

Published by:



VOICES

The Voice of Delaware's HIV Community

Summer Edition • July 2012 • Volume 18 • Number 2



Governor Markell Signs Opt-Out HIV Testing Bill in to Law

Governor Jack Markell signed S.B. No. 162 in to law on National HIV Testing Day, June 27, at a bill signing ceremony in Dover. The new law implements the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) 2006 recommendation for routine/opt-out HIV testing—that all individuals between the ages of 13 and 64 be tested for HIV as part of a patient's routine health evaluation—and eliminates the requirement for extensive pre-test counseling and prevention counseling. As a result, the bill makes HIV testing similar to screening for other medical conditions. As the Governor signed the bill in to law, he was joined by state legislators, including two of the bill's co-sponsors, Senator Margaret Rose Henry and Senator Patricia Blevins. Representatives from various health-related agencies were also on hand to show their support for the legislation, including staff members from the Delaware HIV Consortium,



Westside Family Healthcare, Planned Parenthood and the Mid-Atlantic AIDS Education and Training Center (AETC). Secretary of the Department of Health & Social Services, Rita Landgraff, and Dr. Paul Silverman of the Division of Public Health were also in attendance, among other state officials.

The new law helps expand HIV screening beyond the traditional, targeted high-risk populations to the general public and

also helps destigmatize such screenings and cement HIV testing's place as part of regular medical care. The bill preserves the opportunity for patients to decline the testing, or "opt-out", as with most other medical tests. It is estimated that one out of every five people (21%) who are infected with HIV is unaware of his/her status. In fact, this 21% of individuals who are unaware of their infection are responsible for more than

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AIDS Walk Delaware: One Day... Two Walks • Saturday, September 29



AIDS Delaware and the Delaware HIV Consortium, along with partner organizations Faith Community Partnership and the Ministry of Caring, will celebrate the 26th anniversary of AIDS Walk Delaware on September 29 in Wilmington and Rehoboth Beach. Everyone is invited to be a part of this fun and meaningful event which raises money for local AIDS service organizations while increasing awareness about HIV/AIDS. For the first time, this 5K walk will be held at two locations on the same day, bringing Delawareans together in the fight against the disease. Whether this is your first AIDS Walk, or your 26th, every walker and every dollar counts in the fight against AIDS. Register today at www.aidswalkdelaware.org and ask your friends and family to join you.

"The need for HIV/AIDS services are as vital today as they were 25 years ago," says Peter Houle, Executive Director of the Delaware HIV Consortium. "We have over 3,700 known individuals currently living with HIV/AIDS in Delaware, and Delaware consistently ranks among the top 10 states for AIDS cases per capita. After a quarter-century, this event continues to bring awareness to our cause as well as provide significant funding for statewide HIV/AIDS programs. We are proud to partner with AIDS Delaware again as we continue our collaborative efforts to fight AIDS in Delaware."

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Letter From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Unlike my usual letters, when I attempt to inspire and motivate, I would like to simply THANK all of our volunteers, Board members, staff, supporters and WOW Awardees for their overwhelming support of our programs and special events over the years and for their enormous support so far this year. My heart goes out to all of you for assisting us in achieving our mission, vision statement and strategic plan through your generosity of time, talents and financial support. The Delaware HIV Consortium is grateful for every act of kindness and support, no matter the size. Together we assist someone infected or affected by HIV/AIDS every day and that is our purpose! You all inspire me and I cannot thank you enough.

Peter Houle, MBA, Executive Director

The Delaware HIV Consortium Thanks the following sponsors and supporters



Mission Statement:

The Delaware HIV Consortium is dedicated to eliminating the spread of HIV/AIDS through its leadership to ensure a high-quality, seamless continuum of care for all people infected and affected in Delaware.



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Helping Those In Need

Michael Brossette Memorial Fund Surpasses \$100,000 in Financial Aid Given to State's Neediest Residents With HIV/AIDS

The Delaware HIV Consortium is proud to announce that the Michael Brossette Memorial Fund (MBMF), a privately funded financial assistance program operated by the Consortium, has recently surpassed the \$100,000 mark for financial assistance given to HIV-positive Delaware residents who are experiencing financial hardship. This program helps people who do not generally qualify for other public, private or governmental programs. In addition to financial assistance, the program aims to introduce participants to other resources and information about services available for future use. This fund was established in 2000 in the memory of Michael Brossette, a past president of the Consortium's Board of Trustees and resident of Sussex County who died from AIDS in 1997.

