



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

HIV IN THE UNITED STATES

There are a record number of over 1.1 million people living with HIV in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). HIV is an infectious virus, and continues to be a significant public health concern. With proper care and treatment through antiretroviral medicines, people with HIV today can live relatively long and healthy lives.

- Since the early 1980s, over 636,000 people have died of AIDS in the U.S.
- There are approximately 50,000 new infections each year.

In order to realize the benefits of AIDS drugs, people with HIV must first be diagnosed through testing, then linked to and retained in care and treatment. There remains great stigma and discrimination associated with HIV, and people with HIV do not feel free to disclose their HIV status.

- Over 200,000 people in the U.S. are unaware they are HIV positive.
- Only 37 percent of people living with HIV in the U.S. are retained in HIV care, only 33 percent have been prescribed antiretroviral treatment, and only 25 percent are virally suppressed.

Persons of minority races and ethnicities and the poor are disproportionately affected.

- African Americans, who make up just 12 percent of the population, account for 44 percent of new infections.
- Nearly 90 percent of Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program clients have a household income of less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (about \$23,000).

HIV treatment is also HIV prevention. Treatment not only saves the lives of people living with HIV, but can also prevent HIV transmission to others by suppressing the virus. Due to the positive effects of treatment, scientists now state that we have the ability and knowledge to end AIDS.

The U.S has a [National HIV/AIDS Strategy](#) that sets clear goals and priorities to reduce the number of new HIV infections; increase care and treatment for people with HIV; and reduce HIV-related health disparities.

THE RYAN WHITE HIV/AIDS PROGRAM

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program provides medical care, prescription drugs, and other essential services to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured individuals with HIV/AIDS in the United States.

The Program initially passed the U.S. Congress in 1990 with strong bi-partisan support in response to the growing AIDS emergency that was devastating certain communities, particularly in urban areas. At that time, there were no successful treatment options and most people died within months.

The bill was named after Ryan White, a courageous teenager with hemophilia who faced intense discrimination in his Indiana community for having AIDS. Ryan fought to live a normal life and attend school. Sadly, Ryan died a couple weeks before the bill passed the U.S. Congress. His story has and continues to inspire others living with HIV and AIDS and paved a way for caring communities to address their needs.

With the advent of antiretroviral medications in the mid-1990s, people with HIV began to live longer, if they had access to care and medications. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program has continued to grow to provide appropriate and impactful medical care and essential support services, along with lifesaving medications to people who have no other means to pay for them. It acts as the payer of last resort.

- **The Program continues to enjoy bi-partisan support and today is funded at \$2.3 billion and assists approximately 554,000 individuals with HIV/AIDS.** The Program is administered by the HIV/AIDS Bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The agency makes grants to state and city health offices, and directly funds AIDS services organizations and medical clinics.
- **The largest component of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP).** It is currently funded at \$900 million and assists over 200,000 people with lifesaving medications. With new infections, more people being diagnosed through testing, and people living longer, demand on the program continues to increase. Enrollment in ADAP increased by 8 percent between FY2012 and FY2013. With this increased demand for medications comes a corresponding increase in medical care and support services provided by all other parts of the program.
- **Over 70 percent of Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program clients today have some sort of insurance coverage, mostly through traditional Medicaid and Medicare.** As the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is implemented, there will be expanded opportunities for health care coverage for some Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program clients. While

insurance is expected to cover more of the costs for medications and primary care, it will never be a substitute for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Medicaid expansion within the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is a state option. Not all states are moving forward with expansion at this time. According to one estimate, 52% of the uninsured people who are living with HIV and are eligible for Medicaid live in non-Medicaid expansion states.

As the ACA is implemented, benefits will differ from state to state and there will be many gaps and costs that will have to be filled by the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program after all other options have been exhausted. ACA Health Plans will not offer all of the comprehensive essential support services, such as case management, emergency housing, transportation, and nutritional services that are needed to ensure retention in medical care and adherence to drug treatment.

This approach of coordinated, comprehensive, and culturally competent care leads to better health outcomes. Therefore, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, while it may need to change in the future, must continue and its funding must be maintained.

Through the expansion of coverage by Medicaid and private insurance, together with the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, it is hoped that more people with HIV will access and be retained in care and on treatment. Peoples' lives will be improved and at the same time, progress will be made toward achieving an AIDS-free generation.