

HEALTH

For Your Health

BY DR. WYNDOLYN C. BELL

HIV/AIDS is not solely an individual concern. It is a family issue that we can't afford to ignore. It affects not only the person living with the virus, but the entire family and, ultimately, our entire community.

It has been 30 years since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the first case of a deadly new syndrome that would come to be known as HIV/AIDS. Over the years, we have made great strides in preventing HIV transmission and treating people with HIV and AIDS.

Prescription drugs, long-term care plans, healthy-lifestyle interventions and innovative treatments are improving. Americans with HIV and AIDS are living longer, healthier and more productive lives. But we still have a long way to go.

According to the CDC, more than 1 million people are living with HIV in the United States, and more than 20 percent of them are living with HIV but are unaware of their infection. The CDC estimates that more than 56,000 Americans become infected with HIV each year, and more than 18,000 people with

HIV/AIDS is a Family Issue

AIDS die each year in the U.S.

By race/ethnicity, African Americans are severely and disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS in the United States, according to the CDC. African Americans represent roughly 13 percent of the U.S. population; however, they account for almost half of people living with HIV as well as nearly half of new infections each year, far surpassing any other racial or ethnic group.

There is no scientific evidence that demonstrates that African Americans are more susceptible to HIV infection, and efforts to prevent HIV transmission are equally effective in the African-American population as in other populations.

According to the CDC, many African Americans face the same challenges as other ethnic groups that contribute to higher rates of HIV infection, including socioeconomic issues associated with poverty, unprotected sex, injection drug use, lack of awareness of HIV status, and higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The presence of certain STDs can significantly increase the chance of contracting HIV infection.

HIV/AIDS is both preventable and treatable. Early diagnosis and proper care help people with HIV/AIDS live longer and healthier lives and prevent them from spreading the disease to others.

The CDC identifies stigma as a major contributor to the spread

of HIV. Shame keeps people from seeking information, speaking openly, using protection, getting tested and treated, and otherwise acting to protect themselves and those they love.

HIV testing is fast, easy, widely available and can be done confidentially. Without needles, rapid HIV tests provide results in less than half an hour. Local health departments can provide information on how to get tested at no cost.

If you feel you may be at risk, give yourself the gift of knowing your HIV status - and encourage those you love to do the same.

Dr. Wyndolyn C. Bell is vice president of Health Care Strategies for United Healthcare.



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Part 28. Industrial Injuries:

What to do if you are hurt on the job

Q: I was lifting a heavy object on the job site and my back just collapsed on me. I have since gone to several company doctors only to get yet another pain pill. One doctor has mentioned surgery. What do you think I should do?

A: You should immediately request to see a Chiropractor. Approximately 90% of back injuries have the capacity of being helped through Chiropractic. Our

office has an excellent track record with helping problems like yours. We make every attempt possible to get you back on the job safely as soon as possible - often within a few days. This is obviously beneficial not only to you but your company as well. It is not uncommon for a workmen's compensation back surgery to run

\$100,000. I'm sure your employer would just as soon not have expenses like that. Speak to your employer today about having a Chiropractic consultation. If you have had a lifting injury or suffer from pain, why don't you call us today. A life of suffering is indeed a wasted life. Don't let it be yours.

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