

Castle Hill ACTS Update



Dr. Antonia Novello, Commissioner of Health for New York State (left) and Dr. Julie Gerberding, Director of the CDC (right)

Health Officials Urge Clinicians to Increase HIV Screening

Bronx patients among the nation's most at-risk for HIV infection.

Responding to increases in HIV infection rates, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has again issued a challenge for clinicians to make HIV testing a routine part of medical care, especially in high risk areas like the Bronx.

Engaging more patients in HIV testing is not only a priority for the CDC, but also for the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). In a letter mailed to providers throughout New York state in April, Commissioner Novello wrote, "more needs to be done to

encourage HIV testing and remove barriers to HIV testing." The letter called attention to a newly streamlined HIV test consent form that is designed to facilitate faster and more efficient testing by all clinicians, not just dedicated HIV test counselors.


The recommendations issued by the CDC and the NYSDOH underscore the relevance and timeliness of the ACTS program in helping clinics scale up HIV testing services to the levels they are needed.

Find out more about CDC and NYSDOH HIV testing recommendations online:

www.cdc.gov/hiv/partners/ahp.htm

www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/aids/regulations/2005_guidance/letter.htm

HIV Looking Glass



The CDC recommends routine HIV testing of all patients in areas with $\geq 1\%$ prevalence of HIV. This is a look at HIV in New York and your clinic's progress in meeting HIV testing goals.

Citywide HIV/AIDS rate	1.2%
Bronx HIV/AIDS rates	
• Crotona/Tremont	2.1%
• Fordham/Bronx Park	1.4%
• High Bridge/Morrisania	2.3%
• Hunts Point/Mott Haven	2.2%
• Kingsbridge/Riverdale	.5%
• Northeast Bronx	.7%
• Pelham/Throgs Neck	1%

Castle Hill Testing Trends

	Chlamydia	HIV
June '05	112	148
May '05	86	113
April '05	71	104
Mar '05	68	115
Feb '05	51	172
Jan '05	53	152

2005 Testing Totals (to date)

- Chlamydia 768
- HIV 477

2004 Testing Totals

- Chlamydia 1762
- HIV 684

It's all about your opening line

To de-stigmatize HIV testing and encourage patient consent, instead of saying...

Because you have risk factors for HIV, I think it would be a good idea for you to get an HIV test. What do you think? Do you want to get tested?

try...

Because the Bronx is a high risk area for HIV, I now recommend that all my patients get an HIV test. I would really like for us to do this today.

To Test or Not to Test

Assess your knowledge of the value of HIV testing by examining these common misconceptions:

MYTH	FACT
<p>Most patients will refuse an HIV test when their health care provider suggests it.</p>	<p>Studies confirm that HIV testing is more likely when providers take the initiative and stress the benefits of testing.</p> <p>Irwin KL, Valdiserri RO, Holmberg SD. The acceptability of voluntary HIV antibody testing in the United States: A decade of lessons learned. <i>AIDS</i> 1996;10:1702-1717.</p> <p>Samet JH, Winter MR, Grant L, Hingson R. Factors associated with HIV testing among sexually active adolescents. A Massachusetts survey. <i>Pediatrics</i> 1997;100:371-77.</p>
<p>A provider can almost always predict when patients are truly at-risk for HIV and should be offered HIV testing.</p>	<p>For patients and providers alike, the “visual AIDS test” is highly unreliable. While there are some groups that are more at-risk than others, in the Bronx anyone could be exposed to the virus via sex or IV drug use.</p> <p>Everyone benefits when providers test all of their patients, because many patients do not recognize their own HIV risk factors. Heterosexual women as well as older men and women often assume they are not at-risk for HIV when, in fact, they are among the fastest growing groups of HIV infected patients. No one understands this better than your clinic, where a 50 year old heterosexual woman who reported no risk for HIV was recently diagnosed with full blown AIDS.</p>
<p>Routine HIV testing in clinical settings isn't cost-effective.</p>	<p>Two separate studies published this year in the <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i> proved the significant cost and health value of routine one-time HIV testing, particularly in high-risk settings.</p> <p>Paltiel DA, Weinstein MC, Kimmel AD, et al. Expanding HIV screening in the United States--an analysis of cost-effectiveness. <i>N Engl J Med</i> 2005;352:586-95.</p> <p>Sanders GD, Bayoumi AM, Sundaram V, et al. Cost-effectiveness of screening for HIV in the era of highly active antiretroviral therapy. <i>N Engl J Med</i> 2005;352:570-85.</p>
<p>Absorbing the cost of HIV testing for Medicaid patients is problematic at Montefiore.</p>	<p>There is no financial risk in testing Medicaid patients for HIV at Montefiore. The hospital receives wrap-around payments from Medicaid for HIV testing, and also has a federal grant that specifically covers the cost of HIV testing for those who are uninsured.</p> <p>For more information, contact Paul Meissner at 718-920-7802.</p>



ACTS chart stickers are a helpful reminder to address HIV testing and they help you note the delivery of patients' HIV test results.

The stickers also help track clinic progress and individual patient progress with respect to HIV testing.

When you run low on stickers or want to change your clinic's sticker, contact:

Stephen Stafford or Connie Ortiz
718-882-0232



ACTS in Action

The ACTS program is now being implemented in more than a dozen clinical settings in the U.S. and Africa.

In addition to your clinic and four other Montefiore family clinics, ACTS is also being piloted by Montefiore's Pediatric Emergency Room.

Additionally, ACTS is being implemented by school nurses across the country through the National Assembly on School-Based Health Care.

And on the other side of the World, ACTS will soon be used at youth clinics (see photo) in the township of Khayelitsha in South Africa.

As these initiatives progress, we will share lessons and triumphs that will help you and your colleagues better use the ACTS program to identify your HIV-positive patients and link them to care.