

# **New HIV Estimates for the United States**

## **Part One: Interview with Dr. Kevin Fenton**

*This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC – safer, healthier, people.*

### **What does the higher estimate based on the new surveillance system signify?**

[Fenton] “Well, first of all we must bear in mind that these are new breakthrough technologies which are providing us with the clearest picture of the HIV epidemic in the United States to date. Previous estimates of HIV incidence in the United States suggested that there are approximately 40,000 new cases occurring. The most recent estimates in 2006 suggest that the epidemic is - and has been - higher than previously known, at approximately 56,000 new HIV infections. These new technologies which we are applying to measure HIV incidence provides us with the clearest...most clear picture of how the epidemic is spreading in the United States to date.”

### **How should the new estimate impact people’s awareness of HIV/AIDS?**

[Fenton] “Well these estimates are really a wake-up call. They are a wake-up call to all of us in the United States to have authentic conversations about what we all need to be doing to ending this epidemic within our lifetimes.”

### **What does this tell us about the effectiveness of HIV prevention in the U.S., and what needs to be done?**

[Fenton] “The reality is that there are still too many people who are HIV-infected and who are unaware of their HIV status. We are seeing nearly 30 percent of new HIV diagnoses occurring in young people. So it’s clear that we need to focus our efforts in tackling these areas to enhance our prevention response. But all of us have a role to play in preventing HIV. The response should take place at the individual, at the community and at the national level. At the individual level, we all need to be taking control of the epidemic. We need to be knowing our HIV status and testing on a regular basis. Communities need to mobilize against HIV. Communities need to tackle issues of stigma and discrimination or other social factors which might be driving the epidemic. And as a nation, we need to recognize this epidemic for the crisis that it is.”

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