

# Georgia Minority Health & Health Disparities Report



## Facing a Crisis

*Georgia's minority population shoulders burden of climbing HIV/AIDS rates*

The largest health disparities among various racial and ethnic groups are demonstrated in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) was first recognized in the United States in 1981 and has since become a worldwide epidemic, with over 20 million deaths. In the United States, there are nearly a million individuals infected with HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus, and about a quarter are unaware of their HIV status. The estimated number of AIDS cases, through 2003, is 929,985. Since 1982 the United States has spent \$150 billion on HIV/AIDS. In 2002, Georgia reported 26,008 AIDS cases, placing



## States and Territories Reporting the Most AIDS Cases as of December 2002

State/Territory	# of Cumulative AIDS Cases
New York	155,755
California	128,064
Florida	90,233
Texas	59,772
New Jersey	45,237
Illinois	28,426
Pennsylvania	28,136
Puerto Rico	27,242
Georgia	26,008
Maryland	25,358

Source: CDC, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention

## Just the Facts

**68%+** of the reported AIDS cases in Georgia are within the Atlanta Metropolitan area which includes Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett counties.



This is the third in a series of 12 reports released by the Georgia Office of Minority Health, Department of Community Health, in collaboration with the National Center for Primary Care at the Morehouse School of Medicine.



## Just the Facts

**929,985** is the estimated number of AIDS cases in the United States.

**\$12.3 million** is the state contribution to the total funds (\$57 million) allocated toward HIV/AIDS initiatives in Georgia.

**29,896** reported AIDS cases in Georgia as of September 2004.

African Americans represent 64 percent of the AIDS cases in 2002, although they only represent 29% of the Georgia population.

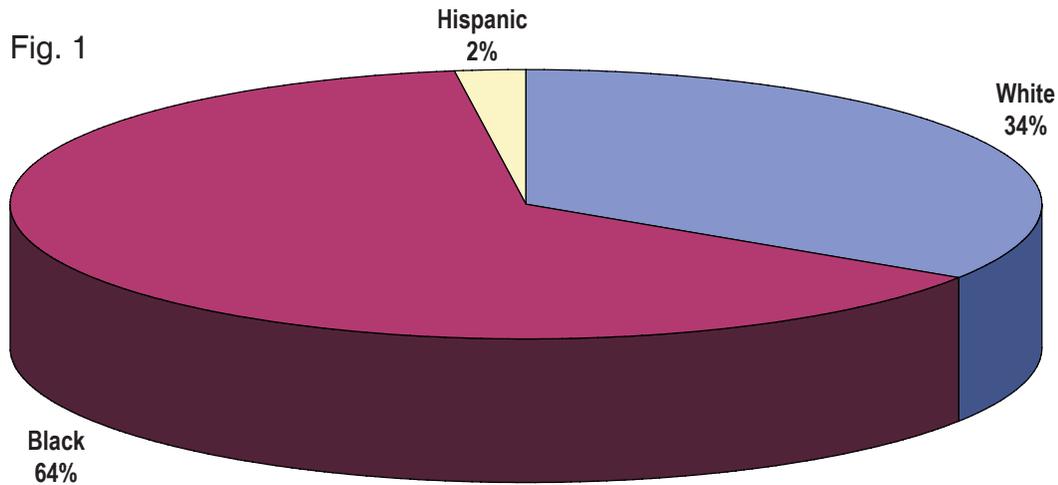
**75%** of the nation's newly diagnosed cases in 2002 were African Americans.

African American females in Georgia are 23 times more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS than their white female counterparts.

**78%** of the reported pediatric AIDS cases are African American children.

The percentage of perinatally HIV exposed births increased 10 times in the Latino population from 1.1% in 1994 to 10.5% in 2002 in 20 Georgia counties.

