

# Snapshot of HIV/AIDS among people over 55 in the District of Columbia

Revised November 2007



The HIV/AIDS epidemic in the District of Columbia continues to present a major public health challenge. Although there have been significant strides in the diagnosis, treatment, and survival of those living with HIV and AIDS, the District remains a city with one of the highest burdens of the disease in the United States. The District has a modern epidemic, large and complex, that affects all populations in every community across age, sex, race/ethnicity, and way of getting the disease.

HIV is a virus that does not discriminate by age. Nearly one in 10 District residents aged 55 and older have HIV or AIDS. Reaching 55 years old does not make a person immune to this disease.

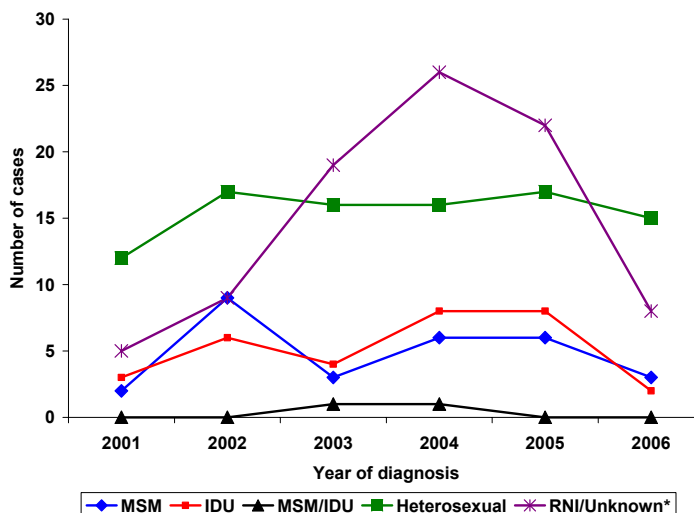
The District encourages all persons ages 14 to 84 to know their HIV status and get tested routinely. Here are some statistics of how HIV/AIDS is impacting older District residents.

## HIV, 2001-2006

From 2001-2006, 245 new cases of HIV were reported among District residents aged 55 and older. There was an overall increase of 21% in newly reported HIV cases over that period of time.

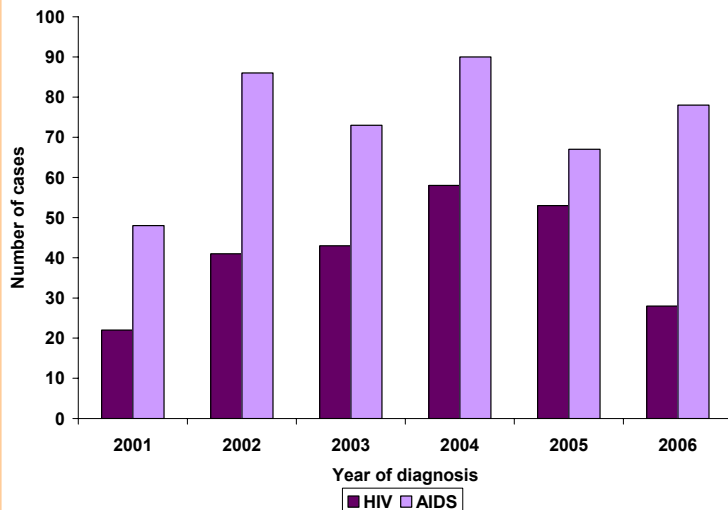
- Of the new HIV cases, 72% (n=176) occurred among males and 28% (n=69) occurred among females.
- The most common mode of transmission was heterosexual contact (38%), followed by sexual contact among men who have sex with men (MSM) at 12%.
- Of the newly reported HIV cases, 84% were black. Whites and Hispanics accounted for 9% and 3%, respectively.

### Mode of Transmission of Newly Reported HIV Cases among persons ages 55 and older—District of Columbia, 2001-2006



\*RNI/unknown includes hemophilia, blood transfusion, and risk not identified.

### HIV and AIDS Cases among persons ages 55 and older—District of Columbia, 2001-2006



\*A patient is reported as an HIV or an AIDS case. These categories are mutually exclusive

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## AIDS, 2001-2006

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- From 2001 to 2006, there were 442 persons ages 55 and older newly reported with AIDS. Of these, 335 (76%) occurred among males and 107 (24%) occurred among females. Overall, the number of newly reported AIDS cases among District residents ages 55 and older increased 38% from 2001-2006
- By the end of 2006, there were 299 persons living with AIDS aged 55 and older, accounting for approximately 3.5% of all adults and adolescents living with AIDS through that year.
- From 2001-2006, there were 206 deaths reported among persons aged 55 and older with AIDS, accounting for 11% of all adults and adolescents with AIDS who died during this time period in the District. Overall, deaths reported among the elderly AIDS cases increased by 31% from 24 in 2001 to 35 in 2006
- The most common mode of transmission among newly reported AIDS cases was heterosexual contact (31%), followed by MSM at 22%. From 2001-2006, the number of new AIDS cases among the elderly reporting heterosexual contact as the mode of transmission more than doubled, from 11 in 2001 to 26 in 2006 (an increase of 58%).
- Of the 442 newly reported AIDS cases, 87% were black. From 2001-2006, there was an overall increase in newly reported AIDS cases among black District residents ages 55 and older of 37%, from 44 in 2001 to 70 in 2006. In contrast, the numbers of newly reported AIDS cases among white and Hispanic persons ages 55 and older remained relatively stable during this time period.

- At the end of 2006, 85% of living AIDS cases among persons 55 years old and older were black. From 2001-2006, blacks accounted for 89% of deaths that occurred among AIDS cases.

## Tell Your Doctor – Check the box for HIV

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When getting any regular check-up or medical treatment, make sure to tell your doctor to include HIV among your health care tests. Just as you get your blood pressure checked, your cholesterol, and blood sugar, your doctor can easily check the box for HIV and you'll be healthy for it.

### Understanding HIV/AIDS Surveillance Data in the District of Columbia

The District began HIV surveillance in 2000 using code-based reporting, with new HIV cases were reported to the Department of Health (DOH) using a unique identifier code. The data presented on HIV cases that have not progressed to AIDS are limited to cases reported between January 1, 2001 (the start of code-based HIV reporting) and November 16, 2006. HIV data collected on and after November 17, 2006, when the District began confidential name-based HIV reporting are not included in this report. AIDS surveillance began in 1985 as confidential name-based reporting. The AIDS data presented in this report include cases reported through December 31, 2006.

Surveillance data are collected primarily through the investigation of cases reported by laboratories and providers, and the data in this report are not adjusted for reporting delays. The report provides comprehensive demographic information about people living with HIV and AIDS. It shows readers “what” is going on with the epidemic with more detail than ever compiled previously, but we know we have more to learn about the “why” of how the epidemic continues to impact District residents. DOH knows that there are more people with HIV or AIDS in the District. With better diagnosis of the virus, the reported numbers will increase. Subsequent reports will better inform public officials and community members for future prevention and planning.