



NCCAF Technical Assistance Toolbox

Increasing the capacity of communities to respond to the HIV epidemic locally
www.NCcommunityAIDSfund.org

Section 1 — Background

June 2011

- Approximately 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the United States.
- Someone is diagnosed with HIV in the US every 9 1/2 minutes.
- Women make up about 30% of all new HIV diagnoses in North Carolina.
- Twenty-eight (28) percent of those diagnosed with HIV are simultaneously diagnosed with AIDS.

Women and HIV in North Carolina

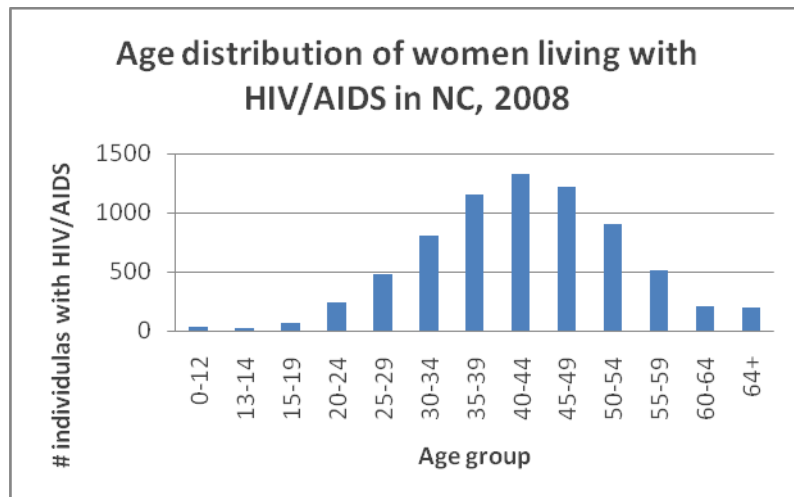
Women are one of the fastest-growing demographics at risk for HIV infection.¹ In 1985, women represented only 8% of AIDS cases in the United States.² Today, however, over 30% of new HIV infections in North Carolina occur in women.³

As of December 2008, over 7,000 women in North Carolina were estimated to be living with HIV or AIDS. The vast majority of these women acquired HIV from their sexual partners. In 2008, heterosexual contact accounted for 90% of new HIV infections among North Carolina women while intravenous drug use (IDU) accounted for 10%.⁴

“Women who are married or in long term relationships...don’t see the risk of HIV infection or don’t think it could happen to them...but basically no one is safe from the risk of HIV.”

Mary Washington, MSW, Duke University Infectious Disease Clinic

Most women living with HIV in North Carolina are middle-aged adults. In 2008, HIV disease was the 7th leading cause of death for North Carolina women between the ages of 30-50. For African American women in North Carolina between the ages of 30-50, HIV was the 3rd leading cause of death, trailing behind only cancer and heart disease.⁵



Biologically, women have a greater risk of contracting HIV from sexual contact compared to men. Women may also experience unique symptoms and complications from the disease. HIV infection makes women more susceptible to infection with the human papillomavirus (HPV), which can increase the risk of developing cervical cancer.⁶ Women also experience symptoms such as breast enlargement, abdominal fat redistribution, headaches, and abdominal or pelvic complaints more often than men.⁷

Educational Resources

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is March 10th

www.womenshealth.gov

AIDS Info

www.aidsinfo.nih.gov

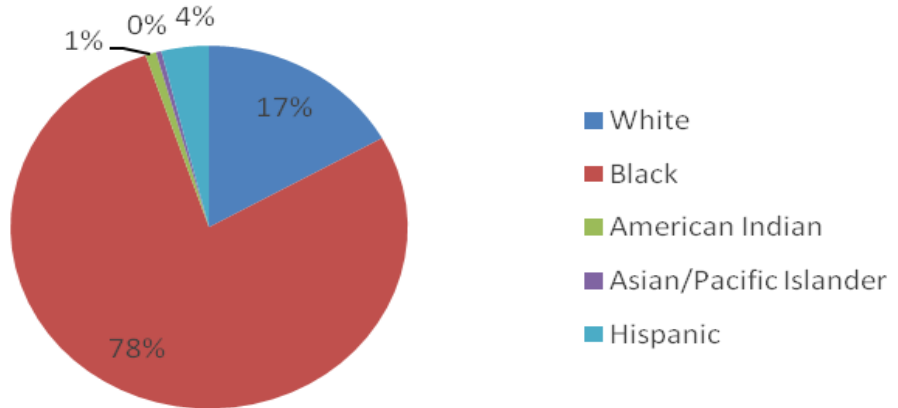
Kaiser Family Foundation Women's Health Policy

www.kff.org/womenshealth/

HIV and Women in North Carolina

- Over 35,000 people are living with HIV in North Carolina.
- Almost 2,000 people test positive for HIV each year in NC.
- People over age 50 make up about 10% of the new HIV diagnoses in North Carolina.
- Heterosexual contact accounts for about 90% of the newly diagnosed cases of HIV among women in North Carolina.
- In NC a quarter (1/4) of our HIV population is living in a rural area of the state.

HIV/AIDS among women in NC by race/ethnicity, 2008



Racial and ethnic disparities in HIV/AIDS incidence in North Carolina are particularly striking among women. In 2008, the rate of HIV diagnosis for adult/adolescent black women in North Carolina was *fifteen (15) times* the rate of diagnosis for adult/adolescent white women. Hispanic women in North Carolina were diagnosed with HIV at *four(4) times* the rate of white women.⁸ These statistics show that in order to control the spread of HIV in North Carolina,

women, particularly minorities, should remain an important priority for both public health officials and policymakers.

“We need to empower women... to help them understand that they have options... so that despite living with HIV, they are still able to identify and reach their full potential.”

Reverend Keron Sadler from the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network

¹Pulerwitz J. et al. "Relationship power, condom use, and HIV risk among women in the USA." AIDS CARE 14.6 (2002): pp. 798-800.

²"Women and HIV/AIDS in the United States." HIV/AIDS Policy Fact Sheet. The Kaiser Family Foundation. July 2007. <http://www.kff.org/hivaids/upload/6092-04.pdf>

³North Carolina Epidemiological Profile for HIV/STD Prevention and Care Planning, December 2009. Division of Public Health, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/hiv

⁴North Carolina Epidemiological Profile for HIV/STD Prevention and Care Planning, December 2009.

⁵Leading Causes of Death in North Carolina, 2008. North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/lcd/lcd.cfm>

⁶HIV/AIDS Complications. MayoClinic.com. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hiv-aids/DS00005/DSECTION=complications>

⁷Nicholas, Patrice K. "Women and HIV: Symptoms and Quality of Life in Women." *Bulletin of Experimental Treatments for AIDS*. 17.2 (2005):pp. 32-34.

⁸North Carolina Epidemiological Profile for HIV/STD Prevention and Care Planning, December 2009.



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