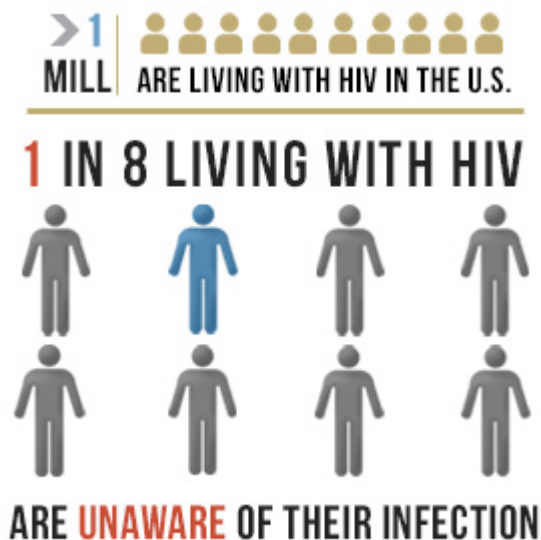


Dispelling Myths About HIV/AIDS



Myth # 2 – HIV/AIDS is Not an Issue in the United States

In the course of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, we in the United States have been very fortunate to have a government that made HIV/AIDS a primary focus in the epidemic's early days; relatively easy access to great health care; and widespread availability of each new generation of HIV treatment. Unlike many nations where HIV transmission went virtually unchecked for the pandemic's first decade or more, the US has been spared the high rates of infection, staggering numbers of deaths, and exploding number of children orphaned by HIV that have been recorded around the globe.

Unfortunately this has led many Americans to believe that HIV/AIDS is not an issue in the US. That is not the case. Consider the following:

- More than 1.2 million people in the US are living with HIV infection.
- Nearly 1 in 8 (12.8%) of HIV infected Americans are unaware

of their infection.

- Over the past decade, the number of people living with HIV has increased.
- The estimated number of new HIV infections has remained stable in recent years at about 50,000 new infections annually.
- Although men who have sex with men represent about 4% of the US male population, they accounted for 78% of new HIV infections among men and 63% of all new infections.
- New HIV infections among women are primarily attributed to heterosexual contact (84% in 2010) or injection drug use (16% in 2010).
- African Americans represent approximately 12% of the US population, but accounted for 44% of new HIV infections in 2010.
- Hispanic/Latinos represented 16% of the US population but accounted for 21% of new HIV infections i
- About 1 in 4 new infections in the US is among youth ages 13-24. Most do not know they are infected, are not getting treated, and can unknowingly pass the virus on to others.

Lest we Americans become too complacent about this very real HIV issue within our borders, consider that some of our urban areas have HIV rates that exceed some African nations.

It is long past time for Americans to acknowledge that we have not done as well at ending our own HIV/AIDS epidemic as many other nations around the globe. Next time your hear someone repeat the myth that there is not HIV/AIDS issue in the US, please explain the real facts.

Source: CDC: US Statistics: HIV in the United States