

HIV/AIDS in Rural America

Approximately 50,000 of the estimated 1.1 million Americans age 13 and older living with HIV at the end of 2009 and 7.7 percent of new diagnoses were in rural areas.

Barriers to care in rural areas include:

- **Distance and low population density**, meaning fewer specialized services are available and it is harder to get them to clients;
- **Health system gaps** and relatively few providers and systems with the capacity to deliver high quality HIV services;
- **Reimbursement for HIV/AIDS care**, as people living with HIV/AIDS in rural areas are less likely than their urban counterparts to have health insurance; and
- **Stigma and confidentiality** are particular concerns among rural populations.

The Data

Rural areas have comprised 5 to 8 % of all U.S. HIV cases.

68 percent of all AIDS cases among rural populations are in the South, where the rate of infection is 320/100,000.

The greatest impact is on poor, minority populations.

Half of rural AIDS cases occur among African Americans, 9% are Latinos, 2% are American Indian/Alaska Natives and 3%, are white.

Most (75%) of rural AIDS cases are men. About 60% are men who have sex with men and 28.5% men infected through heterosexual contact. About 20% are injecting drug users.

HIV infection rates among rural women are increasing, particularly among African American women.

Federal Programs

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program provides funds to cities, states and community-based organizations that serve more than 500,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. Services include primary medical care and essential support services.

Ryan White also funds AIDS Education and Training Centers, which train providers. Between July 2011 and June 2012, 23% of providers receiving their training were employed in rural areas

Additionally, Federally-funded rural community health centers provide HIV screening and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant supports early intervention services for HIV-Designated States, many of which have substantial rural populations.