The MBMF is not intended simply to complement the regular income of persons with HIV or AIDS. Rather it provides funding to meet a specific need for the applicant. The MBMF can contribute to the payment of housing and utility costs, medical bills and other needs as identified on a case-by-case basis. In fact, through March 2011 22% of funds disbursed went to help with rent payments and 20% of funds were used to help pay the costs of utilities. The next highest expenditure went to assistance with housing security deposits: 11%. Mortgage payments also accounted for 7% of funds paid out, meaning 60% of all funds given to applicants helped pay for housing and utilities. These basic necessities help keep HIV-positive persons stably housed in a healthy environment where they can better adhere to their medications, decreasing the likelihood of homelessness and further transmission of the HIV virus.

Of the remaining 40% of expenditures, roughly 20% was spent on medical related needs ranging from dental and medical costs to eye care and pharmaceutical costs and laboratory fees. The remaining 20% of expenditures helped pay for various types of needs, including burial assistance. Burial assistance is one area in which governmental and community resources for assistance are rare, and the Consortium is proud to help families in a time of mourning when paying for a funeral should be the last thing they have to worry about.

"It's not about numbers or percentages. It's all about people," says Glen Pruitt, the Consortium's Associate Executive Director and the administrator of the fund since its inception. "Because we use private dollars in this program, we have greater freedom to meet the needs of people, in ways that other programs cannot." One time, for example, the MBMF was used to buy a bus ticket for a newly-diagnosed person to travel halfway across the country to be with family as the person began HIV treatment. Another time, the MBMF paid the enrollment fee for an HIV-positive person to enter a residential program to learn life- and self-management skills. "A bus ticket or an enrollment fee may seem like a small thing, but in the lives of those people helped by the fund, it was huge," said Glen.

Initially the program served only HIV-positive residents of Sussex County but eventually was expanded to assist eligible persons throughout the state. The program may provide up to \$500 in assistance per applicant. The Delaware HIV Consortium takes no administrative charges for operating the program. In this way, 100% of the dollars given to the MBMF are used to provide direct assistance to persons living with HIV disease.

If you would like to help support this vital program, please make a contribution today to the MBMF by donating via the agency's website, www.delawarehiv.org, by calling the office at 302-654-5471 or by sending a check made out to the Delaware HIV Consortium with "MBMF" in the memo line to: 100 W. 10th St, Suite 415, Wilmington, DE 19801. No donation is too small and we thank you in advance for your support.

Two New Community Members Join the Board of Trustees

Michael Kelsey, Managing Vice-President for Capital One, joined the board in May. Michael and his wife have been supporters of the Consortium for years. He is an active member of Trinity Episcopal Church in Wilmington.

Michael says he is "committed to serving our community and helping those affected by HIV, as well as educating those who are unaware of the impact of HIV/AIDS [on our state]."

Rev. Dr. Christopher Bullock is the founder of the Canaan Baptist Church in New Castle, where he was elected as the

first pastor in 2004. He has vast experience working to improve the communities that he has called home.

Dr. Bullock lived and worked in Chicago from 1998 to 2004 but before that was the pastor at the Eighth Street Baptist Church in Wilmington from 1990 to 1998. Dr. Bullock has traveled, preached, and lectured throughout the United States, Europe, Middle East, West Indies, Brazil, and Mexico and has served as an Honorary Advisor to the South African government at the United Nations in New York.

OraQuick In-Home HIV Test Expected in Stores by October 2012

On July 3, after much debate, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the OraQuick In-Home HIV test (OraQuick) as the first rapid, over-the-counter HIV test for sale in the United States. The test, which has been used in testing sites for several years, can now be done in the privacy of one's own home. OraQuick uses a mouth swab to collect saliva which is then inserted into a test tube with results appearing within 20 to 40 minutes.

While OraQuick could potentially help identify thousands of undiagnosed people living with HIV, it doesn't come without some potential problems. An FDA statement noted that the in-home test presents a number of issues: "The potential risks of an HIV home-use test include not fully comprehending the limitations of a screening test, such as misunderstanding a negative result when testing during the window period or the incomplete understanding of a false positive result. Home-use tests lack live counseling, resulting in the potential for adverse outcomes if the user obtains an unexpected result without concurrent live counseling. Additional risks include the inability to reach individuals for medical follow-up, partner notification, and public health reporting. There is also the potential for coercive testing and testing by unprepared minors."

Still, the potential for large numbers of people to become aware of their HIV infection outweighs the potential problems. Projections are that in a million tests, 9,087 additional HIV-positive individuals would be identified who otherwise might not seek HIV testing. To assist consumers in interpreting and knowing what to do with at-home results, OraSure, the maker of OraQuick, has arranged for a call center with bilingual (English- and Spanish-speaking) support.

The OraQuick In-Home HIV test is expected to be available for purchase this October at more than 30,000 retail outlets (such as Walgreens, CVS, Wal-Mart, etc.) throughout the country and online. Although the test is currently sold to clinics at the price of \$17.50 per test, it is expected to retail somewhere in the \$40 to \$60 range. In surveys, 46% of respondents said they would pay no more than \$20 for a test, so affordable pricing will be critical in order for it to have an impact.

