



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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California Surpasses National Goal to Ensure Californians Living with HIV Have Been Diagnosed

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Public (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith announced today that California has surpassed a key goal of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

CDPH [data](#) released today indicate that 91 percent of Californians living with HIV in 2014 had been diagnosed. California reaches this benchmark six years ahead of the timeframe set by the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, which is to ensure that 90 percent of people living with HIV are diagnosed by 2020. The Strategy was developed by the White House to guide a collective national response to the HIV epidemic.

“We’ve come a long way in our ability to prevent and treat HIV in the 35 years since the epidemic began,” said Dr. Smith. “I’m proud of the work we’ve done across the Golden State to meet and surpass this key indicator, which will help us improve viral suppression rates and reduce new HIV infections.”

Although approximately 14 people in California become infected with HIV every day, significant progress has been made in diagnosing people living with HIV. Once diagnosed, people with the disease can receive effective treatment that significantly reduces the virus in their blood to an undetectable level (viral suppression). Viral suppression reduces a person’s likelihood of HIV transmission to partners by 96 percent and also turns HIV from a fatal disease into a chronic, lifelong manageable condition.

Even though the state has successfully diagnosed more than 90 percent of the estimated 140,000 Californians living with HIV, many people do not know they are infected and are not in treatment.

“HIV testing is the first step to helping people know their status so they can obtain medical care and treatment to improve their own health and prevent spread of the disease to their partners,” said Dr. Karen Mark, chief of the CDPH Office of AIDS. “Especially as we mark National HIV Testing Day today, it is vital to acknowledge the importance of HIV testing and knowing your status.”

CDPH recommends that every person between the ages of 13 to 64 get an HIV test at least once as part of routine medical care. Sexually active gay and bisexual men, transgender individuals, and people who inject drugs should be tested at least annually. More information about HIV testing is available at gettested.cdc.gov.

In addition to HIV testing, CDPH supports other methods of HIV prevention, including the use of condoms and HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a highly effective HIV-prevention tool for people at high risk of infection. When taken as prescribed, PrEP can reduce the risk of HIV infection by more than 90 percent. PrEP should be used in combination with other prevention methods, including condoms, for optimal protection against HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases.

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