



PROTECTING OUR PATIENTS

Routine HIV Screening Saves Lives

We Care

Providing people with routine HIV screening is a quick, confidential, and easy way to promote the health of everyone in our care.

HIV screening is integrated into general care by making it a part of the routine care practice, such as with diabetes and hypertension. We screen for HIV using an opt-out approach; the screening will be conducted unless the person declines. Opt-out screening eases any discomfort someone may have with requesting HIV screening or being identified as someone that may have reasons for HIV prevention.



Quick opt-out scripting examples:

- "Today we will be screening for hypertension, diabetes, and HIV unless you decline. Do you have any questions?"
- "Since you haven't been screened for HIV this year, I'm going to add that screening to your lab work unless you decline."

We Screen

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone ages 13-64 be screened for HIV as part of general healthcare.

- Almost 13% of people living with HIV (PLWH) do not know their status and account for 40% of new infections.¹
- People dying from HIV are increasingly over 45 years old (75%) and female (26%), yet these two groups are frequently left unscreened.²

We save lives every day by screening people in our care and connecting newly diagnosed individuals to antiretroviral therapy.

- Starting treatment early prolongs the health and life of PLWH and reduces the risk of transmission to others.³
- Antiretroviral therapy decreases the amount of HIV in the body, leading to an undetectable viral load. PLWH cannot pass HIV on to their partners if HIV is undetectable; the campaign Undetectable equals Untransmittable, U=U, relays this.⁴

Under the Affordable Care Act, most health insurance plans must cover recommended preventative services, including HIV screening for everyone ages 15 to 65, and for people of any age at increased risk without additional cost sharing such as co-pays or deductibles.

We Affirm

When everyone is screened, people do not feel singled out or assumed to be at high risk for HIV. Some people may still have fears related to the confidentiality of their HIV diagnosis, particularly in communities where providers live and socialize with people in care.

Confidentiality concerns can be addressed by letting everyone know that their results are protected by state and federal privacy laws and can only be released with their permission, except when required for disease reporting purposes.



We can assure people in our care:

- "If you are diagnosed with HIV, this will become part of your confidential medical record, and your state or local health department will be notified."
- "All care providers are required by law to ensure your medical information remains confidential."

When giving a diagnosis, remember to create an affirming space that is welcoming, calm, safe, nonjudgmental, and confidential. Be specific and direct.

- If HIV has been detected, link the person quickly to HIV care.
- If HIV has not been detected, encourage the individual to get screened at least once each year and practice behaviors that help prevent infection.

These conversations open the door for people in your care to discuss their bodies and health with you, creating a relationship that can lead to positive health outcomes.

More Information

As members of the care team, we break down the barriers to HIV screening and provide affirming care so that everyone can experience positive health outcomes. Make your commitment and get more information at www.phimc.org/pop.

About PHIMC - The Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) enhances the capacity of public health and healthcare systems to promote health equity and expand access to services. Through organizational development, system transformation, fiscal management, and program implementation, PHIMC leads efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure in Illinois.

About POP - Protecting our Patients (POP) mobilizes care teams to address biases and stigmas that harm health experiences and outcomes of people in our care, including ourselves. POP initiatives promote practices that improve the experiences of people in care and support comprehensive care, including: 1) integrating routine HIV screening into care settings and 2) providing affirming care for all, especially people systematically marginalized from care systems. POP is a project of PHIMC funded by the Illinois Department of Public Health through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Sources:

1. CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/index.html>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/slidesets/cdc-hiv-surveillance-mortality-2019.pdf>
3. National Institutes of Health. "Starting Antiretroviral Treatment Early Improves Outcomes for HIV-Infected Individuals." 27 May, 2015.
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/art/index.html>



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