



Jeb Bush * Governor
 John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A. * Secretary of Health
 John P. Heilman, MD, MPH * Pinellas County Health Department Director
 Lisa Cohen * Pinellas & Pasco Counties HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator
 Beth Gustafson, MPH * Editor of Pinellas County HIV/AIDS Surveillance Newsletter

Volume 12, Issue 3
 December 12, 2002



PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
 205 DR. M.L. KING ST NO * ST PETERSBURG, FL 33701 * (727) 824-6900

HIV/AIDS Surveillance Quarterly Statistics Pinellas and Pasco Counties (Area 5) October 2002

World AIDS Day: December 1st

Since 1988, December 1st has marked the global world calendar as "World AIDS Day." Each year, a theme is selected by UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS). The theme UNAIDS selected this year was **"Stigma and Discrimination: AIDS Does Not Discriminate, People Do!"**

Every day, 32 people in Florida are diagnosed with AIDS or HIV infection, with a total of 89,380 cases reported in the state through September 2002. Although blacks comprise only 14 percent of Florida's population, they account for 47 percent of the state's cumulative AIDS cases. Dr. John O. Agwunobi, Florida's Department of Health Secretary, said the Department of Health is making efforts to address such racial disparities in health outcomes through community-based, culturally-sensitive approaches. These efforts include working with minority, community-based organizations to implement culturally-sensitive HIV prevention and treatment programs; facilitating efforts of black clergy and their congregations to mobilize risk-reduction education and supportive attitudes from within the community; and continuing to work with legislative and other community leaders to

assure enhanced resources in areas of greatest unmet need.

Florida HIV/AIDS facts include:

- Through September 2002, a total of 89,380 cases of AIDS have been reported in Florida, including 1,480 among children less than 13 years of age. Of these, 54% are known to have died;
- Florida is third among the states in cumulative AIDS cases and second in pediatric AIDS cases;
- Through September 2002, 27,205 cases of HIV infection (not AIDS) have been reported (HIV reporting in Florida was implemented in July 1997);
- Every day, 32 people in Florida are diagnosed with AIDS or HIV infection;
- Women are one of the fastest growing groups among people diagnosed with AIDS, accounting for 23% of newly reported cases in Florida cumulative through September 2002. In 1990, women comprised 17% of the reported AIDS cases;
- Women accounted for 37% of HIV cases reported through September 2002;
- Of the cumulative number of AIDS cases, blacks and Hispanics accounted for 62% of the AIDS cases. Blacks comprise 14% of Florida's population, but 47% of the total AIDS cases and 58% of the HIV cases;
- Approximately 1 in 168 Floridians are HIV-infected: 1 in 346 whites, 1 in 46 blacks and 1 in 176 Hispanics. An estimated 95,000 Floridians are currently living with HIV infection;
- Three-fourths of HIV-infected people are thought to be aware of their infection;
- In Florida, an estimated 4,000 people each year become newly infected with HIV; and

- HIV/AIDS is the fourth leading cause of death among 25-44 year olds in Florida, and the leading cause of death among black males and females in this age group.

Tom Liberti, chief of DOH's Bureau of HIV/AIDS, emphasized the importance of this year's theme in the overall fight against HIV/AIDS: "Only by confronting stigma and discrimination will we be able to break the silence and remove the barriers to effective HIV/AIDS prevention and care programs in Florida."

.....
 The above information was obtained from a press release provided by the Department of Health in Tallahassee on 11/26/02.

The Pinellas County Health Department, along with several organizations including Operation Hope, the Suncoast Health Councils, and members of the HIV/AIDS Community Prevention Planning Partnership, successfully commemorated World AIDS Day 2002 by holding a community get-together in downtown St Petersburg at Williams Park from 12 to 5PM on Monday, December 3rd. Participants were offered free food, HIV and hepatitis counseling and testing, and routine health screenings. The day was a great success with 70 people being screened and tested for HIV and 10 people who were also tested for hepatitis.



