

CONNECTIONS

A Bimonthly e-Newsletter from NCHHSTP



Director's Update

May-June 2015



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Director, NCHHSTP

In March, Indiana declared a [public health emergency](#) in Scott County, located in the state's rural southeast region. Since December 2014, more than 140 people have been diagnosed with HIV infection, with 84% also infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV), in this small community of 4,200. On April 24, 2015, CDC issued a [health alert](#), with additional information in the [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#). Historically, HIV infection has been more concentrated in large urban areas, but this outbreak shows the potential vulnerability of rural communities. Most cases reported in Scott County have been linked to syringe sharing among a network of people injecting drugs prepared from prescription pills of the opioid oxycodone (Opana®). The age range of those affected is 18 to 57 years. CDC and several other HHS agencies, including HRSA and SAMHSA, are supporting the Indiana public health response with staff in Scott County, as well as a Center-wide Emergency Operations Center in Atlanta. In addition, state and CDC disease intervention specialists are conducting contact tracing, testing, and linkage to care.

New Tools for Hepatitis Awareness, Counseling, and Testing

May is [Hepatitis Awareness Month](#), and May 19 marks the fourth [National Hepatitis Testing Day](#) in the United States. CDC recently released [A Guide to Comprehensive Hepatitis C Counseling and Testing](#). This manual provides guidance for counseling of individuals at risk for or potentially infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV), testing procedures, and interpreting the results. Several [tools and resources](#) are available to help promote hepatitis awareness, including buttons and badges, a [hepatitis testing site map](#) to find Hepatitis Testing events, and an online [Hepatitis Risk Assessment](#). To further promote these efforts, please participate in the [Be #HepAware Thunderclap](#) on May 19. This tool allows supporters to sign up in advance and simultaneously share a unified message, or "thunderclap," across social media platforms. At least 100 supporters are needed for the Thunderclap to take effect, so please visit <http://thndr.it/1z5X2cF> to sign up!

New Funding Opportunities for HIV Prevention

On March 31, 2015, CDC and HHS [announced](#) more than \$185 million in new HIV prevention funding. These funds will help local health departments and HIV prevention partners expand the delivery of some of our most effective HIV prevention tools to the populations most in need. Through FOA [PS15-1506](#), CDC will award up to \$125 million over three years to state and local health departments to expand the use of two vital prevention strategies: ongoing medical care and antiretroviral treatment for persons living with HIV, and [pre-exposure prophylaxis \(PrEP\)](#) for those at substantial risk for acquiring HIV. FOAs [PS15-1509](#) and [PS15-1510](#) will provide additional funding of \$60.5 million over four years, from the HHS Secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund (SMAIF). These funds will support innovative approaches to address HIV in minority communities, intensifying prevention and treatment efforts for MSM of color. For additional information, see the [NCHHSTP news release](#). The application deadline for each of these FOAs is June 1, 2015.

New from CDC

[NCHHSTP Annual Report](#)

[AR Solutions Initiative Drug-Resistant Gonorrhea Fact Sheet](#)

[Spanish Fact Sheet: HIV Among Women](#)

[HIV and Injection Drug Use Fact Sheet](#)

[New TB infographic](#)

[Spanish Version of the TB 101 Course](#)

[Hepatitis C & Injection Drug Use Fact Sheet](#)

Upcoming Events

May 2015

[Hepatitis Awareness Month](#)

May 19, 2015

[National Hepatitis Testing Day](#)

May 19, 2015

[National Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)

June 8, 2015

[Caribbean American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)

June 9-11, 2015

[National TB Conference - "Managing TB in a Global Society"](#)

June 27, 2015

[National HIV Testing Day](#)

On the Web

The Division of Tuberculosis Elimination is now tweeting [@CDC_TB](#).

