



November 26, 2007

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that in the coming months the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) plans to release the first data from a new and innovative system designed to estimate the number of new HIV infections (or incidence) in a given year.

CDC has developed a breakthrough technology called STARHS (Serological Testing Algorithm for Recent HIV Seroconversion) that can distinguish recent from long-standing HIV infections. This technology made it possible to develop a system that would provide more accurate and timely HIV incidence estimates to better direct programs, mobilize communities, and inform resource decisions. Recognizing that incidence data are critically important to our collective understanding of the domestic HIV epidemic, CDC has been working hard over the past several years to develop and evaluate this system.

The 2005 HIV incidence estimates will be the first that will be available through the new national system and we have been diligently working to finalize and ensure the accuracy of these estimates. CDC has submitted a manuscript describing the estimated incidence data and the new methods from which the data were derived to an academic journal for peer review to ensure that the methods, emerging data, and conclusions are carefully reviewed for scientific accuracy and rigor before they are published. The manuscript is currently under review and decisions about publication are forthcoming. CDC's goal is to release the information as soon as possible. In an effort to ensure the highest scientific quality of the new information, we ask our partners to join us in respecting the peer review process and awaiting the findings.

We recognize that there has been a great deal of speculation in the community regarding exactly what the 2005 estimates will indicate as well as their publication date. Since the data are currently undergoing a rigorous peer review process and neither the data nor a publication date has been finalized, it is crucial that we not speculate as to the findings. The HIV prevention needs and challenges in the United States are too great to allow misinformation to guide program and policy decisions.

CDC is committed to providing an accurate, timely picture of the domestic HIV epidemic and we are moving as quickly as possible to finalize, confirm, and publish the new estimates. We anticipate publishing the new data in early 2008. Once the peer-review process is complete and the data are finalized, CDC will let you know when and where the data will be published. We greatly appreciate your patience and thank you for your continued commitment to and support of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert S. Janssen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert S. Janssen, M.D.

Director

Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention

National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and
TB Prevention