December 14, 2012

Dr. Robert Cosby
c/o USPSTF
540 Gaither Road
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Dr. Cosby:

The HIV Testing Reimbursement Subcommittee of the HIV Health Care Access Working Group, affiliated with the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership, and the undersigned organizations and individuals, praise the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) for strongly recommending that all adolescents and adults from the age of 15 to 65 and pregnant women should be screened for HIV infection. We fully support the grade “A” recommendation and urge you to finalize it as soon as possible. This grade change will help make HIV screening a routine part of preventative care.

Your decision to change the grade for routine testing is supported by scientific evidence and is a critical step in addressing HIV in the United States. There are currently over 1.1 million people living with HIV in the US, but over 200,000 of them are unaware of their infection. Additionally, there continues to be approximately 50,000 new infections each year and more people than ever before are living with the disease.

Using a risk-based testing strategy has proven inadequate because risk can be difficult to determine. Therefore, in order to reduce the number of new infections, we must institute routine HIV testing.

Making sure that all those living with HIV are aware of their infection is critical to both individual and public health outcomes and to ending AIDS in the U.S.

Diagnosing people early and linking them to care and treatment is the best strategy for improving individual health and clinical outcomes. Federal HIV treatment guidelines now recommend that all individuals with HIV be offered HIV treatment upon diagnosis to improve health outcomes and prevent irreparable disease progression. However, nearly 40 percent of people diagnosed with HIV progress to AIDS within one year of diagnosis, meaning that they have carried the virus for many years without detection. Routinizing HIV screening will help change this.

According to recent studies over 50 percent of new infections are attributable to the 20 percent of people who are unaware of their status. Reversing this trend is critical because we know that when an individual is aware that they are HIV positive, they are more likely to take steps to avoid transmitting the virus to others.
Additionally, the ground breaking study HPTN052 substantiated that HIV treatment can prevent transmission. That is, when someone is diagnosed with HIV, engaged in care, adherent to an antiretroviral regimen, and achieve viral suppression, they are up to 96 percent less likely to transmit HIV. However, in order to realize this benefit, people who are HIV positive must be made aware of their infection through HIV testing and subsequently linked to quality care.

We strongly support the USPSTF Grade “A” recommendation for routine HIV screening for adolescents and adults from age 15 through 65, and pregnant women. This recommendation now more closely aligns with the CDC recommendation and will be instrumental in realizing an end to HIV/AIDS in the United States.

Should you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact Subcommittee Co-Chairs Carl Schmid at cschmid@theaidsinstitute.org or Holly Kilness at holly@aahivm.org. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Organizations (127)

AAMA, Inc.  
ActionAIDS  
ADAP Advocacy Association  
Advocates for Youth  
African American Health Alliance  
AID Gwinnett  
AID Gwinnett/Ric Crawford Clinic  
AIDS Action Baltimore  
AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts  
AIDS Alabama  
AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families  
AIDS Community Research Initiative of America  
AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc.  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
The AIDS Institute  
AIDS Interfaith Network  
AIDS Project Los Angeles  
AIDS Research & Treatment Center of the Treasure Coast  
AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta  
AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin  
AIDS Services Foundation Orange County  
AIDS Task Force of the Upper Ohio Valley  
Alabama Alliance for Healthy Youth  
Alere  
American Psychological Association  
American Social Health Association  
Arkansas HIV/AIDS Minority Taskforce  
Arkansas Minority Health Commission  
Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)  
AVAC  
Birmingham AIDS Outreach  
Cascade AIDS Project  
Case Western Reserve University, AIDS Clinical Trials Unit  
Center on Halsted  
Chicago Area HIV/AIDS Integrated Services Council (CAHSIC)  
Chicago House and Social Service Agency Christie's Place  
Citizens Council for Human Rights & Salaam Legal Network  
Colorado Health Network, Inc. dba Colorado AIDS Project  
Columbia CHD  
Community Access National Network  
Community AIDS Resource and Education Services (CARES)  
Community Education Group
Community Information Center  
Dab the AIDS Bear Project  
Desert AIDS Project  
East Los Angeles Women's Center  
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation  
EMS Resources/HispanicAIDS  
Executive Committee of the California STD Directors Association  
Fenway Health  
GALAEI  
Gay Men's Health Crisis  
Georgia AIDS Coalition  
Haymarket Center  
Health Federation of Philadelphia  
Health for Life Clinic PLLC  
Health Services Center, Inc.  
HealthHIV  
HIV Dental Alliance  
HIV Law Project  
HIV Medicine Association  
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance  
HOPE: Atlanta Programs of Travelers Aid  
Housing Works  
International Foundation for Alternative Research in AIDS, Inc.  
Justice Resource Institute  
L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
LifeLinc of Maryland  
Lifelong AIDS Alliance  
Los Angeles County HIV Drug & Alcohol Task Force  
Louisiana Latino Health Coalition (LLHC)  
Lynne Warrick Institute  
Medical U. of SC/Lowcountry AIDS Services Consumer Advisory Board  
Midwest AIDS Training + Education Center (MATEC)  
Mountain Plains AIDS Education and Training Center  
Moveable Feast  
Multicultural AIDS Coalition  
National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors  
National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA)  
National Coalition of STD Directors  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN)  
National Minority AIDS Council  
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable  
Nebraska AIDS Project  
New Concepts Community Support Services  
New Hearts Encouragement Ministry  
Ohio AIDS Coalition, a Division of ARC Ohio  
Orange County Health Department  
Orange County HIV/AIDS Advocacy Team Partnership Project  
PeterCares House  
Portland Black Pride  
Positive Champions Speakers Bureau  
POZ VETS USA-INTL  
Project Inform  
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition  
Rural Women's Health Project  
San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
Servicios de La Raza  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S.  
START at Westminster  
Sunburst Projects  
Test Positive Aware Network  
The American Academy of HIV Medicine  
The Family Tree Community Center  
The Women's Collective  
Trans-Latina Coalition  
Treatment Access Expansion Project  
Treatment Action Group  
Trinity Charities, Inc.  
UCLA Art & Global Health Center  
United Medical Center  
Unity Health Care  
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine  
University of Virginia Health System  
Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services (UCHAPS)  
VillageCare
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waterbury Hospital</th>
<th>Western North Carolina AIDS Project</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weingart Center Association</td>
<td>Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD)</td>
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<td>West Alabama AIDS Outreach</td>
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**Individuals (189)**

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Yvette Wells
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Carla Williams
Kevin Williams
Richard Willis
Justin Wooley
Rhonda Wright