



# HIV/AIDS

# AND

# ASIAN AMERICANS/ PACIFIC ISLANDERS



**HIV/AIDS is devastating communities of color around the globe in ways that we don't fully comprehend. What we DO know about HIV/AIDS is that it is preventable. Know the facts and join us in the fight against HIV/AIDS!**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that today there are 850,000–950,000 HIV-positive people living in the United States, more than at any other time in the epidemic. An estimated 180,000–280,000 HIV-positive individuals do not know they are infected, and therefore are not benefiting from HIV care and treatment, and may also be unknowingly transmitting the virus. An additional 250,000 people living with HIV who are aware of their status may not be getting the care they need or prevention support to help them protect their partners. Altogether, roughly half of all people living with HIV in the United States are untested, untreated, or both.<sup>1</sup>

### What We Know:

- Like other communities of color, the number of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AA/PI) living with AIDS continues to rise.<sup>2</sup>
- Through December 2001, AIDS cases among AA/PI accounted for just under **1 percent** of reported AIDS cases.<sup>2</sup> However, the proportion of AIDS cases in AA/PI varies by area (e.g., in 2000, the AA/PI population represented **27 percent** of reported AIDS cases in Hawaii).<sup>3</sup>
- Through December 2001, 6,157 AA/PI had been reported with AIDS. An additional 852 had been reported with HIV infection from areas with confidential HIV reporting.<sup>2</sup>
- Of the AA/PI adults and adolescents reported with AIDS through December 2001, **87 percent** were men and **13 percent** were women. Among men, at least **71 percent** of AIDS cases were among men who have sex with men.<sup>2</sup> Among AA/PI women, at least **49 percent** of AIDS cases were attributed to heterosexual contact. Heterosexual contact accounted for a greater proportion of AIDS cases among AA/PI women than among all other racial/ethnic groups.
- Ten states account for over three-fourths of the AA/PI population (CA, NY, HI, TX, IL, NJ, WA, VA, FL, MA).<sup>4</sup> Of these states, only FL, NJ, TX, and VA had reported HIV data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of December 2001. Furthermore, some of these states had only recently initiated HIV reporting (e.g., Florida in July 1997 and New York in June 2000). Thus, the full impact of HIV on the AA/PI population is not known.<sup>2</sup>
- Although few HIV/AIDS cases have been reported from the six U.S.-affiliated Pacific jurisdictions, rapid population growth, high teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease (STD) rates, increased mobility, immigration, and tourism all point to a potential HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Pacific region. Therefore, targeted HIV prevention is critical.
- A recent seven-city study conducted by the CDC found that **3 percent** of young gay and bisexual AA/PI men surveyed between 1994 and 1998 were HIV positive.<sup>5</sup>
- Among AA/PI women reported with HIV infection (not AIDS) through December 2001, **51 percent** had no risk for HIV transmission reported or identified, primarily because public health follow-up to ascertain the mode of HIV exposure had not been completed. This statistic highlights the need for additional data regarding AA/PI women and their risk for HIV.





## Major Challenges in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in AA/PI Communities Are:

- Tremendous growth in the population;
- National HIV/AIDS surveillance system that cannot adequately describe the diversity of the population (i.e., 100+ languages and dialects among AA/PI persons living in the United States) at the national level;
- HIV diagnoses often made late in the progression of the disease; and
- Lack of culturally/linguistically appropriate HIV prevention and treatment services in many areas.

## Let's Take Action!

Here are some suggestions on how to fight HIV/AIDS in AA/PI communities:

- Continue to learn and share information about how HIV/AIDS is affecting AA/PI communities.
- Volunteer and support AA/PI community-based organizations (CBOs) providing HIV prevention and care services in critical states and regions across the United States. (Refer to the 10 key states mentioned previously.)
- Help increase AA/PI representation in your local HIV prevention community planning and Ryan White CARE Act planning.
- Create culturally/linguistically appropriate HIV prevention and treatment materials and services.

## Resources!

- Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum.  
Tel: (415) 954-9988 or Web site: [www.apiahf.org](http://www.apiahf.org)
- *Clinician's Guide to Working with Asians and Pacific Islanders Living with HIV*, a manual produced by the Asian and Pacific Islander Wellness Center.  
Tel: (415) 292-3400, TTY: (415) 292-3410, or Web site: [www.apowellness.org](http://www.apowellness.org)
- "What Are Asian and Pacific Islander HIV Prevention Needs?" fact sheet developed by the University of California at San Francisco, Center for AIDS Prevention Studies.  
Tel: (415) 597-9100 or Web site: [www.caps.ucsf.edu/API.html](http://www.caps.ucsf.edu/API.html)
- Order free materials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.  
Tel: (800) 458-5231 or Web site: [www.cdcnpin.org](http://www.cdcnpin.org)
- The *Pocket Guide to Minority Health Resources* lists AA/PI CBOs and more.  
Tel: (800) 444-6472

**For more information on HIV/AIDS and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-458-5231 or on the Internet at [www.cdcnpin.org](http://www.cdcnpin.org).**

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<sup>1</sup> Fleming, P.L., et al., "HIV Prevalence in the United States, 2000," 9th Annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, Feb. 24–28, 2002, Seattle, WA, Abstract 11.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report 2001*, Vol. 13, No. 2.

<sup>3</sup> State of Hawaii, *AIDS Surveillance Quarterly Report* (Dec. 2000).

<sup>4</sup> President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, "Interim Report to the President," *A People Looking Forward: Action for Access and Partnerships in the 21st Century* (Jan. 2001). Web site: [www.aapi.gov](http://www.aapi.gov).

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "HIV Incidence Among Young Men Who Have Sex with Men — Seven U.S. Cities, 1994–2000," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Vol. 50, No. 21 (June 1, 2000), pp. 440–4.