

PHILADELPHIA

AIDS IN THE US

Jonathan Man: *Twenty years after the AIDS epidemic exploded into public view in the United States health officials say the disease is once again spreading at an alarming rate. Authorities say today's infection rates are threatening years of progress. For more now we're joined by medical correspondent Christy Feig in Washington. Christy?*

Christy Feig: Jonathan, Today's CDC¹ report comes just days before the 20th year anniversary of the first reported cases of AIDS. And those numbers will be shown today, err – in the report that came out today the numbers show the latest infection rates of HIV in the United States.

Since the first cases of AIDS were reported in 1981 in the gay communities of Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York almost every group in the United States has been affected. More than 800,000 Americans are currently living with HIV. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention about 1/3 of them don't even know they're infected and by the end of last year 450,000 Americans had died from the disease, and the CDC estimates 40,000 more are infected every year. Yet the gay community still sees the most new infections and according to a new report by the CDC young gay men in the African-American community are especially at risk. The CDC surveyed gay men in their mid to late 30s in 6 cities and found almost 1 in 6 young gay and bisexual black men in these cities were newly infected with HIV.

Dr. Helene Gayle, CDC: *"The rate of new infections that we found among African-Americans was about 5 times higher than for whites and approximately 4 times higher than Latino young men in this population."*

Christy Feig: The CDC says these statistics are a call to action.

Dr. Helene Gayle, CDC: *"This 15% is extremely high and could lead to a very, very devastating situation among this population of young gay men."*

Christy Feig: Some in the gay African-American community say social factors such as the strong influence of the Church don't always allow gay and bisexual men to come out of the closet.

Cornelius Baker, Whitman-Walker Clinic: *"There are a lot of people who do have girlfriends, who do have wives and then have a secretive sexual life beyond that."*

Christy Feig: Powerful medicines have helped bring down the death rates of AIDS in recent years. Now it's the younger generations of gay men, who weren't around to bury their loved ones, who, experts say, are increasingly becoming complacent about protecting themselves.

Now it's these new infections, these 40,000 new infections every year, that really bothers the CDC, and that's because this number has plateaued in the mid-1980s – the number was about 150,000 a year and dropped to 40,000 and it hasn't really changed since and so the CDC is launching a prevention campaign with a goal to try and reduce those numbers by half within 5 years. Jonathan?

Jonathan Man: *Christy Feig.*

CNN, *American Edition*, 2001

ANALYSIS

1. What is AIDS and HIV?
2. When were the first cases of AIDS reported in the US?
3. What is the situation today?
4. Are all the Americans who are HIV positive aware they have the disease?
5. What group is the most at risk? Why?
6. What does the expression "*come out of the closet*" (l. 24) mean?
7. Why is the disease spreading again at alarming rates?
8. What is the CDC going to do to curb the rate of infections?

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention