



## News Release

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### **NEW REPORT ON GLOBAL IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON YOUTH**

***By End of Decade 21.5 Million Young People Ages 15 to 24 Worldwide Expected to be Living With HIV/AIDS – A More Than 70% Increase From Today***

***Report Documents Positive Impact of Prevention Efforts***

**BARCELONA, SPAIN:** HIV/AIDS has always been an epidemic of young people, but new projections indicate that if trends persist, the current impact on youth is only the tip of the iceberg, according to a report released today by the Kaiser Family Foundation. Analysis of new U.S. Census Bureau data by the Foundation projects the number of young people ages 15 to 24 living with HIV/AIDS rising from 12.4 million in 2001 to 21.5 million by the end of the decade – a more than 70 percent increase.

Young people continue to make up significant proportions of new infections and those living with HIV/AIDS, and high prevalence rates among youth are occurring mainly in countries in which young people represent a high percentage of the population.

“It’s the combination of high infection rates among youth and youthful populations that creates an explosive situation in many countries,” said Drew Altman, Ph.D., president of the Kaiser Family Foundation. “This is why HIV prevention for youth needs to be a top priority.”

Of the 40 million people estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS around the world today, more than a third (38%) are under the age of 25. Of the 5 million new infections each year, almost six in ten occur in the same age group. Young people ages 15 to 24 account for half of all new infections among adults (ages 15 to 49) – 6,000 new infections every day. Even in developed nations such as the U.S., young people continue to represent half of all new infections.

Many hard hit countries already have high rates of HIV infection among young people, yet surveys show that most young people do not perceive themselves to be at risk and many of those living with HIV do not know they are infected. Certain subpopulations of youth bear a disproportionate share of risk, including women and girls, men who have sex with men, injection drug users, children orphaned by AIDS, and sexually-exploited children.

The report shows the number of deaths estimated to occur among young people ages 20 to 34 could top 20 million in the hardest hit countries in this decade alone.

Despite the current and projected impact of the epidemic on young people, the report cites evidence that prevention efforts have succeeded in reducing HIV transmission in some areas and for certain populations.

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Few large-scale prevention efforts, however, have been geared toward youth. Where they do exist, efforts have led to increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS, delays in sexual activity, and increased condom use.

The report cites new research on the benefits of prevention programs. Modest changes in key behaviors such as increased condom use and reductions in number of partners can significantly reduce HIV/AIDS prevalence, studies show.

**“The Tip of the Iceberg: The Global Impact of HIV/AIDS on Youth”** examines the impact of HIV/AIDS on young people around the world through new analysis and a compilation of the latest data, sources, and studies. To access the full report, visit [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org).

*The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation is an independent national health philanthropy dedicated to providing information and analysis on health issues to policymakers, the media, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.*

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