FDA Approves New Rapid HIV Test : 11/7/02

The Food and Drug Administration has approved OraQuick™, a new rapid HIV diagnostic test kit that provides results with 99.6 percent accuracy in as little as 20 minutes. Using less than a drop of blood collected by fingerstick, this new test can quickly and reliably detects antibodies to HIV-1, the HIV virus that which causes the overwhelming majority of HIV infections in most cases in the U.S. The newly approved HIV test is called the OraQuick Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test. Although the results of rapid screenings will be reported in point-of-care settings, as with all screening tests for HIV, if the OraQuick will yield some false positives, necessitating confirmation with an additional test such as Western Blot. The OraQuick test has not been approved to screen blood donors. The Moreover, under terms of this initial approval, OraQuiktes can only be given processed in CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act)-approved labs by CLIA-certified laboratory techns or medical staff, which limits its usefulness, especially in outreach settings. This is of importance, because CDC estimates that 25% of the approximately 900,000 HIV infected people in the U.S.

are unaware of their status, and in the year 2000, 30% of people who tested positive didn't return for their results. Being able to alert patients to potential HIV positivity within 20 minutes could result in major improvements in post-test followup and linkage to services. For that reason, HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson has encouraged the manufacturer to document accuracy in less skilled settings, and to apply for a CLIA waiver. If the test manufacturer applies for a CLIA waiver, the FDA can evaluate it for use under less stringent conditions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has estimated that one fourth of the approximately 900,000 HIV-infected people in the U.S. are not aware that they are infected. The test will could also help identify HIV-infected women going into labor who were not previously tested during pregnancy so that precautionary steps can be taken to block their antiretroviral treatment can be offered and breast feeding can be avoided to prevent transmission to their newborns. new-

borns from being infected with HIVit could also assistbe a critical resource in helping identify HIV infection in in making treatment decisions when healthcare and emergency workers sustain occupational exposures to blood or other potentially infectious body fluids. health-care and emergency workers who are accidentally exposed to HIV-infected blood. Our current understanding is that FDA is placing only minimal restrictions on OraQuick. We have heard that restrictions will Other conditions of approval include: Test personnel must be properly trained.

- The test is not for home use.
- The test is not for screening blood donors.
- The test is not to be used on individuals under 13.
- Patients must be given a receive pamphlets related to the test as well as the meaning of results.
- Test results must be accompanied by information

For more information, please check the CDC OraQuick

Inside this issue:	
Pinellas HIV & AIDS statistics	2
Pasco HIV & AIDS statistics	3
Hillsborough HIV & AIDS statistics	4
Florida HIV & AIDS statistics	5
U.S. HIV & AIDS statistics	5
World HIV & AIDS statistics	5
HIV/AIDS Health Department Contact	6

Special points of interest:

- *Upcoming events to keep in mind:*
 - * *2002 year-end ICD-9 and laboratory reviews for health facilities — letters will be sent out in a few weeks!*
- *Call the HIV/AIDS surveillance office at 727-824-6903 if you have an HIV or AIDS case to report or if you need specific HIV/AIDS statistical information. Erica Amato, Debbie Cale, De Wengrzn, Ray Sanderlin or myself are here to assist you with reporting and/or statistics you might need! If you're a health care provider in Pasco County and need to report an HIV/AIDS case please call Michael Wydotis at 727-869-3900 (x173).*



Pinellas County AIDS Statistics

All Pinellas County AIDS data is cumulative from 1981 to November 1, 2002
 Source: Pinellas County Health Department, HIV/AIDS Surveillance

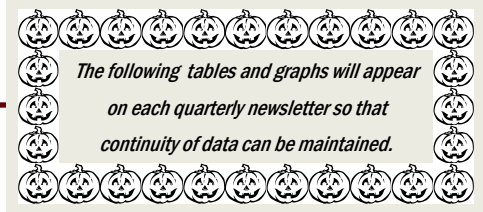


Table 1: **AIDS Cases — by RACE**

Race	Adults	Pediatric	Total
White	2497 (72%)	12 (50%)	2509 (72%)
Black	861 (24%)	11 (46%)	872 (24%)
Hispanic	150 (4%)	1 (4%)	151 (4%)
Asian/Pacific Is.	13 (0%)	13 (0%)	13 (0%)
Am.Indian/AK. Native	7 (0%)	7 (0%)	7 (0%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	3528 (100%)	24 (100%)	3552 (100%)

