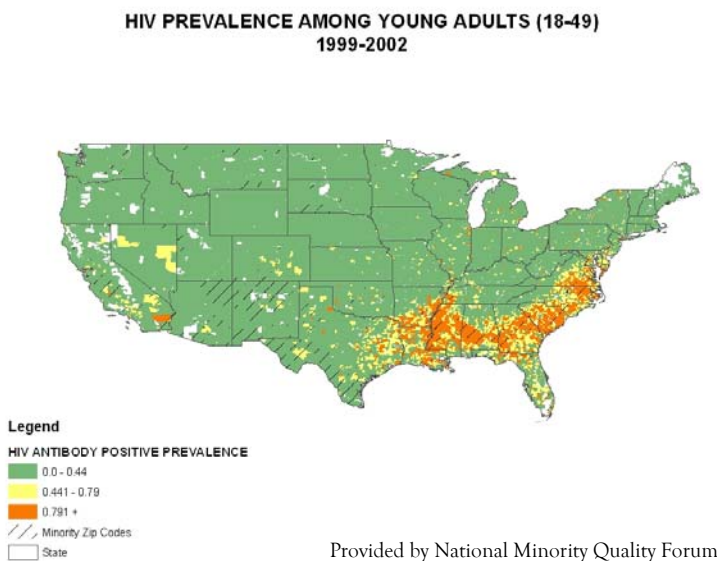


Why a *Manifesto* Update Now? To Save Lives!

The Problem

Rising infection rates coupled with inadequate funding, resources, and infrastructures have resulted in a disparate and catastrophic situation in our public health care systems in the South. The impact of HIV/AIDS on populations that also disproportionately reflect vast poverty and inadequate support continues to fuel the challenges of 1) reducing new infections; 2) identifying infections as early as possible; and 3) providing adequate care, treatment, and housing.

While studies show that early diagnosis and treatment of HIV infection to prevent or delay the transition to an AIDS diagnosis is more cost-effective,³ lack of funding for early treatment for those most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS has systematically led to greater rates of AIDS diagnoses in these groups. Unless we act to correct funding and treatment disparities, we endanger not just isolated communities, but our states and our nation.



Throughout the rest of the country from 2001 through 2005, the number of deaths from AIDS decreased, but continued to increase in the South.^{1,13} The South has the highest number of adults and adolescents living with and dying from AIDS in the United States.^{1,29}

Systems of care have become increasingly overburdened as HIV/AIDS devastates vulnerable populations of the South.^{8,13,27} Characterized by pervasive poverty, lack of adequate services and infrastructures, unemployment, and uninsured individuals,⁴⁵ the South is faced with a crisis of having to provide medical and support care for increasing numbers of infected individuals without adequate funding.

The slide above documents known HIV cases throughout the U. S. among young adults from 1999 through 2002 with obvious disproportionate representation from the South. Since the release of the first *Manifesto* (March 2002), more than 36,000 people have died of AIDS in the South as estimated by the CDC. In 2005 the South was burdened with half of all deaths from AIDS in the United States.⁵⁶

Deaths estimated from AIDS according to the CDC - Numbers							
Region	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Cumulative ^a
Northeast	5,091	5,047	5,376	4,904	3,948	4,074	180,623
Midwest	1,682	1,675	1,655	1,619	1,541	1,325	54,468
South	7,469	7,361	7,776	8,353	8,240	6,475	197,209
West	2,738	2,559	2,597	2,577	2,588	2,141	113,506
Totals	16,980	16,642	17,404	17,453	16,317	14,015	545,806
^a Since the beginning of the epidemic							
Deaths estimated from AIDS according to the CDC - Percents							
Region	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Cumulative ^a
Northeast	30%	30%	31%	28%	24%	29%	33%
Midwest	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	9%	10%
South	44%	44%	45%	48%	50%	46%	36%
West	16%	15%	15%	15%	16%	15%	21%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Introduction

The South has the highest number of new AIDS diagnoses in the United States as a region and sadly has for years.⁴ The levels of HIV transmission coupled with initial diagnoses of AIDS continue to complicate the prevention, care, and treatment systems. The later people are diagnosed, the greater the likelihood that increased transmissions occur.⁵² Care is more complicated when entry into care occurs with concurrent opportunistic infections. Treatment options and systems are also burdened with increasing numbers of drug-resistant strains of the virus, given the number of people infected by those not in care.^{1,4,12}

In addition, many areas of the South continue to face ongoing poverty and discrimination, placing individuals and communities at elevated risk of infection. Unlike the early days of the epidemic, when outbreaks were concentrated in urban areas, a greater proportion of the southern population, including those with HIV/AIDS, live in rural areas.¹¹ This shift further complicates efforts to deliver appropriate care.

