



HEALTH &  
WELLNESS

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AIDS was first identified in the USA in 1981. The epidemic has now spread to every part of the USA and to all sectors of society.

It is thought that more than one million people are living with HIV in the USA and that more than half a million have died after developing AIDS.

American HIV surveillance data are not comprehensive so many statistics must be based on reports of AIDS diagnoses. In interpreting such AIDS statistics, it is important to remember that they do not correspond to new HIV infections. Most people live with HIV for several years before developing AIDS.

Of all the industrialized countries in the world, America is home to the largest number of people living with HIV. Tens of thousands of people are newly infected with HIV in America every year and although infection rates have declined among injecting drug users, there has been an alarming increase among men who have sex with men.

Over 17,000 people died of AIDS in 2005 alone, yet increasingly AIDS is seen as an 'overseas' or an 'African' problem, rather than something that directly affects American citizens. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) tends to receive greater attention and attract considerably more comment in the press than the work taking place within America.

When AIDS is mentioned on a national level, it is often in relation to the chronic funding shortages for AIDS services; the epidemic among African Americans; or the ban on HIV positive people entering the country. With the exception of the reduction in mother-to-child transmission in recent years, the news is rarely good. AIDS continues to affect marginalized groups, and continues to receive nowhere near the attention or funding that is required to effectively tackle the problem.

## Global Facts and Figures

- In 2007, globally, about 2 million people died of AIDS, 33 million were living with HIV and 2.5 million people were newly infected with the virus.
- More than 90 percent of people with HIV are living in the developing world.
- The impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls has been particularly devastating. Women and girls now comprise 50 percent of those aged 15 and older living with HIV.
- In 2007, 420,000 children under age 15 were infected with HIV and 290,000 died of AIDS. In addition to the estimated 2.1 million children living with HIV/AIDS, about 15 million children have lost one or both parents due to the disease.

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