



# HIV/AIDS

# AND

# THE CARIBBEAN

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands



Today there are an estimated **850,000–950,000** HIV-positive individuals living in the United States—the largest number ever—according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Of these, **180,000–280,000** people do not know they are infected, and thus are suffering from a lack of treatment, while at the same time may be unknowingly spreading the virus. About **225,000** more who do know their status aren't getting the care they need. These numbers will continue to grow unless everyone takes decisive action against the disease.<sup>1</sup>

**HIV/AIDS infection rates in the Caribbean are among the highest in the world, second only to that of sub-Saharan Africa. Know the facts, and join us in the fight against HIV/AIDS!**

## TLCA: Fighting HIV/AIDS in Communities of Color!

Within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of HIV/AIDS Policy's The Leadership Campaign on AIDS (TLCA) is working externally and internally to support the fight against HIV/AIDS in communities of color. TLCA reaches out to community leaders and local and national organizations to improve education, awareness, and action against the disease. TLCA wants to help minority leaders fight the stigma, fear, and denial that exacerbate the problem, and to help build partnerships that will promote education, prevention, testing, vaccine awareness, and treatment. TLCA also reaches inwardly to help improve the coordination, information-sharing, communication efforts, and effectiveness of the Department's HIV/AIDS initiatives and programs.

Know the facts and Educate, Motivate, and Mobilize against HIV/AIDS!

## Caribbean<sup>†</sup>

- An estimated **350,000–590,000** adults and children were living with HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean as of December 2003. An estimated **45,000–80,000** adults and children were newly infected with HIV in 2003, and an estimated **30,000–50,000** people died of AIDS that year.<sup>2</sup>
- The national prevalence of HIV in 12 countries in the Caribbean Basin is estimated at a rate of more than **1 in 100** people.<sup>2</sup>
- HIV/AIDS is the **leading** cause of death among men **under the age of 45**.<sup>3</sup>

## U.S. Virgin Islands

- In the U.S. Virgin Islands, approximately **1 out of every 300** persons was estimated to be living with HIV in June 2000. This is a minimum estimate because there may be persons with HIV who are not aware of their HIV infection status.<sup>4</sup>
- From the beginning of the epidemic through June 2000, the primary mode of HIV transmission in the U.S. Virgin Islands was through heterosexual contact.<sup>4</sup>

## Puerto Rico

- Puerto Rico ranked among the top 10 U.S. states or territories with the highest number of total AIDS cases among residents at the end of 2002.<sup>5</sup>
- Injection drug use was reported as the leading mode of transmission through June 2000. The number of persons who reported HIV infection through injection drug use was more than twice that of the second leading mode of HIV transmission heterosexual contact.<sup>4</sup>

## Major Initiatives

The Administration is supporting HIV/AIDS relief in the Caribbean through three major initiatives:

- The \$15 billion, 5-year President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which aims to prevent 7 million new infections, treat 2 million HIV-infected people, and care for 10 million HIV-infected individuals and AIDS orphans in the Caribbean and Africa.<sup>6</sup>
- The \$500 million International Mother and Child Prevention Initiative, which plans to reach 1 million people annually and reduce mother-to-child transmission by 40 percent in 5 years in the Caribbean and Africa.<sup>7</sup>
- A pledge of close to \$3 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in 2005.<sup>6</sup>

# Did you know?

- An estimated **886,575** Americans have been diagnosed with AIDS from the beginning of the epidemic through 2002. Of the **42,136** estimated new diagnoses in 2002, **74 percent** were male and **26 percent** were female. Less than **1 percent** were children under 13.<sup>5</sup>
- **African Americans** account for **39 percent** of total estimated AIDS diagnoses through 2002,<sup>5</sup> though they make up only **12.7 percent** of the population.<sup>8</sup> They also represent an estimated **54 percent** of persons newly diagnosed with HIV in 2002.<sup>5\*</sup>
- **Hispanics** account for **18 percent** of total estimated AIDS diagnoses through 2002,<sup>5</sup> though they make up only **13.4 percent** of the population.<sup>8</sup>
- The number of **Asian/Pacific Islanders** and **American Indian/Alaska Natives** living with AIDS continues to rise, with an approximately **10 percent** increase each year over the past 5 years.<sup>5</sup>
- **Women of color** account for **80 percent** of all women estimated to be living with AIDS. Women across racial/ethnic groups most commonly report heterosexual contact or injection drug use as their primary modes of exposure to HIV, while males most commonly report homosexual contact and injection drug use.<sup>5</sup>

\* In the 30 areas with longstanding HIV reporting

† The Caribbean includes islands in the Caribbean Sea and the mainland countries of Belize, Guyana, and Suriname.

<sup>1</sup> Fleming, PL., et al., "HIV Prevalence in the United States, 2000," 9th Annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, Feb. 24-28, 2002, Seattle, WA, Abstract 11.

<sup>2</sup> UNAIDS, *AIDS Epidemic Update* (Dec. 2003).

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank, *AIDS Regional Update: Latin America and the Caribbean* (Nov. 2003). Web site: [www1.worldbank.org/hiv\\_aids/regional.asp](http://www1.worldbank.org/hiv_aids/regional.asp).

<sup>4</sup> Based upon TLCA consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mar. 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2002*, Vol. 14.

<sup>6</sup> White House press release, *Fact Sheet: Extending and Improving the Lives of Those Living With HIV/AIDS*, June 23, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> White House press release, *President Promotes New Mother and Child HIV Prevention Initiative*, June 19, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Table NA-EST2002-ASRO-04, National Population Estimates, Characteristics (June 2003).

The Leadership Campaign on AIDS is a program of the Office of HIV/AIDS Policy—202-690-5560—[www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)

Note: The models shown are for illustrative purposes only.



# What Can You Do?

- Learn more about HIV/AIDS and its impact on your community.
- Protect yourself against HIV infection. Know the risks associated with sex and drug use.
- Get tested. It's important to know your HIV status to protect yourself and others.
- Get medical care and support if you're living with HIV. Effective treatments exist.
- Educate others about HIV/AIDS. Talk openly and honestly about prevention and treatment.
- Volunteer at a local HIV/AIDS organization.
- Post fact sheets about HIV/AIDS on bulletin boards and in local newsletters.
- Organize a community meeting. Invite educators, faith and business leaders, health care professionals, neighbors, and friends to talk about HIV/AIDS and its impact locally. Even if three people show up, change can happen!
- Help someone living with HIV/AIDS by being a friend.
- Help end the stigma associated with AIDS.
- Implement an activity to support HIV/AIDS observances such as World AIDS Day on December 1 or National HIV Testing Day on June 27. Visit [www.omhrc.gov/hiv/aidsobservances](http://www.omhrc.gov/hiv/aidsobservances) for more ideas.

## To Learn More

- Visit the CDC National Prevention Information Network at [www.cdcnpin.org](http://www.cdcnpin.org) or call 1-800-458-5231.
- Visit the HIV/AIDS Observance Days Web site at [www.omhrc.gov/hivaidsobservances](http://www.omhrc.gov/hivaidsobservances).
- Call the National AIDS Hotline at 800-342-AIDS (Spanish 800-344-SIDA, TTY 800-243-7889).
  - Call your doctor or other health care provider.
  - Contact your local or state public health department.