Table 3: **AIDS Cases — by Adult Risk Categories**

Risk Factors (adults)	Males	Females	Total
Gay/Bisexual Men	2052 (68%)		2052 (58%)
Injecting Drug Users	377 (13%)	146 (28%)	523 (15%)
Gay/ Bi Male & IDU	212 (7%)		212 (6%)
Heterosexual Contact	172 (5%)	273 (52%)	445 (13%)
Transfusion Recipients	34 (1%)	24 (5%)	58 (2%)
Coagulation Disorder	14 (1%)		14 (0%)
Risk Not Reported	146 (5%)	78 (15%)	224 (6%)
Total	3007 (100%)	521 (100%)	3528 (100%)

Table 2: **AIDS Cases — by AGE**

Age	Cases (%)	Deaths
0-12	24 (1%)	14 (58%)
13-19	18 (0%)	
20-29	573 (16%)	
30-39	1574 (45%)	2043 (58%)
40-49	962 (27%)	
50+	401 (11%)	
Total	3552 (100%)	2057 (58%)

Table 4: **AIDS Cases — by Pediatric Risk Categories**

Risk Factors (peds)	Males	Females	Total
Mother with HIV	9 (75%)	11 (92%)	20 (83%)
Hemophilia	2 (17%)		2 (7%)
Transfusion	1 (8%)		1 (5%)
Risk Not Reported	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	1 (5%)
Total	12 (100%)	12 (100%)	24 (100%)

Pinellas County HIV Statistics

All Pinellas County HIV data is cumulative from 7/1/97 to November 1, 2002
 Source: Pinellas County Health Department, HIV/AIDS Surveillance



Table 5: **HIV Cases — by RACE**

Race	Adults	Pediatric	Total
White	463 (55%)	3 (50%)	466 (55%)
Black	310 (37%)	3 (50%)	313 (37%)
Hispanic	43 (5%)		43 (5%)
Asian/Pacific Is.	4 (1%)	4 (1%)	4 (1%)
Am.Indian/AK. Native	5 (0%)	5 (0%)	5 (0%)
Unknown	14 (2%)	14 (2%)	14 (2%)
Total	839 (100%)	6 (100%)	845 (100%)

Table 7: **HIV Cases — by Adult Risk Categories**

Risk Factors (adults)	Males	Females	Total
Gay/Bisexual Men	333 (56%)		333 (40%)
Injecting Drug Users	59 (10%)	54 (22%)	113 (13%)
Gay/ Bi Male & IDU	31 (5%)		31 (4%)
Heterosexual Contact	47 (8%)	101 (41%)	148 (18%)
Transfusion Recipients	3 (1%)	1 (0%)	4 (0%)
Coagulation Disorder	0 (0%)		0 (0%)
Risk Not Reported	117 (20%)	93 (37%)	210 (25%)
Total	590 (100%)	249 (100%)	839 (100%)

Table 6: **HIV Cases — by AGE**

Age	Cases (%)	Deaths
0-12	6 (1%)	0 (0%)
13-19	32 (4%)	
20-29	215 (25%)	
30-39	336 (40%)	19 (2%)
40-49	187 (22%)	
50+	69 (8%)	
Total	845 (100%)	19 (2%)

Table 8: **HIV Cases — by Pediatric Risk Categories**

Risk Factors (peds)	Males	Females	Total
Mother with HIV	1 (50%)	2 (50%)	3 (50%)
Risk Not Reported	1 (50%)	2 (50%)	3 (50%)
Total	2 (100%)	4 (100%)	6 (100%)

Pasco County AIDS Statistics



All Pasco County AIDS data is cumulative from 1981 to November 1, 2002
 Source: Pinellas County Health Department, HIV/AIDS Surveillance

Table 9: AIDS Cases — by RACE

Race	Adults	Pediatric
White	484 (83%)	
Black	57 (10%)	3
Hispanic	37 (6%)	
Other/Unknown	3 (1%)	
Total	581 (100%)	3 (100%)

Table 11: AIDS Cases — by Adult Risk Categories

Risk Factors (adults)	Males	Females	Total
Gay/Bisexual Men	265 (55%)		265 (46%)
Injecting Drug Users	71 (15%)	32 (32%)	103 (18%)
Gay/ Bi Male & IDU	49 (10%)		49 (8%)
Heterosexual Contact	41 (8%)	52 (53%)	93 (16%)
Transfusion Recipients	13 (3%)	3 (3%)	16 (3%)
Coagulation Disorder	3 (1%)		3 (0%)
Risk Not Reported	40 (8%)	12 (12%)	52 (9%)
Total	482 (100%)	99 (100%)	581 (100%)