### Racial/Ethnic Percentages of Cumulative AIDS Cases in Georgia, Dec. 2002



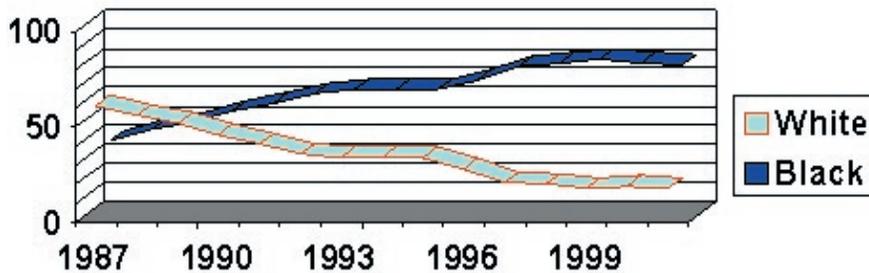
the state in the top ten of states and territories reporting the most AIDS cases. Georgia was one of the last states to require mandatory reporting of AIDS cases and most recently (Dec 31, 2003) mandated the reporting of HIV infection. As of September 2004, there are a total of 29,896 reported AIDS cases in Georgia with the highest prevalence among men who have sex with men and the African American population. HIV/AIDS accounts for \$57 million of federal and state funds in Georgia. Forty six percent or 13,841 of the total reported AIDS cases are men who have sex with men. Among men

who have sex with men, 34% are African American. In the United States, HIV/AIDS has reached epidemic proportions within the minority communities, especially the African American community. From 1999 through 2003, the estimated number of AIDS cases decreased among whites and increased among blacks, Hispanics, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and among American Indians/Alaska Natives. African Americans are 12% of the total U.S. population yet they account for nearly 40 percent of the U.S. reported AIDS cases. In 2003, the estimated rate of AIDS cases in blacks was 58.2



Fig. 2

**AIDS Cases in Georgia by Race and Year of Diagnoses from 1985 - 2001**



per 100,000 compared to 20.0 in the Hispanic population, 8.1 in the American Indian/Alaska Native, 6.1 in the white population 4.0 in the Asian Pacific Islander and 14.5 per 100,000 for the United States as a whole.

In Georgia, the statistics are even worse. In 2002, African Americans represented 29% of Georgia's population, yet African Americans represent 65% of the reported AIDS cases. Figure 2 shows that in Georgia, from 1985 to 2001, the percent of AIDS cases in the minority population has steadily increased, while the percent of cases in the white population has decreased. Across

all categories: genders, age, mode of exposure, rural vs. non-rural, African Americans are more likely to be infected with HIV and to die of AIDS. In Georgia African Americans are most burdened by the AIDS epidemic with an AIDS case rate 11 times higher than Asian Pacific Islanders, 9 times higher than whites, 5 times higher than American Indian/Alaskan Natives, and 3 times higher than Latino persons. In 2002, African Americans in Georgia represented 75% of the newly diagnosed cases and 78% of the pediatric reported AIDS cases. In Georgia, African American men have a rate of 58.6 per 100,000 populations for

## Just the Facts

**58.6** per 100,000 is the rate at which African-American males were diagnosed with AIDS compared to a rate of 7.4 in white males in 2002.

AIDS case rates among blacks in Georgia are 9 times higher than those of their white counterparts.

HIV was the leading cause of death for African Americans aged 35-44 in Georgia during 1999 - 2002.

**25%** of the individuals infected with HIV in the U.S. are unaware of their HIV status.

In Georgia, African-American women have an AIDS age-adjusted death (13.1) rate nearly 22 times that of white women (0.6).

**21.3** per 100,000 is the rate at which Latino males are diagnosed with AIDS in Georgia.

The leading cause of death for African-American men aged 35-44 was HIV/AIDS in Georgia, during 1999-2001, compared to unintentional injuries for white men in the same age group.

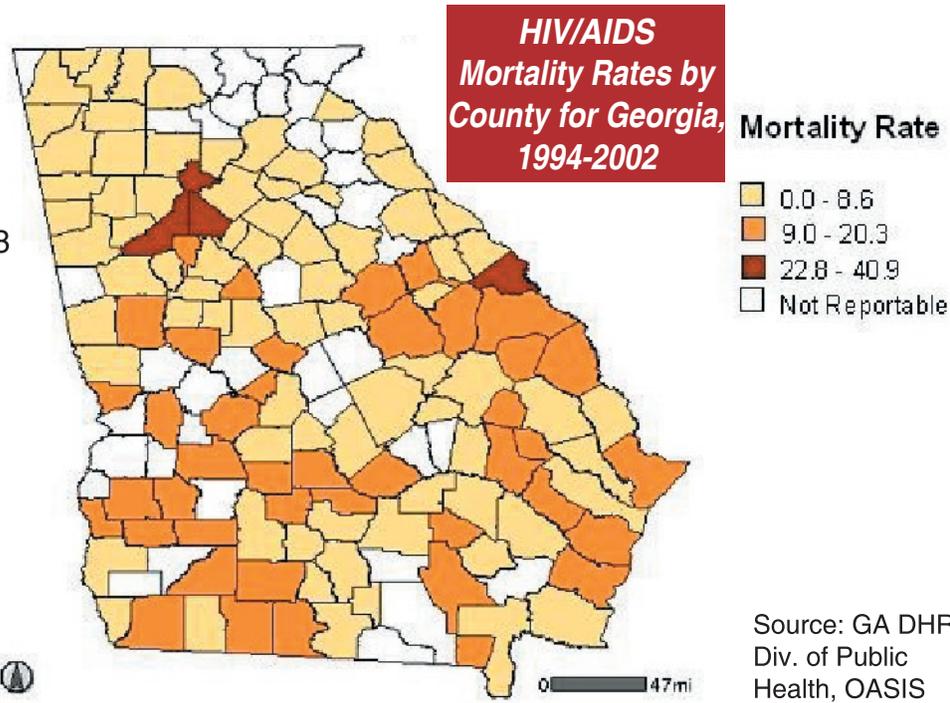
**41.7** is the morbidity rate of HIV/AIDS in non-rural GA compared to 18.0 per 100,000 for rural Georgia.



