The AIDS Institute

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For Immediate Release: 06.26.2013

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COVERAGE FOR HIV TESTING EXPANDS DUE TO ACA & POSITIVE USPSTF GRADE CHANGE


Washington, DC – In observance of National HIV Testing Day on June 27th, The AIDS Institute has issued a coverage guide for HIV testing to help health providers learn how each major payer, including private insurance, Medicaid and Medicare, reimburses for preventive services, including HIV testing.

“The combination of a new recommendation in strong support of routine HIV testing by the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has for the most part removed the cost barrier to HIV testing, specifically routine HIV testing,” commented Carl Schmid, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute.

As described in the coverage guide, routine HIV testing is currently or soon will be covered or incentivized by private insurance plans, Medicaid, and Medicare. This is due to two significant events: an “A” grade for routine HIV testing issued by the USPSTF in April, 2013, and implementation of the ACA, which in many cases requires payers to cover “A” and “B” graded services.

Approximately 18 percent of the more than 1.1 million people living with HIV in the United States, or over 200,000 people, are unaware of their infection. Without knowing their status through testing, they can unknowingly transmit the virus to others and cannot take advantage of lifesaving antiretroviral drug treatment.

Because of health reform, millions of people will gain access to health coverage through an expansion of Medicaid, private insurance market places, and insurance reforms. Included in these coverage reforms is required coverage of free or low-cost preventive services, primarily driven by grades from the USPSTF.
“Now, it is essential that medical providers implement the new USPSTF recommendation and offer HIV testing to their patients on a routine basis," said Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. "It is also important for clinics and health departments that provide HIV testing to develop systems and expertise to bill for these services. We know there can be barriers to routine HIV testing and there are other essential components and costs of testing programs that will not be covered through reimbursement," continued Ruppal, “but with coverage of HIV testing, one barrier to making HIV screening routine has been reduced, and we can take a significant step forward toward making routine HIV testing a reality."

For more information about getting tested please go to www.HIVtest.org.

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The AIDS Institute is a national nonprofit organization that promotes action for social change through public policy, research, advocacy and education.

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