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IMPORTANT REMINDERS:
New resources to identify HIV-positive individuals and connect them to care

July 26, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

The Rhode Island Department of Health Office of HIV/AIDS & Viral Hepatitis has received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to implement a demonstration project. Our goals are to focus on innovative ways to decrease the numbers of individuals infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) who are unaware of their positive status and to ensure long-term linkages to HIV care for those identified as positive.

This demonstration project will incorporate several strategies to support and enhance HIV prevention efforts already underway throughout Rhode Island that involve collaborations involving HEALTH, hospitals, clinics, and community-based organizations.

These strategies include:

1. Fourth Generation Antigen/Antibody Combo testing conducted through the State HEALTH Laboratories for the uninsured/underinsured, including high-risk HIV-negative partners of known HIV-positive individuals.
2. Outreach to out-of-care HIV-positive individuals conducted by Disease Intervention Specialists at HEALTH to connect these individuals to care and keep them in care.

We encourage you to learn more about these new services and resources and we invite you to collaborate with us as we work to identify the gaps in testing and care and stop HIV transmission in Rhode Island.

You'll find our new HEALTH Out-of-Care Referral Form online, along with more information about the 4th Generation HIV Antigen/Antibody test through our State HEALTH Laboratories, at health.ri.gov/forms/referral/201304ReturnToCareReferralFormForHIVPatients.pdf

If you need assistance with confidential notification and testing of partners, you may reach a Partner Notification Specialist by calling (401) 222-7546 or (401) 639-6315. For questions about specific HIV prevention program activities, please call (401) 222-4636. Thank you for being who you are and what you do. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Fine".

Michael Fine, MD
Director of Health