Table 10: AIDS Cases — by AGE

Age	Cases (%)	Deaths
0-12	3 (0%)	
13-19	4 (1%)	
20-29	86 (15%)	
30-39	262 (45%)	
40-49	151 (26%)	
50+	78 (13%)	
Total	584 (100%)	328 (56%)

Table 12: AIDS Cases — by Pediatric Risk Categories

Risk Factors (peds)	Total
Mother with HIV	3 (100%)
Risk Not Reported	
Total	3 (100%)

Pasco County HIV Statistics



Due to the fact that some of the cell sizes for Pasco County were <3, some of the data has not been completely stratified.

All Pasco County HIV data is cumulative from 7/1/97 to November 1, 2002
 Source: Pinellas County Health Department, HIV/AIDS Surveillance

Table 13: HIV Cases — by RACE (adults only)

Race	Adults
White	97 (70%)
Black	19 (14%)
Hispanic	14 (10%)
Other/Unknown	9 (6%)
Total	139 (100%)

Table 15: HIV Cases — by Adult Risk Categories

Risk Factors (adults)	Males	Females	Total
Gay/Bisexual Men	43 (43%)		43 (31%)
Injecting Drug Users	12 (12%)	5 (13%)	17 (12%)
Gay/ Bi Male & IDU	5 (5%)		5 (4%)
Heterosexual Contact	8 (8%)	24 (60%)	32 (23%)
Risk Not Reported	31 (32%)	11 (27%)	42 (30%)
Total	99 (100%)	40 (100%)	139 (100%)

Table 14: HIV Cases — by AGE

Age	Cases (%)	Deaths
0-19	9 (7%)	
20-29	40 (31%)	
30-39	52 (36%)	
40-49	24 (14%)	
50+	14 (12%)	
Total	139 (100%)	0 (0%)

There have been no HIV pediatric cases reported for Pasco County as of July 1997.

Hillsborough AIDS Statistics



All Hillsborough County AIDS data is cumulative from 1981 to November 30, 2002
 Source: Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS

Table 16: AIDS Cases — by RACE

Race	Adults	Pediatric	Total
White	2620 (52%)	17 (23%)	2637 (52%)
Black	1779 (35%)	44 (58%)	1823 (35%)
Hispanic	663 (13%)	14 (19%)	677 (13%)
Asian/Pacific Is.	9 (0%)	9 (0%)	9 (0%)
Am.Indian/AK. Native	5 (0%)	5 (0%)	5 (0%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	5076 (100%)	75 (100%)	5151 (100%)

Table 17: AIDS Cases — by AGE

Age	Cases (%)	Deaths
0-4	58 (1%)	31 (41%)
5-12	17 (0%)	
13-19	29 (1%)	
20-29	926 (18%)	
30-39	2260 (44%)	2854 (56%)
40-49	1283 (24%)	
50-59	415 (8%)	
60-64	84 (2%)	
65-69	41 (1%)	
70+	38 (1%)	
Total	5151 (100%)	2885 (56%)

Table 18: AIDS Cases — by Adult Risk Categories

Risk Factors (adults)	Males	Females	Total
Gay/Bisexual Men	2498 (62%)		2498 (49%)
Injecting Drug Users	568 (14%)	300 (29%)	868 (17%)
Gay/ Bi Male & IDU	311 (8%)		311 (6%)
Heterosexual Contact	358 (9%)	535 (52%)	893 (18%)
Transfusion Recipients	29 (1%)	25 (3%)	54 (1%)
Coagulation Disorder	19 (0%)	1 (0%)	20 (0%)
Risk Not Reported	273 (6%)	159 (16%)	432 (9%)
Total	4056 (100%)	1020 (100%)	5076 (100%)