"Opt-Out" Testing Bill Signed in to Law, Story Continued From Page 1

half (53%) of all new HIV infections. The sooner a person begins treatment for HIV infection, the less likely he or she is to transmit the virus to others. And the only way to know if one is HIV positive is to get tested, using the CDC recommendations as a guideline.

According to recommendations from the CDC, all persons between the ages of 13 and 64 should receive regular, routine testing as part of their normal health care. People over age 64 are also encouraged to be tested, especially if they are sexually active. It is also recommended that those persons who are at high risk should be tested at least once a year for HIV. High-risk behaviors include having unprotected sex and sharing needles for drugs, tattoos or body piercing.

"The state has made great progress in reducing AIDS-related deaths and new HIV infections, but our greatest concern is the hidden cases," said Governor Markell. "This is the next step in our battle to stop the spread of HIV. The sooner people know their status, the sooner they can seek treatment and learn how to prevent the spread of HIV to others." Governor Markell also noted that as many as 800 people in Delaware may have HIV right now and do not know it.

A person could be infected with HIV yet show no symptoms for many years. During that time, however, the virus replicates in the body and can be transmitted to others before the person knows he or she has the disease. There is still no cure for HIV/AIDS, but effective medical treatment can control the advancement of the disease and can help reduce the chance of transmission to others, including newborn infants.

"This new law will not only save lives as more people are tested, it will prevent the transmission of HIV," said state Senator Patricia Blevins. "I am enormously proud to have been part of its passage." S.B. No. 162 was supported by the HIV program of the Division of Public Health (DPH), and more than 40 private organizations from the health care, faith-based, and nonprofit sectors.

"The implementation of routine/opt-out testing for HIV is a victory for all Delawareans, by fortifying our state's prevention and treatment efforts while directly addressing the stigma that is still attached to this disease over 30 years later," said Sara Grainger, Director of Community Planning and Policy Development for the Delaware HIV Consortium. "S.B. No. 162 would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the 40 plus private organizations from the health care, faith-based, and nonprofit sectors and the HIV Policy Committee, that created and signed on to a white paper, testified in Committee Hearings before the General Assembly, and attended votes at Legislative Hall to show their support."

Walgreens Introduces HIV "Centers of Excellence" to Delaware Featuring Staff with Special Knowledge of HIV/AIDS

Delaware now has six Walgreens Centers of Excellence (COEs)—pharmacies that are staffed with specially-trained pharmacists who work closely with customers with HIV/AIDS to offer guidance and support with medications, refill reminders and identification of financial support systems. Staff also provide customers with information about additional HIV/AIDS services available in the community. The COEs are located in neighborhoods/communities that are highly impacted by HIV/AIDS, as identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There are more than 500 COEs located throughout the country. Two additional Walgreens locations near Rehoboth Beach will soon be qualified as Centers of Excellence, too.

A Walgreens press release states, "COE-certified Walgreens pharmacy staff must undergo clinical training through the University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, known for its HIV/AIDS pharmaceutical care education program. The program includes cultural and social training related to HIV/AIDS issues and challenges and annual renewal to keep skills and knowledge current."

Every COE has a Lead HIV/AIDS Clinical Pharmacist specifically trained with thorough knowledge about HIV medications and comorbidities that affect people with HIV/AIDS including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol and more. Every staff member at a Walgreens Center of Excellence, from the pharmacy technicians to the cashiers, is trained on HIV stigma and cultural competency. Walgreens is helping to complete the missing link between patients, physicians, and pharmacists.

Pharmacists at the COEs are tasked with ensuring HIV-positive patients are proactively receiving refill reminders, maintaining a sufficient inventory of antiretrovirals and reviewing regimens for appropriateness (correct and complete), drug interactions and duplication of therapy. In addition, patients are offered free pill boxes, multivitamins and home delivery. Pharmacists further improve patient care by helping complete applications for patient assistance programs provided by pharmaceutical companies. They also refer patients to AIDS service organizations when the need for a medical case manager is necessary.

"Our goal at our COEs is to help patients by combining our medication expertise with our knowledge of each individual patient," says Ambrose Delpino, Pharmacy Manager at the Walgreens COE at 839 Market St. in downtown Wilmington. "We take the time to get to know our patients and help them overcome the many barriers that they may encounter while trying to maintain their health and wellness when faced with the unique challenges of living with HIV/AIDS. By working with local doctors and understanding our patients' difficulties we can help them overcome medication issues, side effects, insurance problems, and financial hardships which might limit access to the important medications our patients need."

