



TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals, and other Healthcare Facilities

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WV Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health

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LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: Please distribute to community health providers, hospital-based physicians, infection control preventionists, laboratory directors, and other applicable partners.

OTHER RECIPIENTS: Please distribute to association members, staff, etc.

The Bureau for Public Health is investigating an increase in newly diagnosed human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) cases in the State among persons at high risk for infection. In addition to syphilis (reported among several of the cases), this at-risk population remains at high risk for hepatitis B and C infection.

The Bureau for Public Health utilizes skilled professionals called Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) who are trained to identify and locate contacts (e.g. partners) through in-depth case interviews, always maintaining patient confidentiality. To contact the DIS assigned to your area, please call the West Virginia STD/HIV Hotline at 1 (800) 642-8244.

Healthcare providers can assist public health in identifying and preventing new HIV cases by considering the following recommendations:

- Assess patient risk by asking about sexual history and drug use in a sensitive and confidential manner.
- Encourage all adults, age 15 through 65, to be tested for HIV at least once in their lifetime.
- Encourage patients at high risk for HIV to get tested at least annually. High risk populations include injection drug users, men who have sex with men, persons with multiple sex partners, and persons diagnosed with sexually-transmitted diseases.
- Discuss ways to lower HIV risk including condom use, never sharing needles, and taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for patients at very high risk for HIV. Additional information on PrEP is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/prep>.
- Collaborate with the DIS to link HIV patients to care, and ensure that partners/contacts are identified and offered testing.
- Assist public health in re-engaging previously diagnosed HIV cases who are not currently in care.
- Report positive HIV cases to the Bureau for Public Health, Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services within one week. For more information on reporting, visit http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/std-hiv-hep/disease_reporting/Pages/default.aspx.

To report clusters or outbreaks of HIV, contact the Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services, Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology (DIDE) at (304) 558-5358, ext. 1 or the answering service at (304) 925-9946.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance. Warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.