

## Join in a Celebration of Life on March 20 for National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is a serious health threat to Native communities, and National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day recognizes the mounting impact of HIV/AIDS on our country's Native people. Although our country's natives—American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians—represent only 1 percent of the U.S. population, they have historically suffered high rates of health disparities, including HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS continues to increase among Native people as it has over the past decade. Of persons diagnosed with HIV, Native Americans have the shortest overall survival time, only 87% live longer than 3 years. That is due in part that 26% of HIV-infected Native Americans are unaware of their infection. This suggests that many Native Americans with HIV are not receiving proper counseling, care, placing them at risk for becoming very sick and further spreading the virus.

Medicare covers voluntary HIV screening for:

- Beneficiaries at increased risk for HIV infection, including anyone who asks for the test (covered once every 12 months);
- Beneficiaries that are pregnant (maximum of 3 screenings during pregnancy).

People considered at increased risk for HIV infection include:

- Men who have sex with men after 1975
- Men and women having unprotected sex with more than one partner
- Past or present injection drug users
- Men and women who exchange sex for money or drugs, or have sex partners who do
- Individuals whose past or present sex partners were HIV-infected, bisexual, or injection drug users
- Persons being treated for sexually transmitted diseases
- Persons with a history of blood transfusion between 1978 and 1985
- Persons who request the HIV test

### *What Can You Do?*

CMS asks that you join in this national effort to raise awareness of the risks of the disease to Native people and help them understand the dynamics contributing to those risks. As a provider of healthcare services to Native populations, we ask that you help promote HIV/AIDS prevention and early detection by talking with your patients about their risks and the importance of prevention, and encourage them to get screened for HIV. Your support can help further the efforts to decrease the occurrence of HIV/AIDS among Native people.

*For More Information:*

- [CMS National Coverage Determination for HIV Testing](#)
- [US Preventive Services Task Force Screening for HIV Recommendation Statement](#)
- [Indian Health Service HIV/AIDS Program](#)
- [CDC National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)
- [National Native American AIDS Prevention Center](#)
- [Healthcare Reform and HIV/AIDS](#)
- [Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation "Medicaid and HIV/AIDS" Fact Sheet](#)

We have the ability to make a difference! Thank you for joining with CMS to help increase awareness and educate about HIV/AIDS-related screening and services covered by Medicare.