

Health News You Can Use - Teen Edition

HIV/AIDS

COMPARING OUR CRISIS HERE AND IN THE CARIBBEAN

THE FACTS

- **Young men between the ages of 13-29 account for 38% of HIV/AIDS infections.**
- **Teen girls reportedly represent 40% of AIDS cases reported among 13-19 year olds.**
- **21% of people are living with HIV/AIDS and do not know it.**

-Kaiser Family Foundation

What is HIV/AIDS?

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). AIDS is a disease of the immune system for which there is treatment, but no cure, at the present time. The virus (HIV) and the disease it causes (AIDS) are often linked and referred to as "HIV/AIDS." This can be contracted by having sex with someone who is infected, sharing needles and coming into contact with the infected persons blood or being born to a woman with HIV and/or ingesting her breast milk.

HIV/AIDS in Central Brooklyn

The average annual HIV-related death rate in Central Brooklyn is more than twice the Brooklyn and New York City averages. Currently, the HIV rate within the Central Brooklyn community of 318,000 residents is over 2,285 persons per 100,000. As a result, we can estimate that there are approximately 7,000 individuals within Central Brooklyn living with and confronting HIV on a daily basis.

How to Get Help:

In order to address this epidemic Kingsbrook created a "Designated AIDS Center" located at Pierre Toussaint Family Health Center, 110 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213.

Offering: Medical Care Coordination, Outpatient Case Management, Inpatient Case Management, Case Management Program Operations, Support Groups, Family & Individual Counseling, Substance Abuse Counseling (referral to detox).

If you or someone you know needs help, please call us at 718-221-3507.

An Overview of AIDS in the United States

The first case of AIDS was officially reported in the US in 1981. Since then over 1.7 million people in the US are estimated to have been infected with HIV including more than 580,000 who have died and more than 1.1 million estimated to be living with the disease today.

Regarding transmission trends, gay and bisexual men account for 53% of new infections. However, today women account for a larger share of new HIV infections than ever before. The CDC reports that roughly 280,000 women are living with HIV/AIDS.

While African-Americans represent 12% of the US population, they account for 45% of new infections. Additionally, African-American women represent the largest share of new HIV infections in women overall at 61%. Although African-American teenagers (ages 13-19) represent only 15% of US population, they represent 68% of new AIDS cases.

New York has the highest prevalence (17.6%), California is second at (14.4%) and Florida is third at (10.6%).

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- **Women aged 15 and over account for 53% of those living with HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean.**
- **HIV prevalence rates are often higher for your women ages 15-24 and are usually three times higher than rates among young men in the same region.**
- **11,000 children under the age of 15 are living with HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean.**

-Kaiser Family Foundation



An Overview of AIDS in the Caribbean

The Caribbean's first case of AIDS was officially recorded in Jamaica in 1982. An estimated 240,000 people were living with HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean at the end of 2008. About 20,000 new infections were reported during 2008 as well as 12,000 deaths due to AIDS.

AIDS is now one of the leading causes of death in some of these countries among those aged 25-44, with Haiti being the worst affected. An estimated 7,500 lives are lost each year to AIDS in Haiti, and thousands of children have been orphaned by the epidemic. Higher prevalence rates are found only in the sub-saharan Africa, making the Caribbean the second-most affected region in the world.

Overall, the main route of HIV transmission in the Caribbean is heterosexual sex. It is believed that most transmission is associated with commercial sex. Additionally, sex between men is also a major factor. Early initiation of sexual acts, taboos related to sex and sexuality, gender inequalities, lack of confidentiality, stigmatization and economic need are some of the factors influencing vulnerability to HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean.

At one extreme, the Bahamas has the highest HIV prevalence in the entire western hemisphere (3%); at the other, Cuba has one of the lowest (0.1%). Haiti (2.2%), Trinidad and Tobago (1.5%) and Jamaica (1.6%) are all heavily affected, while Puerto Rico is the only Caribbean country, apart from Cuba, where it is thought that less than 1% of the population is living with HIV. Other factors, such as AIDS mortality rates and transmission patterns, also vary across countries and areas.

There are signs of potential stabilization of HIV prevalence in certain parts of the Caribbean, including the Dominican Republic, Bahamas and Barbados and Haiti.

How to Get Help:

Caribbean Regional Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS..... www.crnplus.org

Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS www.pancap.org

Caribbean AIDS Telecommunications and Information Network www.catin.org

Log on to our website to view our teen round table episode discussion on HIV/AIDS.
Go to our Health News TV link under "Community Programs & Events".



*This piece has been researched by students in the Kingsbrook/BQLI AHEC SHIP Mentorship program.
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