



IDPH News Release

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New HIV Diagnoses up 27 Percent in Iowa

The Iowa Department of Public Health's (IDPH) annual HIV Surveillance Report for 2015 finds there were 124 new HIV diagnoses last year, an increase of 27 percent from the 98 cases reported in 2014. "This increase marks a return to the levels we saw in 2013, and is a reversal from the drop in cases from 2013 to 2014," said IDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance coordinator Jerry Harms.

The reason for the increase in diagnoses is unclear; however, 2014 was the first year of full implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and it is possible fewer tests were performed that year because providers were dealing with the influx of new patients. In 2015, providers may have been more prepared for the increase in patients, and were more likely to perform testing. More detailed analyses indicate the largest decreases in 2014 and increases in 2015 occurred in private physician offices, hospital-based clinics, and community health centers (compared to public test sites, correctional settings, and blood banks).

Established nationally in 2013, the HIV Care Continuum Initiative focuses on linking newly diagnosed individuals to care, retaining them in care, and increasing the proportion of HIV-diagnosed individuals whose viral load (the amount of virus in their blood) is effectively suppressed. Studies have shown viral suppression improves individual health outcomes and may reduce the likelihood of transmitting HIV by up to 96 percent. Of the 2,367 diagnosed persons (both in and out of care) in Iowa, 76 percent were virally suppressed. Nationally, an estimated 42 percent of persons diagnosed with HIV (both in and out of care) had attained viral suppression, so Iowa does very well by comparison.

The number of deaths among HIV-infected persons diagnosed in Iowa continues to decrease since peaking at 103 deaths in 1995. Since 2000, the number of deaths has fluctuated from a low of 20 to a high of 44. Preliminary data indicate 20 HIV or AIDS-related Iowa deaths in 2015.

IDPH and its community partners are currently creating Iowa's 2017-2021 Comprehensive HIV Plan, which will be released this fall. To see the State of Iowa HIV Disease End-of-Year Surveillance Report for 2015, visit <http://idph.iowa.gov/hivstdhep/hiv/data>.

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