

EPI CONNECTIONS

December 2006

A Bimonthly Newsletter of the Communicable Disease Division

PHocus - World AIDS Day in Boulder County

World AIDS Day was established by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1988 to focus attention on the devastating global impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. AIDS has already claimed the lives of more than 25 million people, and over 39 million people are currently living with the disease worldwide. On December 1, "Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise" was the theme that governments from all over the world, congregations of every faith, national AIDS programs, grass roots community associations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals adopted to join together in a united fight against AIDS.

In Boulder County, 691 people have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS since 1985. Of those 146 have died, and 545 are currently living with the disease. The incidence rate of HIV in the county has decreased since the 1980s; from a high of 11.3 per 100,000 in 1986 down to a rate of 2.4 per 100,000 in 2005.

Boulder County HIV/AIDS patients diagnosed from 2000 to 2005 were comprised of 87% men, 77% white, 16% Hispanic, 55% men who have sex with men (MSM), 6% injection drug users (IDU), 12% MSM and IDU, and 10% heterosexual. Over 74% of the patients were 20-39 years old at diagnosis, and 20% were 40-49 years old.

References:

Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health HIV/AIDS Observance Days Website, December 2006.

Kaiser Family Foundation, *Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic Fact Sheet*, November 2006.

World AIDS Campaign Website, December 2006.

Boulder County Public Health, HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections Program Reports, 1985 to 2006.

Works Program Reduces Transmission of HIV Among Injection Drug Users (IDU)

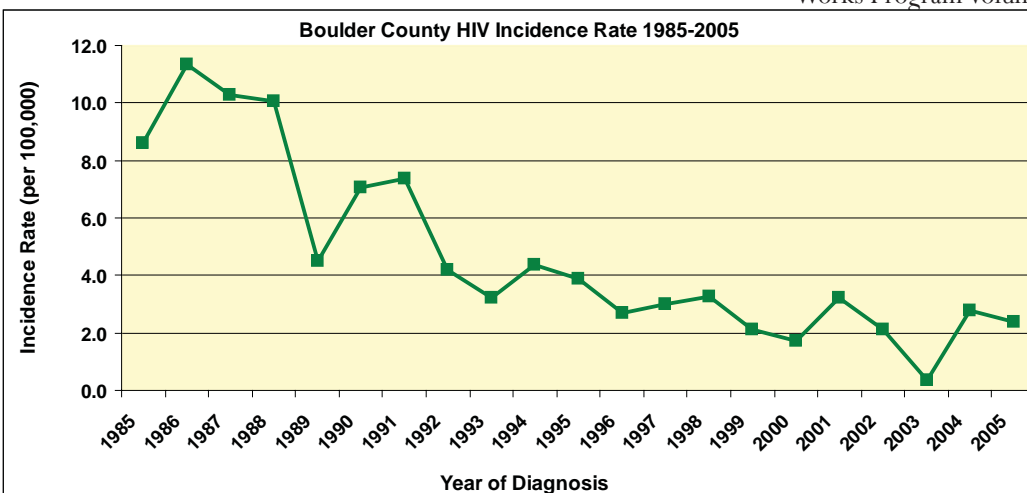
High-risk injection practices of HIV-positive IDU in Boulder County prompted implementation of the Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) Works Program in 1989. The program offered syringe exchange and education to reduce HIV cases. In its first year, the program served 105 people--84% changed their behavior to reduce HIV transmission by using safer sex practices (49%), reducing injection drug use (42%), stopping needle sharing (42%), and using only new needles for each injection (40%).

The program has since evolved to provide outreach, education, and syringe exchange services to reduce HIV and viral hepatitis transmission among local IDU and their partners. Syringe exchange services provide new sterile syringes and other harm reduction supplies, as well as brochures on safer injection practices.

The program operates a "one-for-one" exchange. If 10 used syringes are brought in for disposal, staff will exchange them with 10 clean syringes. There is no minimum or maximum limit of how many syringes a person may exchange. Currently, the program has 30 trained volunteers that serve about 60 individuals and make approximately 500 contacts with those enrolled. This year, Works staff has received over 45,000 syringes and distributed over 44,200.

Works Program volunteers are mostly active or recovering IDU, and exchanges occur primarily in the field. BCPH also offers HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C (hep C) testing for all participants in the Works Program. All services are free and confidential.

To refer your patients for an exchange, please page 303-281-3008. To find out more about the Works Program, please call the HIV/Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Program Coordinator at 303-413-7522.





Hepatitis C—Most Frequent Reportable Disease in 2006

While HIV/hepatitis C (hep C) co-infection county data are not yet available, hep C is the most common communicable disease reported in Boulder County. To date in 2006, BCPH received 140 hep C reports; that's 17% of all the communicable disease cases in Boulder County and 16% of the total Colorado hep C burden.

Demographically, 61% of the Boulder County cases were male. Of the known ethnicity and race data, 84% were white, 6% were Hispanic, 2% were Asian, and 0% were black. The median age for chronic hepatitis C infection was 49 years; 2% of reported cases were children. Nine percent of the total cases were hospitalized as a result of their infection, and no deaths were reported.

Geographically, 46% of hepatitis C cases reside in Boulder, 33% in Longmont, 8% in Lafayette, 6% in Louisville, 2% each in Niwot and Superior, and 1% each in Ward and Erie. Please see the GIS map below for Boulder County hep C morbidity by zip code.

Epi-Eye

A Look Outside Our Community and Around the World

India, The Next Wave

While HIV and AIDS have been reported all over the globe, 95% of those living with HIV and AIDS reside in the developing world. Sub-Saharan Africa, the most affected region of the world, continues to be home to two-thirds of people living with HIV and AIDS. Most nations in the region have a generalized epidemic, with prevalence rates over 1%. In some countries, like Swaziland, prevalence estimates exceed 30%.

However, the next wave of the epidemic has been quickly and quietly devastating Asia. In China and India, the disease is starting to take flight. An estimated 8.6 million people are living with HIV and AIDS across South and East Asia; two-thirds of those are living in India. In 2006, India surpassed South Africa as having the highest number of people (5.7 million) living with HIV and AIDS in the world.

Parents Asking for Tdap

The BCPH educational campaign "Keep Pertussis Out" has been launched! You may have seen the postcards brought in by your patients. The postcards, emphasizing the importance of the Tdap vaccination, have been mailed to every parent of children aged 10 through 19 in both Boulder County school districts. The campaign will also include reminder e-mails to parents plus inclusion of the topic in newsletters and newspapers and on posters in all middle and high schools.

In the coming weeks we will be distributing posters to display in your office as well as reference cards to assist you in the diagnosis and treatment of the disease. Please visit our web site at www.KeepPertussisOut.org for more information about pertussis and the Tdap vaccine, or call us at 303-413-7500.