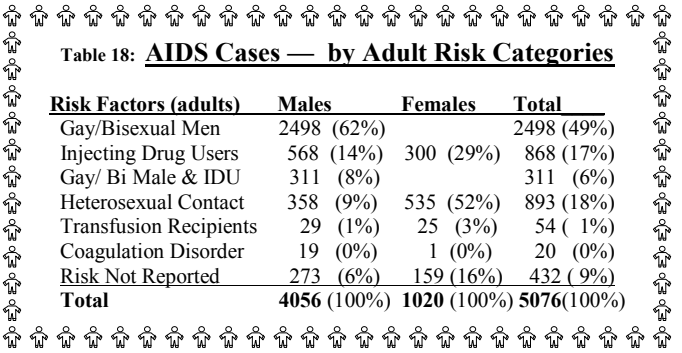
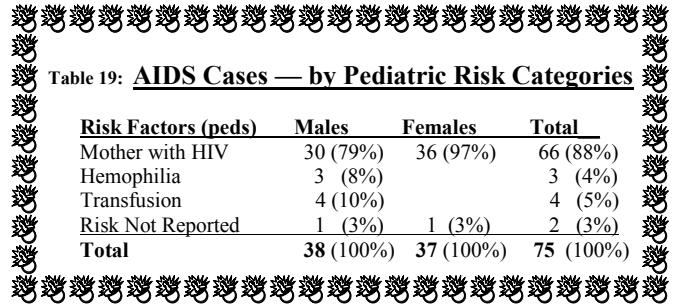


Table 19: AIDS Cases — by Pediatric Risk Categories

Risk Factors (peds)	Males	Females	Total
Mother with HIV	30 (79%)	36 (97%)	66 (88%)
Hemophilia	3 (8%)		3 (4%)
Transfusion	4 (10%)		4 (5%)
Risk Not Reported	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	2 (3%)
Total	38 (100%)	37 (100%)	75 (100%)



Hillsborough HIV Statistics

All Hillsborough County HIV data is cumulative from 7/1/97 to November 30, 2002
 Source: Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS

You can get Hillsborough and other Florida county data
 on the Florida Department of Health website:

www.doh.state.fl.us

(once at the site click on "AIDS/HIV")



Table 20: HIV Cases — by RACE

Race	Adults	Pediatric	Total
White	594 (36%)	2 (13%)	596 (35%)
Black	857 (51%)	13 (81%)	870 (51%)
Hispanic	225 (13%)	1 (6%)	226 (13%)
Asian/Pacific Is.	5 (0%)	5 (0%)	5 (0%)
Am.Indian/AK. Native	1 (0%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)
Unknown	6 (0%)	6 (0%)	6 (0%)
Total	1688 (100%)	16 (100%)	1704 (100%)

Table 21: HIV Cases — by AGE

Age	Cases (%)	Deaths
0-4	10 (1%)	0 (0%)
5-12	6 (0%)	
13-19	56 (3%)	
20-29	421 (25%)	
30-39	649 (38%)	57 (3%)
40-49	409 (24%)	
50-59	108 (6%)	
60-64	23 (1%)	
65-69	12 (1%)	
70+	10 (1%)	
Total	1704 (100%)	57 (3%)

Table 22: HIV Cases — by Adult Risk Categories

Risk Factors (adults)	Males	Females	Total
Gay/Bisexual Men	507 (48%)		507 (30%)
Injecting Drug Users	86 (8%)	92 (15%)	178 (10%)
Gay/ Bi Male & IDU	45 (4%)		45 (3%)
Heterosexual Contact	143 (14%)	273 (43%)	416 (25%)
Transfusion Recipients	1 (0%)	1 (0%)	2 (0%)
Coagulation Disorder	1 (0%)		1 (0%)
Risk Not Reported	272 (26%)	267 (42%)	539 (32%)
Total	1055 (100%)	633 (100%)	1688 (100%)

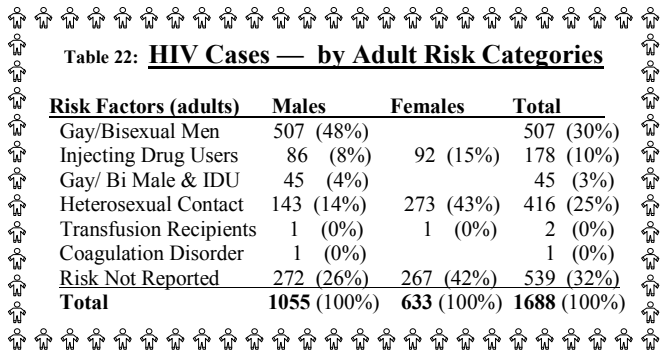
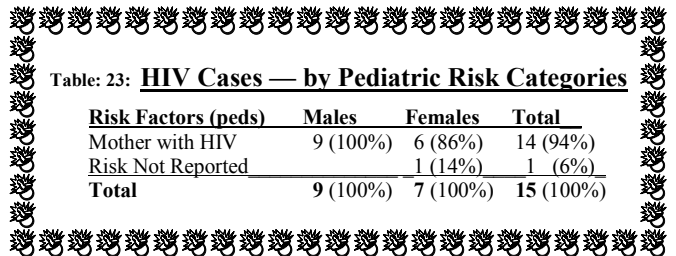


