

Assessing the Number of People with HIV/AIDS in Areas Affected by Hurricane Katrina

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Among the many thousands of people affected by Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast – particularly in the states of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi – are people with HIV/AIDS. In addition to facing the multitude of health and other challenges confronting many others living in these areas who have been displaced or otherwise affected by Katrina¹ (potentially compounded by Hurricane Rita), people with HIV/AIDS may face additional hardships due to their HIV illness and which can exacerbate their illness. These include barriers to accessing needed medications^{2,3} and other medical and social support services, the loss of shelter and food, and physical and emotional stress, all of which may further weaken an already compromised immune system. Potential disruptions in receipt of antiretroviral medications are of particular concern since they have implications for both the health status of individuals living with HIV disease and for public health more generally, since such disruptions can lead to antiretroviral drug resistance.

However, little is known about the full magnitude of the population with HIV/AIDS in the most disaster-affected areas of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Such information is critical for determining the potential scope of one disaster-affected population that may face additional and complex needs – the HIV/AIDS population.

In an effort to provide an estimate of the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in those areas of the Gulf Coast most affected by Katrina, the Kaiser Family Foundation obtained county-level HIV/AIDS prevalence data for Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi counties declared eligible for both individual and public disaster assistance by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) due to Katrina.⁴ This includes 10 counties in Alabama, 31 counties in Louisiana, and 43 counties in Mississippi. Where county-level HIV/AIDS prevalence data were not available, data from broader areas that include both hardest hit and adjacent counties were used; it is important to note that many other counties in these states, including these adjacent counties were also affected by the Hurricane and are eligible for some forms of disaster assistance.

Overall, more than 21,000 people with HIV/AIDS were estimated to be living in the disaster-affected counties in the three states before Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. This includes 2,646 in Alabama^{5,6}, 12,849 in Louisiana⁷, and 5,567 in Mississippi.⁸ Nearly 7,400 had been living in the New Orleans metropolitan area⁹ alone (including more than 5,000 in the city of New Orleans); more than 1,500 in Mobile County, Alabama; and almost 900 in the three southernmost, hardest hit counties of Mississippi (Hancock, Harrison, Jackson). See Table. It is important to note that not all of these individuals were necessarily displaced or otherwise directly affected by Hurricane Katrina; rather, these estimates represent the total number of people with HIV/AIDS who were living in these counties before Katrina hit, a subset of whom have been affected.

Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi are three of the poorest states in the country. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, many low-income people with HIV/AIDS in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi relied on their state's Medicaid program for medications and other services or its AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) for medications if they had no other source of care or coverage. For example, in June 2004, Alabama served 1,220 ADAP clients, Louisiana served 1,654, and Mississippi served 769.¹⁰ These individuals may now be faced with trying to access ADAP services in other parts of their home state or in other states; a similar challenge is facing Medicaid beneficiaries with HIV/AIDS who may have relocated to other states as well.

References

¹ KCMU, *Policy Brief: Addressing the Health Care Impact of Hurricane Katrina*, September 2005.

² Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV Infection, et al., "Recommendations for Non-HIV-Specialized Providers Caring for Displaced HIV-Infected Residents from the Hurricane Disasters Essential Information for Managing HIV-Infected Patients Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy", September 23, 2005. Available at: <http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/disaster/2EssentialsforManagingHIV1ap.pdf>.

³ Academy of HIV Medicine/HIV Medicine Association, "Recommendations for the Triage of HIV+ Patients", September 20, 2005.

⁴ FEMA, Hurricane Katrina, Emergency Declarations, Counties Eligible for Individual Public Assistance and Individual/Public Assistance. Available at: www.gismaps.fema.gov/2005pages/katrina.shtm. Accessed September 19, 2005.

⁵ Alabama Department of Public Health, State of Alabama *Integrated Epidemiologic Profile HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care 2003, September 2004*. Living with HIV/AIDS through 2003. Available at: <http://www.adph.org/AIDS/epi.pdf>.

⁶ Where estimates of HIV/AIDS prevalence for a disaster-designated county in Alabama were not available, the state's Public Health Area (PHA) was used. PHAs may include additional counties not deemed by FEMA to be eligible for both individual and public disaster assistance but adjacent to the most affected counties.

⁷ Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, *Quarterly Report HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report September 30, 2004*. Living with HIV/AIDS as of third quarter, 2004. Available at: www.oph.dhh.state.la.us/HIV/AIDS/docs/nov%2004%20revisions/Third%20Quarter%202004%20HIV/AIDS%20Report.pdf.

⁸ Special Data Request, Craig W. Thompson, Director, STD/HIV Bureau, State of Mississippi, 9/20/05. People living with HIV/AIDS as of August 29, 2005.

