

HIV/AIDS IN THE NATION

From the National Minority AIDS Council

African Americans are infected with, and die from, HIV/AIDS more than any other racial or ethnic group.

African Americans represent only 13% of the U.S. population. In 2004, the CDC reported that blacks accounted for half of all new HIV/AIDS diagnoses, with an AIDS case rate among adults and adolescents more than 10 times higher than that of whites.

Over 200,000 African Americans have died of AIDS in the past twenty five years.

HIV/AIDS IN THE FINGER LAKES REGION

From Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS National Black HIV AIDS Testing Day Bulletin dated 020707

In this region, Black people comprise 8.9% of the non-incarcerated population age 13-74. Yet by six different measures Blacks represent 43%-52% of the cases of HIV/AIDS in this region.

The table below compares the rates of HIV/AIDS in the Black community to the overall rates, as well as the rates in other racial/ethnic groups. By all measures the impact that HIV/AIDS is having on the Black community surpasses all other groups. **Now is the time we must all stand and deliver to prevent further devastation.**

RATES OF HIV/AIDS PER 100,000 13-74 YEAR OLD PERSONS IN FINGER LAKES REGION (EXCLUDING PRISONERS)

	TOTAL	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE	OTHER
Rate Newly Diagnosed with HIV 2001-2004	31.9	187.1	112.9	11.2	61.0
Rate Living with HIV	83.8	411.7	305.7	39.7	78.5
Rate Living with AIDS	127.1	615.3	462.7	62.8	65.4
Death Rate	16.9	93.6	41.3	8.2	0.0

Source: Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency; Feb. 2007.

The data indicate that Blacks have been newly diagnosed with HIV at a rate 16.7 times greater than Whites over the period 2001-2004. The data also show that the rate of Blacks living with HIV is more than 10 times greater than Whites in this region. The rate of Blacks living with AIDS is 9.8 times greater than Whites in this region. Hospitalization rates for those living with HIV/AIDS are reasonably comparable. The rate of deaths, however, among Blacks with HIV/AIDS is 11.4 times greater than Whites.

The Finger Lakes Ryan White Care Network AIDS Mortality Work Group is studying deaths of people with AIDS in this region and is expected to release its initial report this spring. The literature review that has been done for that group strongly suggests that there are actions that people living with HIV/AIDS can take to prolong their lives. These include: knowing one's status, accessing care as soon as one is diagnosed, working with one's health care provider to develop a treatment plan you can live with, taking care of your general health so that you don't die of other causes such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, complications from diabetes, kidney disease etc. There are many people in this community across all races who have been living with this virus for 15 years and in some cases more than 20 years. We know that some of the difference in the death rates across

racial groups is attributable to people with AIDS dying from other causes. AIDS is a tracer disease that shows us that there are miles to go to improve the overall health status of Black people in this community.

High rates of STDs particularly in the urban Black community are a major driver of the HIV epidemic in this region. To prevent HIV, we must encourage people to be tested and treated for STDs because STDs make people more vulnerable to becoming infected with HIV if they are exposed.

Knowing one's partners' status, reducing the number of partners one has, and using safer sex are key strategies in reducing transmission of the virus.

Addressing substance abuse of all types is another way to reduce infections. When people are high, whether it's from alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, crystal meth, or other substances, they are more likely to engage in risky behaviors that can result in infection. Substance abuse and HIV thrive in communities affected by poverty, violence, oppression, and inequality of all types.