



New HIV Cases Decline, but Disparities Remain

The drop is attributable in part to increased use of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV.

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HIV incidence in the United States declined by 12% in recent years, according to the latest surveillance report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The drop is attributable in part to increased use of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV. While everyone did not benefit equally, all groups saw some improvement.

New cases fell from about 36,500 in 2017 to about 32,100 in 2021. The decline was driven by a 34% drop among people ages 13 to 24. Young gay and bisexual men, who account for four out of five cases in this age group, saw new infections fall from about 7,400 to about 4,900. But the decline was not even: Cases fell by 45%, 36% and 27% among young white, Latino and Black gay and bi men, respectively. Just under 20% of new cases in 2021 were among women, more than half of whom were Black. The South saw more new infections in 2021 (16,700) than the West (6,600), Midwest (4,400) and Northeast (4,400) combined. However, it was the only region to see a statistically significant decline, falling by 12%.

“We see some bright spots in the data—our nation’s HIV prevention efforts are working, especially for young people,” says Jonathan Mermin, MD, MPH, director of the CDC’s National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. “A challenging task that once seemed impossible—to end the HIV epidemic in America—is possible. We need the will, the resources and the resolve to make it happen.”

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