Table 23: HIV Cases — by Pediatric Risk Categories

Risk Factors (peds)	Males	Females	Total
Mother with HIV	9 (100%)	6 (86%)	14 (94%)
Risk Not Reported	1 (14%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)
Total	9 (100%)	7 (100%)	15 (100%)



Florida HIV/AIDS Statistics

Source: Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS
 HIV/AIDS, STD & TB Monthly Surveillance Report, #218
 If additional state data is needed please go to "www.doh.state.fl.us"



Table 24: **Cumulative HIV Case Counts for Florida**
 (7/1/97-9/30/02)

	HIV	Deaths
Total	27205	572 (2%)
Adult	26944	568 (2%)
Pediatric	261	4 (2%)

Table 26: **Cumulative HIV/AIDS Case Counts in Surrounding Counties**
 (as of 9/30/02)

County	HIV	AIDS
Hillsborough	1653	5109
Pinellas	843	3539
Polk	418	1378
Sarasota	168	861
Manatee	217	826
Pasco	129	563
Hernando	51	185
Highlands	75	150
Hardee	14	60

Table 27: **Cumulative HIV/AIDS Case Counts in the Top 7 Florida Counties**
 (as of 9/30/02)

County	HIV	AIDS
Dade	7935	25809
Broward	4488	14105
Palm Beach	2099	8539
Orange	2018	5113
Hillsborough	1653	5109
Duval	1350	4478
Pinellas	843	3539

Table 25: **Cumulative AIDS Case Counts for Florida**
 (through 9/30/02)

	AIDS	Deaths
Total	89380	48445 (54%)
Adult	87900	47638 (54%)
Pediatric	1480	807 (55%)

United States HIV/AIDS Statistics

Adults & Children estimated to be **living** with HIV/AIDS in U.S.: 920,000
 Estimated number of adults & children **newly** infected with HIV in U.S. during 2000: 45,000

Table 28: **Cumulative HIV/AIDS Case Counts for U.S.**
 (as of 8/31/02)

	HIV	AIDS	% AIDS Deaths
Total	193249	843426	56%
Adult	189107	834225	56%
Pediatric	4142	9201	57%

(Source: Florida HIV/AIDS, STD & TB Monthly Surveillance Report, #218)

Beth Gustafson is responsible for compiling and editing the HIV/AIDS Surveillance Statistics for the Pinellas and Pasco County Health Departments on a quarterly basis. For further information regarding statistics, or questions regarding HIV or AIDS reporting, please contact Beth at (727) 824-6903



Table 29: **Cumulative HIV* Cases of 5 Leading U.S. States**
 (as of 8/31/02)

1. New York (12/00)	29202	(15%)
2. Florida (7/97)	26553	(14%)
3. New Jersey (1/92)	15602	(8%)
4. Texas (2/94)	13686	(7%)
4. North Carolina (2/90)	11321	(6%)

(Source: Florida HIV/AIDS, STD & TB Monthly Surveillance Report, #218)

* Data only from those states where HIV is reportable & includes only persons reported with HIV

Table 30: **Cumulative AIDS Cases of 20 Leading U.S. Cities**
 (as of 6/30/01)

1. New York City	122062	11. San Juan, PR	15958
2. Los Angeles	42796	12. Baltimore	15009
3. San Francisco	28212	13. Boston	14645
4. Miami	24838	14. Ft. Lauderdale	13306
5. Washington DC	24029	15. Dallas	12672
6. Chicago	22217	16. San Diego	10820
7. Houston	19582	17. Tampa-St Pete	8726
8. Philadelphia	19605	18. Oakland	8227
9. Newark	17472	19. Detroit	7993
10. Atlanta	16423	20. West Palm Beach	7899