⁹ Metropolitan Statistical Area as defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

¹⁰ National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors/Kaiser Family Foundation, *National ADAP Monitoring Project Annual Report*, April 2005. Data also available at www.statehealthfacts.org/hiv.

People Estimated to be Living with HIV/AIDS in Katrina-Affected Disaster Areas¹

Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi Counties Designated by FEMA As Eligible for Both Individual & Public Assistance

| Alabama^{2,3} | HIV/AIDS | Louisiana⁴ | HIV/AIDS | Mississippi⁵ | HIV/AIDS |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Choctaw/Sumter/Hale Counties + others in PHAVII | 263 | Acadia Parish | 66 | Adams County | 87 |
| Baldwin/Clarke/Washington Counties + others in PHAIX | 452 | Ascension Parish | 119 | Amite County | 15 |
| Greene/Pickens/Tuscaloosa Counties + others in PHAIII | 369 | Assumption Parish | 21 | Claiborne County | 15 |
| Mobile County | 1,562 | Calcasieu Parish | 518 | Clarke County | 42 |
| | | Cameron Parish | 4 | Copiah County | 65 |
| | | East Baton Rouge Parish | 2,555 | Covington County | 32 |
| | | East Feliciana Parish | 113 | Forrest County | 283 |
| | | Iberia Parish | 77 | Franklin County | 15 |
| | | Iberville Parish | 262 | George County | 7 |
| | | Jefferson Parish | 1,275 | Greene County | 11 |
| | | Jefferson Davis Parish | 53 | Hancock County | 65 |
| | | Lafayette Parish | 512 | Harrison County | 554 |
| | | Lafourche Parish | 73 | Hinds County | 2,148 |
| | | Livingston Parish | 102 | Jackson County | 266 |
| | | Orleans Parish | 5,549 | Jasper County | 27 |
| | | Plaquemines Parish | 28 | Jefferson County | 33 |
| | | Pointe Coupee Parish | 41 | Jefferson Davis County | 30 |
| | | St. Bernard Parish | 117 | Jones County | 132 |
| | | St. Charles Parish | 64 | Kemper County | 7 |
| | | St. Helena Parish | 9 | Lamar County | 23 |
| | | St. James Parish | 44 | Lauderdale County | 226 |
| | | St. John the Baptist Parish | 65 | Lawrence County | 30 |
| | | St. Martin Parish | 73 | Leake County | 26 |
| | | St. Mary Parish | 63 | Lincoln County | 47 |
| | | St. Tammany Parish | 251 | Lowndes County | 141 |
| | | Tangipahoa Parish | 179 | Madison County | 197 |
| | | Terrebonne Parish | 143 | Marion County | 46 |
| | | Vermilion Parish | 69 | Neshoba County | 21 |
| | | Washington Parish | 165 | Newton County | 44 |
| | | West Baton Rouge Parish | 83 | Noxubee County | 22 |
| | | West Feliciana Parish | 156 | Oktibbeha County | 47 |
| | | | | Pearl River County | 78 |
| | | | | Perry County | 20 |
| | | | | Pike County | 96 |
| | | | | Rankin County | 405 |
| | | | | Scott County | 61 |
| | | | | Simpson County | 41 |
| | | | | Smith County | 14 |
| | | | | Stone County | 33 |
| | | | | Walthall County | 31 |
| | | | | Wayne County | 41 |
| | | | | Wilkinson County | 18 |
| | | | | Winston County | 25 |
| SUBTOTAL Alabama | 2,646 | SUBTOTAL Louisiana | 12,849 | SUBTOTAL Mississippi | 5,567 |
| TOTAL ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH HIV/AIDS IN AFFECTED AREAS = | | | | | 21,062 |

Notes & Sources:

1. Source: FEMA, Hurricane Katrina, Emergency Declarations, Counties Eligible for Individual Public Assistance and Individual/Public Assistance. Available at: www.gismaps.fema.gov/2005pages/katrina.shtm. Accessed 9-19-05.
2. Source: Alabama Department of Public Health, State of Alabama Integrated Epidemiologic Profile HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care 2003, September 2004. Living with HIV/AIDS through 2003. Available at: www.adph.org/AIDS/epi.pdf.
3. Note: Where data for individual counties were not available, Public Health Area (PHA) was used. PHAs may include counties not designated by FEMA as eligible for both individual and public assistance, but adjacent to eligible counties.
4. Source: Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Quarterly Report HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report September 30, 2004. Living with HIV/AIDS as of third quarter, 2004. Available at: www.oph.dhh.state.la.us/HIV/AIDS/docs/nov%2004%20revisions/Third%20Quarter%202004%20HIV/AIDS%20Report.pdf
5. Source: Special Data Request, Craig W. Thompson, Director, STD/HIV Bureau, State of Mississippi, 9/20/05. People living with HIV/AIDS as of August 29, 2005

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