Federal Panel Advises Everyone 15 to 65 to Test for HIV

May 1, 2013

The influential U.S. Preventative Services Task Force has recommended that all Americans ages 15 to 65 receive a one-time HIV antibody test and that those in higher risk categories screen once a year or more, the Los Angeles Times reports. The recommendations, which bring the task force in line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations, were published both on the agency's website and in the Annals of Internal Medicine.

The Task Force based its recommendations in part on recent research studies that have added weight to the argument that HIV is best treated early and that antiretroviral (ARV) treatment significantly lowers the risk of transmitting the virus. Fourteen people in the VISCONTI cohort in France who began ARVs within months of infection, for example, have been able to cease therapy without experiencing viral rebound. The HPTN 052 study, published in 2011, found that ARVs lower the risk of transmitting HIV among heterosexual couples by 96 percent.

According to the recommendations, those in the higher risk groups who should test more frequently, regardless of age, include injection drug users, men who have sex with men, those who have unprotected vaginal or anal intercourse and those who have sex with a partner who is HIV positive or bisexual, who injects drugs or who exchanges sex for money. Pregnant women should also be tested.

Previously, the task force's recommendations were limited to people in those risk groups and for pregnant women.

To read the Task Force recommendations, click here.

To read the LA Times story, click here.

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