

HIV Universal Screening Recommendations

Although Vermont continues to have a low incidence of HIV, an estimated 100 Vermonters are infected but do not know their status. People who are not aware that they are infected with HIV are not able to take advantage of treatments that can keep them healthy and extend their lives, nor do they have the knowledge to protect their sexual or drug-use partners from becoming infected.

To identify HIV-positive individuals who are unaware of their status, the Vermont Department of Health recommends HIV screening as a component of routine primary and urgent healthcare in Vermont, in line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2006 [Revised Recommendations for HIV Testing of Adults, Adolescents, and Pregnant Women in Health-Care Settings](#). These recommendations support routine HIV screening of adults, adolescents, and pregnant women as part of a normal standard of care provided to patients, regardless of the patient's stated risk history or motivation for seeking health care. In 2010, the Vermont Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) surveillance data indicated that 65 percent of reported STD cases (chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis) were identified by non-specialized STD care providers. This data suggests the importance of screening in a variety of practice settings, such as obstetrics and gynecology, general practice and student health clinics.

In Vermont, since the beginning of 2010, 30 percent of the newly diagnosed HIV-positive individuals who accessed HIV specialty care had been seen in an emergency department in the six months prior to their diagnosis. This represents missed opportunities. In the same time period, *nearly one-third of newly-diagnosed HIV-positive individuals who accessed HIV specialty care were immediately diagnosed with AIDS*. This indicates that they were diagnosed late in the course of their infection.

Actions Requested –

- **Patients with STDs**
Screen for HIV all patients seeking treatment for an active STD, after notifying the patient that testing will be done.
- **Pregnant Women**
Include HIV screening in the routine panel of prenatal screening tests for all pregnant women, and repeat an HIV test during the third trimester for women at increased risk. Administer a rapid HIV test in Labor & Delivery for any pregnant woman who does not have a documented HIV test.
- **General Population**
Offer HIV screening to all patients ages 13 to 64 in all health care settings. HIV prevention counseling is not required. Anyone at high risk for HIV infection should be screened for HIV at least annually.

Informed Consent –

Separate written consent for HIV testing is not required. General consent for medical care is sufficient to encompass consent for HIV testing.

Vermont Department of Health Lab Test Processing

The Health Department Lab has HIV test request forms, test kit supply request forms, and directions for submitting serum or oral fluid samples online at: http://www.healthvermont.gov/enviro/ph_lab/clinicallabservicesmanual.aspx#Forms.

The Health Department Lab will bill insurance directly for costs associated with providing the test kits and processing tests.

The Health Department is committed to assisting primary and urgent care providers implement routine HIV testing to increase early detection and effective treatment of HIV infection.

... continued