Ambrose continues, "Just the other day one of our pharmacists noticed a patient was getting only two of his three HIV medications. We had a conversation with the patient and learned he had stopped taking the third medication because it was causing side effects which left him at risk for developing resistance to the other medications. We were able to recommend an over-the-counter product that treated the side effect, and the patient is now taking all of his medications with no complications."

Locations of Centers of Excellence in Delaware

New Castle County

1313 N. Union St., Wilmington 19806

Phone: 302-658-1381

1900 Maryland Ave., Wilmington 19805

Phone: 302-652-5543

3301 Lancaster Pike, Wilmington 19805

Phone: 302-655-0826

3513 N. Market St., Wilmington 19802

Phone: 302-357-3470

802 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington 19809

Phone: 302-761-1700

839 N. Market St., Wilmington 19801

Phone: 302-654-1834

Sussex County

17239 Five Points Square, Lewes

Phone: 302-644-7840

18993 Munchy Branch Rd., Rehoboth Beach

Phone: 302-226-0220

Truvada for Prevention?

FDA Advisory Committee Recommends Approval of Truvada for PrEP

Truvada is already approved for treatment of HIV/AIDS but it could be approved for prevention of the disease in the near future for individuals who are at high risk for contracting HIV. On May 11, 2012, a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory committee recommended that the agency approve the drug for pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP.

What is PrEP? According to the CDC, "PrEP is short for PreExposure Prophylaxis and may be part of comprehensive HIV prevention services in which HIV-negative people who are at high risk, take antiretroviral medication daily to try to lower their chances of becoming infected with HIV if they are exposed to it. To date, PrEP has been shown to be effective in men who have sex with men (MSM) and heterosexual men and women."

The FDA committee voted 19-3 in favor of approval for the prevention indication—PrEP for HIV-uninfected men who have sex with men—and 19-2 with one abstention for HIV-uninfected partners in couples where the other partner is infected. The committee recommended by 12-8 with two ab-

stentions in favor of approving the drug for individuals who engage in risky sexual behavior that could result in their contracting the virus. The FDA doesn't have to follow the recommendations of its advisory committees, but it often does.

Truvada is made by Gilead Sciences and is a once-a-day pill used in combination with other HIV drugs. The nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor does not rid the body of HIV. Instead, it prevents the virus from replicating in the body.

Many people in the AIDS community are opposed to the idea of using Trudava as PrEP, noting the possibility of drug resistance to develop if it is not taken properly. Another point of contention is using the high-cost medication for prevention when there are people known to be HIV positive on ADAP waiting lists for HIV drugs.

Michael Weinstein, president and founder of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, said he was concerned that approval could lead to a decrease in condom use. "Approving PrEP would be a reckless act," he said.

AIDS Walk Delaware, Story Continued From Page 1

The Walks will be held on Saturday, September 29 with registrations starting at 9 am and kick-off at 10 am. The AIDS Walk in Wilmington will be held at Dravo Plaza on the Riverfront where there's plenty of free parking. The route will take walkers along the scenic Wilmington Riverwalk, near the Blue Rocks Stadium and the Russell W. Peterson Wildlife Refuge. The AIDS Walk in Rehoboth Beach will be held at Grove Park, and walkers will enjoy strolling along the boardwalk for a portion of their 5K route. While there is no registration fee, all walkers are encouraged to ask for donations, all of which will be used on programs and services throughout the state of Delaware.

"In addition to raising funds at the Walk, we also educate walkers about HIV/AIDS and how to prevent contracting the disease," says Manager of Communications and Special Events, John Hinkson. "It's important that people know about the impact that this disease continues to have on our country: Currently, more than 1.1 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. Every 9.5 minutes another American becomes infected with HIV - that's more than 56,000 estimated new cases of HIV each year. HIV is a preventable disease so with the proper education we have the power to end this silent epidemic that continues to take an extra heavy toll on gay and bisexual men, minority communities and the poor."

AIDS Walk Delaware would like to thank this year's sponsors: Walgreens, M&T Bank, Wesley Emmons M.D., Shop-Rite, Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant, WSTW and WDEL.

Walkers are encouraged to form teams with family and friends, coworkers and members of their faith community. You can also walk as an individual, or you're always welcome to join the Delaware HIV Consortium's team. Registration is easy—go to www.aidswalkdelaware.org and click on the tab that says "Register" at the top of the page. Fill out all of the required fields and once you're done you'll have access to a personal fundraising page where you can add a photo, update your fundraising goal and add a message about why you're walking. You can send friends a direct link to your fundraising page, making online donations easy by e-mail or Facebook.



Another Successful WOW Awards

The Delaware HIV Consortium's 8th Annual WOW Awards Celebration was held on Friday, April 20 at the Clarion Hotel - The Belle in New Castle. The event was a huge success, raising more money than ever before. Many thanks go out to all of those who attended, our sponsors, donors and student performers. We couldn't do it without the help of so many people.



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