



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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Keeping The Promise To Face HIV Globally and Locally

World AIDS Day is December 1st

December 1st marks the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day, and state health officials encourage everyone to learn more about the global AIDS/HIV epidemic and personal risk for HIV infection.

“World AIDS Day reminds us that we are all part of a larger, worldwide AIDS/HIV epidemic,” said Secretary Karen Timberlake. “While the face of the epidemic may change across countries and continents, we all share in the global challenge of assisting increasing numbers of persons in need of HIV prevention and treatment services.”

Recent estimates for the U.S. indicate that the HIV epidemic is much larger than previously assumed and that it is growing at alarming rates among certain individuals and communities. More than 33 million persons worldwide are living with HIV and some 7,300 individuals are infected daily. The number of people living with HIV continues to grow as new infections occur, as HIV treatments successfully extend life, and as deaths decrease among persons living with HIV.

Since 1983, more than 10,200 people in Wisconsin have been diagnosed with HIV infection and more than 3,680 have died. Currently, the state has reached an all-time high with more than 6,500 people assumed to be living with HIV/AIDS in Wisconsin.

People who may be at risk for HIV infection and can benefit from HIV testing are those who:

- had unprotected sex with someone with HIV infection
- injected drugs or shared injection equipment (such as needles, syringes, cotton, water) with others
- have been diagnosed with or treated for hepatitis B or C, tuberculosis (TB), or a sexually transmitted disease (STD) like syphilis or gonorrhea
- exchanged sex for drugs or money
- received a blood transfusion or clotting factor between 1978 and 1985
- had unprotected sex, especially with anyone who is part of the risk groups listed above

If you have questions about HIV testing, you are encouraged to talk with your health care provider, local health department, or call 1-800-334-2437 to locate HIV testing resources in Wisconsin.

HIV infection is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which damages the body's immune system. Without the immune system's protection, the body is defenseless against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases which can lead to the development of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), the later stage of HIV infection.

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HIV is transmitted through contact with infected body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk. It is spread by sexual contact with an infected person, and by sharing needles and/or syringes (primarily for drug injection) with someone who is infected. Very rarely, HIV is transmitted through transfusions of infected blood or blood clotting factors. Babies born to HIV-infected women may become infected before or during birth or through breastfeeding after birth.

To learn more about World AIDS Day and HIV infection in Wisconsin, go to <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/aids-hiv>.

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