

HEALTH ALERT NETWORK Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

HIV ADVISORY FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) Asks Physicians and Other Healthcare Providers to Perform Routine Screening for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

April 20, 2011

Several HIV cases in Idaho have had missed opportunities for HIV testing. **IDHW and district health departments recommend healthcare providers screen patients for HIV according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations. CDC recommends routine voluntary HIV screening for patients in all health care settings.** Routine HIV screening is considered part of normal medical care and should be presented to the patient in an 'opt-out' format with the healthcare provider informing the patient that they would like to test them for HIV unless the patient states that they do not want the test performed.

Some examples of missed HIV testing opportunities in Idaho include:

- A pregnant woman in her 20s was not tested for HIV when she went into labor. A year later she and her child were tested for HIV. Both were positive.
- A male in his 50s diagnosed with progressive squamous cell skin cancer was not tested for HIV at the time of diagnosis or treatment. A post-mortem diagnosis of HIV occurred when his corneas were donated to an eye bank and HIV antibodies were detected.
- A male in his 30s was diagnosed with HIV after multiple ED visits for candidiasis (thrush) and pneumonia. At his last ED visit, he presented with several weeks of a chronic cough and several months of oral candidiasis and was diagnosed with advanced pneumocystis carinii-pneumonia (PCP).
- A heterosexual woman had numerous healthcare appointments for a chronic cough and/or persistent candidiasis. The patient tested positive for HIV after being placed on a ventilator, and was diagnosed with advanced PCP.

Healthcare providers should be concerned about HIV in **any** patient, **male or female, homosexual or heterosexual, with or without a history of IV drug use**, who presents with chronic symptoms such as:

- Swollen lymph nodes
- Diarrhea
- Weight loss
- Fever
- Persistent cough and/or shortness of breath

- Persistent or chronic infections, such as thrush

Per CDC guidelines for HIV Testing of Adults, Adolescents, and Pregnant Women:

- The general population should be tested *at least once* in their lifetime for HIV, with repeat screenings based on clinical judgment.
- All pregnant women should receive HIV screening as part of their routine panel of prenatal screening tests with each pregnancy.
- Healthcare providers should test all persons likely to be at high risk for HIV at least annually or with any new exposure.
- All patients seeking treatment for STDs should be screened routinely for HIV during each visit for a new complaint, regardless of whether the patient is known or suspected to have specific behavior risks for HIV infection.

HIV affects people living in every health district in Idaho. IDHW encourages all healthcare providers in Idaho to adopt the CDC recommendations of routine HIV screening to prevent missed opportunities.

**For more details on the CDC recommendations for HIV testing see:
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5514a1.htm>**

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