

In August 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated estimates of the rate of HIV in the United States: 56,300 new infections occurred in the U.S. in 2006. This number represents an over 40% increase to the previous annual estimates of 40,000. Because the CDC's new surveillance system allows for more accurate estimates of new infections in specific populations, the CDC states these new estimates do not reflect an overall increase in HIV incidence. Yet data shows that HIV continues to disproportionately impact African American men and women, men who have sex with men and gay and bisexual men of all races/ethnicities. The data also reflects a continued increase in HIV/AIDS in Hispanic communities. The CDC also stresses that an estimated one-quarter of persons living with HIV/AIDS are unaware of their health status. These real numbers represent real individuals in our communities and illuminate the impact of discrimination and health disparities on the very health of our nation.

Professional social workers have the practice skills necessary to address this growing public health pandemic. Social workers need to be knowledgeable about current trends in disease management and their role in assessment and intervention with clients at risk for HIV/AIDS and related co-infections within the populations served.

For more information on HIV/AIDS - please go to

http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/hiv_aids/default.asp

Please click here

(<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/factsheets/pdf/incidence.pdf>) For a copy of the CDC Factsheet "Estimates of New HIV Infections in the United States".