

## **HIV as a Public Health Priority**

In 2019, federal government released “Ending the HIV Epidemic” initiative:

1. Reduce the number of new HIV infections by 75%;
2. Promote access to testing so that 100% of persons living with HIV/AIDS know their status; and
3. Promote access to linkage to care so that 90% of persons diagnosed with HIV/AIDS are virally suppressed.

In 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revised the recommendations for HIV testing in adults, adolescents, and pregnant women in healthcare settings to include all persons between the ages of 13-64.

In 2013, the United States Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued a Grade A recommendation for HIV screening of persons aged 15 to 65, which includes HIV screening as a reimbursable preventative service for patients with a payor.

Despite the federal recommendations, routine HIV testing had remained low in healthcare facilities in New Jersey.

In 2016, the Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U) campaign was launched after three larger studies on sexual transmission of HIV were performed in thousands of serodiscordant couples. Not a single case of HIV was transmitted from the HIV+ partner to the HIV- partner. These groundbreaking studies provide evidence that PWH who are adherent to their ART medication and achieve an undetectable viral load are unable to transmit the virus to others via sexual transmission. PWH who are maintained in medical care will live long, healthier lives, in addition to the potential reduction in health-risk sexual behaviors and further transmission of HIV.

To that end, this letter serves as a recommendation to consider integrating testing of HIV/HBV/HCV8/STIs into your setting’s routine practice.