(Source: Centers for Disease Control, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Vol. 13, No. 1)

Table 31: **Cumulative AIDS Cases of 10 Leading U.S. States**
 (as of 6/30/01)

1. New York	144106
2. California	121831
3. Florida	83005
4. Texas	55292
5. New Jersey	43017
6. Illinois	25665
7. Puerto Rico	25459
8. Pennsylvania	25264
9. Georgia	23575
10. Maryland	22432

(Source: Centers for Disease Control, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, Vol. 13, No. 1)

Here are some useful Web links/sites for HIV/AIDS information:

World HIV/AIDS Statistics

From W.H.O. (www.who.org) & UNAIDS (www.unaids.org):
 Reported World AIDS Cases as of 5/00: **2,201,468**
 Estimated living World HIV/AIDS Cases as of 2001: **40 million**
 Estimated new HIV infections in World in 2001: **5 million**
 Estimated World deaths due to HIV/AIDS in 2001: **3 million**
 Estimated Cumulative number of deaths in World due to HIV/AIDS: **21.8 million**



- <http://www.doh.state.fl.us>
- <http://www.cdc.gov>
- <http://www.who.int>
- <http://www.paho.org/english/aid/aidstd.htm>
- <http://www.iapac.org>
- <http://www.flairs.org/tcrs/aidstline.htm>
- <http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu>
- <http://www.hivatis.org/trtgdlns.html>
- Florida HIV/AIDS statistics
- Centers for Disease Control
- World Health Organization
- PAHO: AIDS site
- Int'l Assoc of Physicians in AIDS care
- Florida AIDS Hotline site
- HIV/AIDS InSite Information
- HIV/AIDS treatment site



HIV/AIDS Surveillance Office
Pinellas County Health Department
205 Dr. M.L. King Street North
Disease Control, Room 3-148
St Petersburg, FL 33701

AIDS Epidemic Continues to Ravage American South

The six-state American South region of the U.S. including North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana has had the highest proportional increase of HIV and AIDS from 1990 to today. The southern region - stretching from Delaware to Texas - has the largest number of people with AIDS in the country and the unique problems posed by this silent, rural epidemic makes it more difficult to combat in the South than in other areas of the country. These factors include:

- * **It is a rural disease.** Seventy-five percent of the infected people live in rural areas, which poses transportation and other problems.
- * **The stigma is greater.** The disease is "spreading silently" because people are afraid to admit they have HIV. In some areas, people believe there is a cancer epidemic because people with AIDS tell friends and family they have cancer.
- * Patients are less likely to have a community support system and more likely to distrust the medical system and, therefore, **miss appointments or refuse treatment.**
- * **The gay community is different from that of large urban areas.** There is an underground community of gay men who are often married and don't want to talk about the fact they are having sex with other men.
- * The South has a higher proportion of AIDS patients with **mental health and substance abuse problems.**
- * **Prevention messages designed for urban populations don't work well** in the rural South.

Partly because of these factors, there has never been a dropoff in the rate of infection as there was in the urban areas, said Duke University professor Kathryn Whetten-Goldstein, assistant professor of public policy studies and community and family medicine at the Center for Health Policy, Law and Management. "We've never had a handle on the epidemic in the South," she said.

source: [AScribe Newswire, 11/25/02]

Florida law requires cases of AIDS to be reported by anyone who diagnoses or treats a person with AIDS, with a \$500 fine per case for failure to report.
NOTE: A person who tests positive for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) on or after July 1, 1997 is reportable. Confidentiality is guaranteed.
Please send your completed HIV/AIDS case report in an envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL" to:

BETH GUSTAFSON, MPH
PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
205 DR. M.L. KING STREET NORTH
ST PETERSBURG, FL 33701
(727) 824-6903 ; SUNCOM 517-4403
FAX: (727) 820-4274
EMAIL: BETH_GUSTAFSON@DOH.STATE.FL.US

If you need reporting forms, would like to have a brief HIV/AIDS Surveillance In-Service for your staff in your office, or would like to have your HIV/AIDS cases reviewed in your office, please call the above number and speak to Beth Gustafson, Erica Amato, Debbie Cale, Dolores (De) Wengrzyn, or Ray Sanderlin.