a diagnosis of AIDS compared to a rate of 7.4 in white males in 2002. African American females in Georgia are 23 times more likely to be diagnosed with AIDS than their white female counterparts.

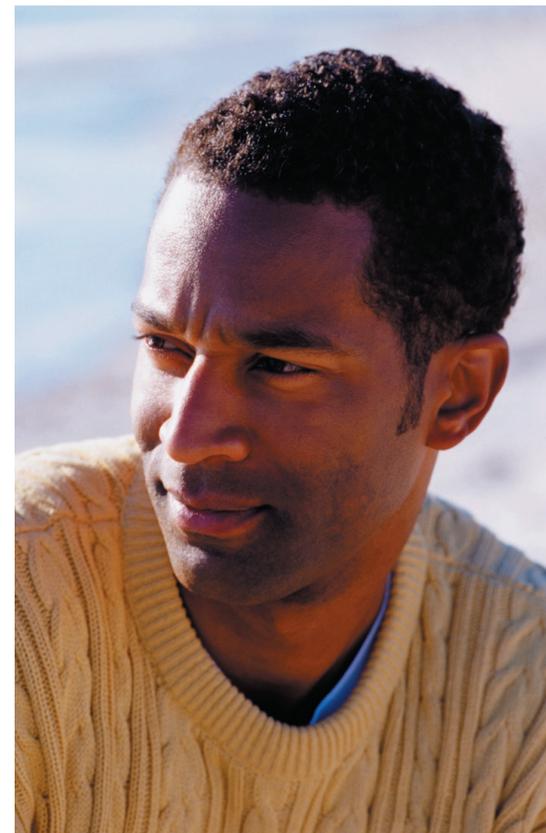
AIDS in Georgia is striking the most productive age groups. During 1999 – 2002, the morbidity rate, for individuals between the ages of 20-44, is 68.3 per 100,000 populations. This resulted in 71,450 years of potential life lost for the state of Georgia and its human resources. During the same time period, HIV was the leading cause of death for African Americans aged 35-44 in Georgia. In African American women aged 25-34, HIV was the leading cause of death compared to unintentional injuries for white women in the same age group; and in African American men aged 35-44, HIV was the leading cause of death compared to unintentional injuries for white men in the same age group. This equals over 50,000 years of potential life lost for the African American community due only to disparities. But AIDS does not discriminate by age. In Georgia 9.5 per 100,000 is the HIV/AIDS morbidity rate for

Fig. 3



Georgians aged 60-74 during 1999 – 2002, with a rate of 11.6 during 2001. This population needs to be addressed when designing HIV prevention interventions.

Within the state of Georgia, more than 68% of the reported AIDS cases in Georgia are within the Atlanta Metropolitan area, which includes Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett counties. Within metro Atlanta's 68% of reported AIDS cases, 67% of these cases are in Fulton County. Within the five metro counties, Fulton and DeKalb have the highest morbidity and mortality rates. Figure 3 gives