Four out of ten (40%) of Americans living with AIDS reside in the South.

HIV/AIDS has had a greater impact on blacks in the South than in any other area of the country, especially among men who have sex with both men and women.¹³ Compared to other regions of the country, HIV/AIDS in the South also disproportionately affects more heterosexuals and those who live in rural areas.^{11,13,14}

The South also reports higher rates of syphilis and gonorrhea than other regions of the country, which increase the risk of HIV transmission.^{3,4,9} Additionally, stigma due to social conservatism

AIDS in the South^{1,4,13,15,17,56,57}

Note: The South comprises 36.4% of the population of the U.S. through 2006.⁵⁹

- Of the top 20 areas (includes 18 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico) with the highest AIDS case rates in 2006, 11 (55%) are in the South.
- The South has the highest number of adults/adolescents living with AIDS in the U.S.
- The number of persons living with AIDS has increased from 1993 to 2005 at a greater rate in the South than in the other regions of the U.S.
- The South has the highest number of people dying from AIDS in the U.S. The number of persons who died from AIDS-related deaths increased from 2001 to 2005 at a greater rate in the South than in other region of the country.
- Of the 20 metropolitan areas with the highest AIDS case rates in 2006, 16 (80%) are in the South.
- The southern states have a higher percentage of new AIDS cases among persons living in non-metropolitan areas than other regions of the U.S.
- Of the 20 states with the highest rates of persons living with HIV (not AIDS) in 2006, 11 (55%) are in the South.
- Of the 15 states with the highest rates of new HIV diagnoses, nine (60%) are in the South.
- Prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS are further complicated in the South by the high prevalence of HIV-infected individuals living in rural areas. Southern states comprise 65% of all AIDS cases among rural populations.

is more pronounced in the South as compared to the rest of the nation.

Geographic Concerns

Rural populations tend to be dispersed over extremely large areas dotted with small communities and are often compared to higher density urban areas. Yet in rural areas of the Southeast, people with HIV/AIDS often travel for several hours to see an infectious disease specialist in a medical care setting.

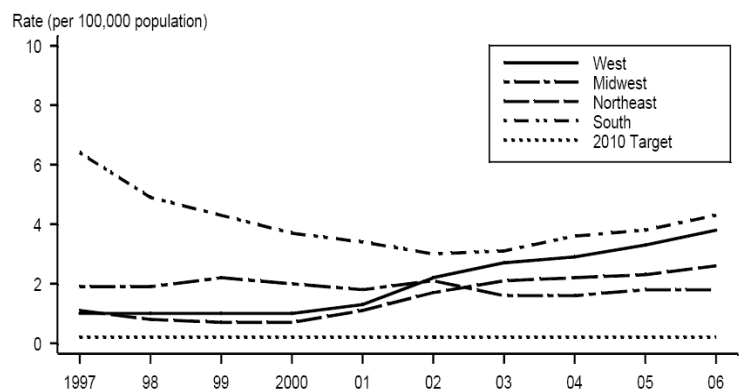
Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

Individuals with STDs, especially syphilis, are at a significantly higher risk for HIV transmission.¹⁹ Throughout the last two

decades, STD rates have been higher in the South, compared to other regions.

- The South ranked first among the four regions of the U.S. in rates of primary/secondary syphilis and rates of gonorrhea in 2006.⁵⁸
- Of the ten states that had the highest primary/secondary syphilis rates in 2006, seven (70%) were southern states.
- Of the 20 states that had the highest gonorrhea rates in 2006, 13 (65%) were Southern states.

Figure 9. Primary and secondary syphilis — Rates by region: United States, 1997–2006 and the Healthy People 2010 target



Note: The Healthy People 2010 target for P&S syphilis is 0.2 case per 100,000 population.