

HIV/AIDS

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is the final stage of infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which destroys or disables the cells that are responsible for fighting infection. AIDS is diagnosed when HIV has weakened the immune system enough that the body has difficulty fighting infections.³⁷ HIV is predominantly transmitted through sexual contact and injection drug use. While HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect men who have sex with men, an increasing proportion of HIV/AIDS diagnoses occur among women and particularly minority women. In 2009, adolescent and adult females accounted for about one-fourth of new HIV and AIDS diagnoses, up from 7 percent in 1985.³⁸ The rate of new HIV

diagnoses was 32.7 per 100,000 males (data not shown) and 9.8 cases per 100,000 females aged 13 and older in 2009.

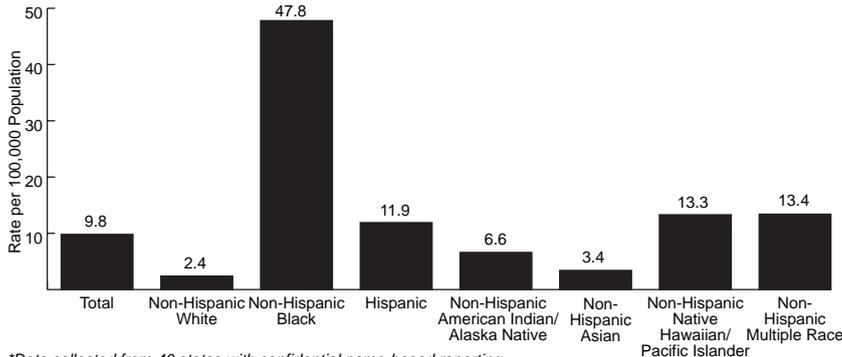
Rates of new cases among adolescent and adult females vary dramatically by race and ethnicity. HIV disproportionately affects non-Hispanic Black females at a rate that was nearly twenty times higher than among non-Hispanic White females (47.8 versus 2.4 cases per 100,000 females). In 2009, new HIV diagnoses were also elevated among females of every minority group, but especially Hispanic, non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and non-Hispanic females of multiple races (11.9, 13.3, and 13.4 cases per 100,000 females, respectively).

Early detection of HIV infection is critical in preventing transmission of the virus to oth-

ers, and persons aware of their HIV infection can benefit from advances in medicine that may significantly prolong their lives. Early entry to care can also produce significant cost savings for medical treatment.³⁹ Despite these individual and societal benefits, a large proportion of people identified as HIV-positive receive an AIDS diagnosis simultaneously or within a year of HIV diagnosis. In 2008, 31 percent of HIV-positive females of all ages received an AIDS diagnosis within 12 months of their HIV diagnosis, which was slightly less than among males (34 percent). Women and younger persons tend to receive earlier diagnoses perhaps due, in part, to more frequent testing opportunities (e.g. routine reproductive health visits) and greater risk awareness.⁴⁰

Estimated Rates of New HIV Cases Reported Among Females Aged 13 and Older,* by Race/Ethnicity, 2009

Source II.14: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HIV Surveillance Report



*Data collected from 40 states with confidential name-based reporting.

Time to an AIDS Diagnosis After a Diagnosis of HIV Infection, by Sex, 2008

Source II.14: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, HIV Surveillance Report

