

CONNECTIONS

A Bimonthly e-Newsletter



Director's Update

September - October 2010



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Director, NCHHSTP

Over the past fiscal year, we have made amazing progress in our HIV prevention efforts including the lifting of the HIV travel ban, release of federal guidance and support for syringe services programs, the National HIV/AIDS Strategy launch, new investments in domestic HIV prevention, and on the global front, promising news from the International AIDS Conference. Change is happening thanks to the leadership of our colleagues in Washington, D.C., our federal partners, grantees, other stakeholders, and communities across the nation. However, we have even bolder steps to take. The National HIV/AIDS Strategy calls for innovative and coordinated steps and CDC is poised to take on this challenge. In the year ahead we will further enhance our coordination with federal partners to scale up evidence-based interventions, intensify efforts where needed most, identify and consolidate gains when they occur, and work to ensure even greater returns on our health investments. Our new fiscal year brings renewed commitment with a focus on effectiveness, impact, equity, and quality.

New TB Testing Guidelines

In June 2010, CDC released [Updated Guidelines for Using Interferon Gamma Release Assays to Detect *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* Infection—United States, 2010](#). This report updates CDC's guidance on using interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs), which are whole-blood tests that can aid in diagnosing tuberculosis (TB) infection and can be used in place of the traditional tuberculin skin test (TST).

The IGRAs provide rapid results (in as little as 24 hours), do not boost responses measured by subsequent tests, and are unaffected by prior vaccination with Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG), a TB vaccine used most frequently outside the United States. IGRAs are preferred for testing some groups, such as those with historically low rates of return for TST reading, and for persons who have received BCG. This last group would include many foreign-born persons as well as certain cancer patients. In most circumstances requiring testing for TB infection, either a TST or an IGRA (but not both) can be used. A new IGRA [fact sheet](#) is available.

New from CDC

- [NCHHSTP State Health Profiles](#)
- [Self-Study Modules on TB](#)
- [Hepatitis B and a Healthy Baby](#)
- [Sexual Transmission of Hepatitis C](#)
- [HIV and AIDS in the U.S.](#)

Upcoming Events

- September 12–15, 2010**
[United States Conference on AIDS](#)
- September 12–15, 2010**
[50th ICAAC Meeting](#)
- September 18, 2010**
[National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day](#)
- September 27, 2010**
[National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)
- October 15, 2010**
[National Latino AIDS Awareness Day](#)

Upcoming HIV/AIDS Awareness Days

Over the next two months, we observe National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day, September 18; National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, September 27; and National Latino AIDS Awareness Day, October 15. These observance days bring attention to the issues related to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and specific populations. Persons living with HIV are living longer and healthier lives, but as they grow older, the effects of aging must be considered within the context of HIV/AIDS. As well, gay and bisexual men of all races are disproportionately affected by HIV, and there are cultural, social, economic, and other factors that play a critical role in health outcomes in these communities that are as diverse as the U.S. population. These observances are key opportunities for strategic outreach to increase HIV testing, early diagnosis and linkage to care, and ongoing commitment to better health for all communities.

On the Web

[HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Assistance Portal](#)

