

>>> IMPORTANT INFORMATION

It is important to know that:

- Most people with HIV infection do not look sick.
- Most people with HIV infection have not been tested and don't know they are infected.
- CDC estimates that about 1 million people in the United States are living with HIV or AIDS. About one quarter of these people do not know they are infected: not knowing puts them and others at risk.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and is caused by HIV. AIDS represents advanced HIV or the final stage of HIV infection. A person with AIDS has an immune system so weakened by HIV that the person usually becomes sick from one of several opportunistic infections or cancers such as PCP (a type of pneumonia) or KS (Kaposi sarcoma), wasting syndrome (involuntary weight loss), memory impairment, or tuberculosis. If someone with HIV is diagnosed with one of these opportunistic infections, he or she is said to have AIDS. AIDS usually takes time to develop from the time a person acquires HIV—usually between 2 to 10 years or longer.

With respect to the handling of blood and body fluids of all persons, the College follows the U.S. Public Health Service's "Universal Precautions" guidelines. "Universal precautions," as defined by CDC, are a set of precautions designed to prevent transmission of HIV, hepatitis B virus (HBV), and other bloodborne pathogens when providing first aid or health care. Under universal precautions, blood and certain body fluids of all persons are considered potentially infectious for HIV, HBV and other bloodborne pathogens.

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6. Support Services

Various types of support are available for members of the College community. Students may seek assistance at the Personal Counseling Center, the Office of the Chaplain/Campus Ministry, the Student Health Center, and the coordinators of services for students with disabilities. Employees may seek assistance from the Office of the Chaplain and the employee assistance program.

Those seeking assistance may include:

- Persons who are HIV positive or are concerned that they may have been exposed to HIV;
- Persons who are experiencing stress because someone close to them is HIV positive or has AIDS;
- Persons who have suffered the loss of someone close to them because of AIDS.

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 How can I obtain more information?

The following references may be useful:

- CDC. Revised recommendations for HIV testing of adults, adolescents and pregnant women in health-care settings. MMWR 2006;55 (RR-14).
- CDC. HIV prevalence estimates—United States; 2006, MMWR 2008, 57:1073-6.
- CDC. HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report, 2006. Vol. 18. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2008.
- Hall HI, Ruiguang S, Rhodes P, et al. Estimation of HIV incidence in the United States. JAMA 2008; 300:520-529.

providence college
 HIV/AIDS POLICY

background
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What are HIV and AIDS?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV is a virus that was first identified in the United States in 1981. Some viruses, such as the ones that cause the common cold or the flu, stay in the body only for a few days. Other viruses, such as HIV, never go away. HIV is different from most other viruses because it attacks the immune system. The immune system gives our bodies the ability to fight infections. HIV finds and destroys a type of white blood cell (T cells or CD4 cells) that the immune system must have to fight disease. When a person becomes infected with HIV, that person becomes "HIV positive" and will always be HIV positive.

What types of behavior can and cannot result in HIV transmission?

HIV is a fragile virus primarily found in the body fluids of an infected person.

It *can* be transmitted in the following ways:

- Having intimate sexual contact with someone infected with HIV.
- Using infected drugs or steroids, during which equipment (such as needles, syringes, cotton, water) and blood were shared with someone infected with HIV.
- Being exposed (fetus or infant) to HIV before or during birth or through breast feeding.
- Receiving a blood transfusion infected with HIV. However, since 1985, all donated blood in the United States has been tested for HIV. Therefore, the risk for HIV infection through the transfusion of blood or blood products is extremely low. The U.S. blood supply is considered among the safest in the world.
- Home tattooing and body piercing.
- Accidental needle sticks.

It *cannot* be transmitted in the following ways:

- Saliva, tears, sweat, feces, or urine
- Hugging
- Kissing
- Massage
- Shaking hands
- Insect bites
- Living in the same house with someone who has HIV
- Sharing showers or toilets with someone with HIV

People who have HIV infection may not have symptoms for many years, especially if they receive good medical care and effective therapies. While drug therapies show great promise in managing HIV infection, they are expensive, may cause serious side effects, require strict and complex dosing schedules, do not work for everyone, and are not a cure. Researchers continue to develop better treatments for people in all stages of HIV infection, including AIDS. However, people with HIV infection can transmit the virus to others—even if they have no symptoms and even if they do not know they have been infected.

Although testing is voluntary, making HIV testing a routine part of health care for adolescents and adults aged 13-64 years is one of the most important strategies recommended by CDC for reducing the spread of HIV. Studies show that people who know they are infected are far less likely to engage in high risk behavior. Students may be tested at the Student Health Center, health departments, the office of a physician, hospitals, and sites specifically set up to provide HIV testing. A testing site may be located by visiting the CDC HIV testing database or by calling CDC-INFO (formerly the CDC National AIDS Hotline) at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) 24 hours/day. Users of this service are not required to provide confidential, personal information.

1. Students

An applicant's HIV/AIDS status is not a factor for consideration in the admission process. A student who is HIV positive or who has AIDS is not excluded from attending classes, participating in College-sponsored programs or activities, or using campus facilities because of his/her infection. A student who may be too ill to attend classes or participate in such programs or activities will be treated as any other student with a serious illness. With respect to on-campus housing, the best currently available medical information does not indicate any risk to those sharing a residence with infected individuals. There may be some reasonable concern for the health of those with HIV/AIDS regarding exposure to certain contagious diseases (e.g., chicken pox) in a close living situation. The College, therefore, in consultation with the student, will make housing decisions on a case-by-case basis and may provide the student with a single room in order to protect the health of that student.

The College's health-care policy encourages regular medical follow-up and counseling for an HIV-positive individual. Special precautions to protect the health of an immunologically-compromised individual should be considered during periods where there is a prevalence of certain contagious diseases. With the authorization of the College's academic dean, a student who is immunologically compromised may be excused from institutional requirements, as medically indicated.

2. Employees

An applicant's HIV/AIDS status is not a factor for consideration in the hiring process. An employee whose illness impacts his/her ability to perform job-related duties should refer to the College Handbook and consult with the Human Resources Department as necessary.

3. Harassment

Providence College is strongly opposed to and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory harassment of and/or by members of the College community. Complaints of discriminatory harassment may be filed in accordance with the relevant grievance procedures (i.e., College Handbooks, "Student Procedures for ADA/504 Grievance Resolution"). All complaints will be taken seriously. Any

and all appropriate action deemed necessary will be taken in a timely manner in accordance with College policy and procedures.

4. Confidentiality

Employee disclosures regarding HIV/AIDS status will be protected from further disclosure unless there is proper authorization for release of such information. A student who is HIV positive or who has AIDS is encouraged to inform campus health-care providers to access proper medical care, support, counseling and education. All treatment records are confidential in accordance with relevant state and federal law.

With respect to public health reporting requirements, in 2006 the Centers for Disease Control adopted guidelines for the surveillance of HIV/AIDS by local and state administrators. On July 14, 2006, the State of Rhode Island switched to confidential name-based reporting. A detailed and revised surveillance definition for HIV/AIDS can be found online at www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/reporting or via the publication MMWR 1999;48 (RR-13);1-28.

5. HIV/AIDS Task Force

Should an HIV/AIDS issue be raised by a member of the Providence College community, the circumstances may be considered by a group of administrators (the vice president for student affairs administration, the director of the Student Health Center, the director of the Personal Counseling Center, and the dean of residence life); others may be added to this group as circumstances warrant. In making recommendations, consideration will be given to the health and safety of the individual with HIV/AIDS and other members of the College community.