC going to reach those populations that do not access services in traditional medical settings?**

The new initiative focuses on making HIV testing a routine part of medical care. CDC will strongly encourage all healthcare providers to include HIV testing, when indicated, as part of routine medical care and on the same voluntary basis as other diagnostic and screening tests. In addition, to reach persons infected with HIV who do not have access to traditional medical settings, CDC will implement new models for diagnosing HIV infections outside medical settings. CDC will create new program models to increase HIV testing in high-prevalence, non-medical settings by encouraging the use of HIV rapid tests. The agency will fund pilot projects aimed at identifying the most effective models for HIV diagnosis and referral for medical and preventive care that CDC grantees can employ outside traditional medical settings. CDC will also continue to fund community-based organization outreach activities that target persons who do not access services in traditional medical settings (e.g., homeless youth).

- **It appears that CDC is moving away from a focus on prevention for HIV-negative persons and focusing only on HIV-positive persons. Is that true?**

No. CDC will continue to support activities -- primarily health education/risk reduction activities -- that focus on high-risk HIV-negative persons, especially with indirect funding provided to community-based organizations (CBOs) through state and local health departments. In the directly-funded CBO program announcement, primary emphasis will be placed on reaching HIV-infected persons and their partners, as well as other persons at very high risk of infection. CBOs will need to conduct outreach and testing with high-risk populations to identify HIV-positive persons. CDC will work with those identified as positive to help prevent the spread of HIV to others and will work with their HIV-negative partners to help keep them from acquiring HIV infection.

Compared with persons who know that they are HIV-positive, persons who are unaware of their infection are 2-3 times more likely to engage in risky behaviors, resulting in increased exposure of others to the virus. Many studies have shown that receiving a positive HIV test result reduces risk behavior by 60-80 percent. In a 2002 study published in the journal *AIDS*, men recently infected with HIV showed a 70 percent reduction of risk behavior after one year of follow-up. In 2001, a study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* showed that, compared with an HIV-positive control group, persons with HIV undergoing a behavioral science-based risk-reduction intervention reported 82 percent fewer HIV risk behaviors at six-month follow-up than the control group.



In 1998, a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed that, among uninfected persons, enhanced risk-reduction counseling resulted in 18 percent fewer sexually transmitted infections at one year compared with persons receiving standard counseling. (Sexually transmitted infections are transmitted through the same risk behaviors as HIV.)

These studies suggest that by working with HIV-infected persons, we can achieve greater reductions in risk behaviors and HIV transmission than by working with uninfected persons. For example, one study showed that among persons testing positive for HIV, there was a 70 percent reduction in reported risk behavior at one year. However, CDC believes it is important to continue to work with both HIV-infected and uninfected persons, especially the partners of those already infected with HIV.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (2003). *CDC's New HIV Initiative Advancing HIV Prevention: New Strategies for a Changing Epidemic United States* <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/partners/question.htm>