

GRAAHI's Policy Brief on HIV

The HIV Problem in the United States

- The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) attacks the body's immune system, preventing it from protecting the body from disease and infection. HIV is the cause of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), which is a chronic and life-threatening condition.
- More than 1.2 million people are living with HIV in the US today, where 1 out of 8 of them is unaware of their infection.
- Over the last decade, the annual number of new HIV diagnoses declined by 19%.
- In 2014, youth and adults (aged 13 to 24) accounted for more than 20% of new HIV diagnoses.
- HIV can be transmitted via infected blood, bodily fluid and breast milk.
- In 2016, the United States' federal funding for HIV/AIDS research, treatment and prevention totaled over 27 billion dollars.



HIV in Kent County, Michigan

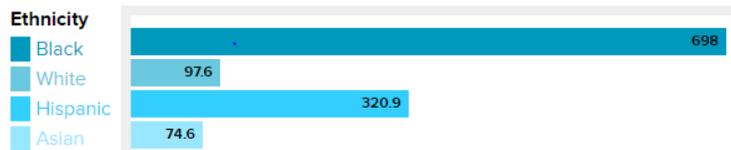
(Rate of people per 100,000 who ever tested positive for HIV)

Kent County, Michigan	The State of Michigan	United States
176.9 (2014)	178.8 (2014)	357.8 (2014)

Even though Kent County's HIV rate is lower than the rates for Michigan and the United States, that does not tell the full story. View the HIV rates below by race for Kent County, MI to capture the real issue. Rates are for 2013 or 2014.

HIV/AIDS

Rate of people per 100,000 who ever tested positive for HIV.



The HIV Problem for Blacks

- Blacks are most affected by HIV/AIDS and are more likely to die from the disease compared to all other racial/ethnic groups.
- As of 2017, over 498,400 Blacks are living with HIV/AIDS in the US. (CDC)
- In 2014, 3,591 Blacks died of HIV or AIDS, accounting for 53% of total deaths attributed to the disease that year in the US. (CDC)
- In 2015, Blacks represented 12% of the US population, but accounted for 45% (17,670) of HIV diagnoses. (CDC)
- Black women account for the largest share of new HIV diagnoses (about 4,500, or 60% in 2015). The rate of new HIV diagnosis among Black women is 16 times higher than the rate for White women and nearly 5 times higher compared to Hispanic women.
- Blacks account for 14% of the Michigan population but represent 58% of all HIV cases in the state.

Hitting Home in Grand Rapids

Jeffrey Cipcic tested positive for HIV 30 years ago. At 20 years old, he was given a two-year prognosis. Jeffrey still remembers the significant shame associated with the virus back then. However, the conversation about HIV/AIDS has evolved through the years, allowing many people to speak openly about it now. Having lived with the virus for the bulk of his life, Jeffrey has survived two AIDS-related cancers and a stroke. Throughout his experiences though, Jeffrey continues to be a vibrant contributor to the Grand Rapids' community, educating others on behalf of the complex illness.

Policy and Fiscal Recommendations for HIV Prevention

- 1) Mandate and promote funding for sexual education in schools regarding the urgency of HIV prevention through long term strategies of public information and education; Including enacting a policy that provides structural-level condom distribution interventions such as: 1) having free condoms available in the nurse's office in public schools; 2) increasing access to condoms in the public sector; and 3) ensuring proper use of condoms through education and counseling to students.
- 2) Recommend that county health departments implement high impact, comprehensive HIV prevention programs to achieve maximum impact on reducing new HIV infections. Encourage pursuance of grants to support implementation.
- 3) Develop effective or evidence-based media campaigns on HIV risks and symptoms.
- 4) Support efforts to increase the number of health care providers who are skilled in HIV medical care through training, telemedicine, expansion of professional authority, and task sharing.
- 5) Maximize the potential of public-private partnerships to ensure continuity of HIV services for HIV patients who change their health care provider, health care insurance, or medical assistance program.
- 6) Establish policies and procedures with correctional facilities (including juvenile detention centers) that enable transitional planning and continued HIV services for HIV patients after release.
- 7) Develop and promote online directories of HIV testing centers and health care providers who provide HIV care in the public and private sectors.
- 8) Support the use of culturally appropriate prevention messages through Act Against AIDS (<http://www.cdc.gov/actagainstaids/index.html>), a national initiative that focuses on raising awareness, fighting stigma, and reducing the risk of HIV infection among at-risk populations, including PWID (people who inject drugs).
- 9) Support the use of intervention programs that deliver services to PWID such as Community PROMISE, a community-level HIV/STD prevention program for populations at high-risk that uses role-model stories and peer advocates to distribute prevention materials within social networks.
(<https://effectiveinterventions.cdc.gov/en/HighImpactPrevention/Interventions/PROMISE.aspx>)

*Visit hei.graahi.org to view more data, resources and recommendations for HIV and other health indicators.

Citations

- hei.graahi.org
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