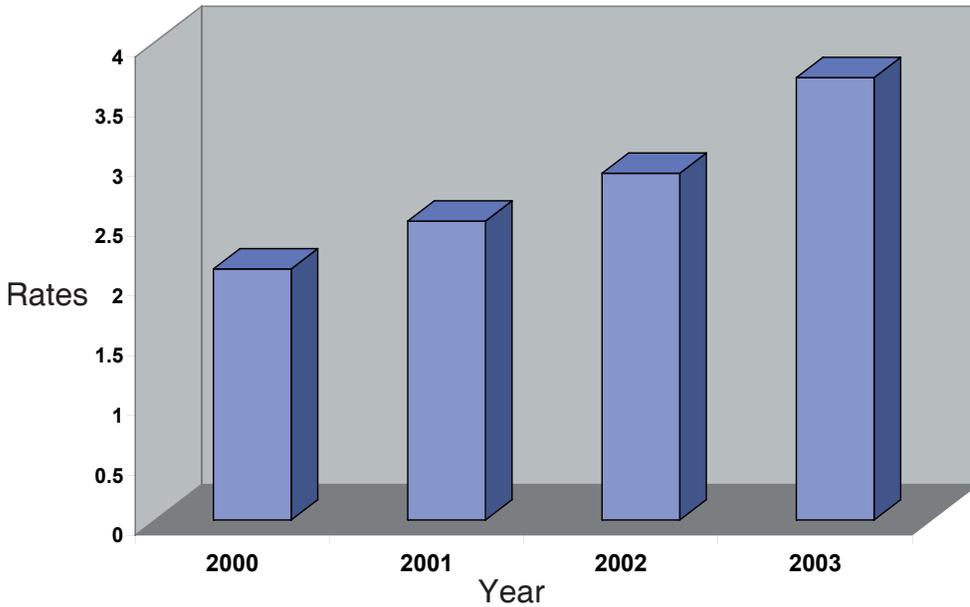


## Just the Facts

**98%** of the minority female AIDS cases in Georgia were African American women from 1981 to 2001.

Fig. 4

**Latino HIV/AIDS Mortality Rates in Georgia, 2000-2003**



an overview of the mortality rates within the counties. It is tempting to focus on the metropolitan areas, due to the concentration of AIDS cases but it is important to note that the morbidity rate of HIV/AIDS is 18.0 for rural Georgia and the mortality rate is 9.1 per 100,000. Nearly 1 out of 2 women with AIDS in Georgia live in a rural area.

Even though the data reveals that African Americans are carrying the burden of HIV/AIDS in Georgia, the data also exhibits the rise of HIV/AIDS in the Latino

population. Death rates in the Latino population steadily declined during the 1990s, then there was a steady rise in the death rates from 2000-2003 (see Figure 4), with a mortality rate of 3.7 per 100,000 population for 2002. Latino males were diagnosed with AIDS at a rate of 21.3 per 100,000 populations in Georgia during 2002 and Latino females were diagnosed with AIDS at a rate of 5.1 compared to 1.3 in white females in Georgia. These numbers are suspected to be higher due to the fact that this



population is more unlikely to access the health care system than any other racial/ethnic group. Another indicator of the rise of HIV in the

**Nearly 1 out of 2 women with AIDS in Georgia lives in a rural area.**

Latino community is the rising percentage of perinatally HIV exposed births. According to the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention, these rates have increased 10 times in the Latino population from 1.1% in 1994 to 10.5% in 2002 in 20 Georgia counties.

## Just the Facts

Since 2000, the percentage of perinatally HIV exposed births has steadily increased in the Latino population

Conclusions  
&  
Recommendations

- Open discussion of sexuality, HIV/AIDS risk factors, screening, and methods of prevention, is needed in a wide range of community settings.
- Additional resources are needed for culturally competent interventions in minority and rural communities, especially for the African-American community.
- Resources for free, anonymous, rapid testing, in a stigma-free environment are needed throughout the state.
- Assuring participation by all health care professionals in the recent state-mandated collection of data on HIV infection will demonstrate the true impact of the virus on Georgia's population.
- Each community throughout the state needs capacity for assuring best-practice comprehensive AIDS care and highly active anti-retroviral therapy for Georgians with HIV/AIDS. 

*Just the Facts*

**9.5** per 100,000 is the HIV/AIDS morbidity rate for Georgians aged 60-74 during 1999 – 2002.

Of the 68% of the metro Atlanta reported AIDS cases, 67% of these cases are in Fulton County.

**5.1** per 100,000 is the rate at which Latino females were diagnosed with AIDS compared to 1.3 in white females in Georgia.

AIDS case rates among African Americans are 11 times, 5 times and 3 times higher than their Asian Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Latino counterparts respectively.



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