



News Release

For immediate release: November 26, 2013

(13-162)

Contacts: [Marqise Allen](#), Communications Office
[Kelly Stowe](#), Communications Office

360-236-4072

360-236-4022

HIV epidemic: fight gets shot in the arm from health care reform

About 1,400 HIV positive people who receive state aid may qualify for expanded Medicaid

OLYMPIA — Each Dec. 1, World AIDS Day is an opportunity to look back at how far we've come in the fight against HIV. This year, however, we're also looking ahead at ways the Affordable Care Act may improve treatment for people and further turn the tide of the epidemic.

People living with HIV and AIDS have historically had a hard time getting private health insurance. That should no longer be an issue under the act. Key parts of the law that open access to people with pre-existing conditions are already in place and are improving access to insurance for people with HIV. And insurers can no longer impose lifetime caps on insurance benefits, so there's no longer a lifetime dollar limit on essential health benefits.

As the law is fully implemented in 2014, more significant changes will help people living with HIV. Low-income single adults without children were previously not eligible for Medicaid. Some of these people will now be eligible, because Washington chose to expand its Medicaid coverage. Those who don't qualify could be eligible for tax subsidies that will help them buy coverage from the health-insurance exchange.

Out of the 4,000 people whose HIV care is paid for through the state Department of Health, more than 1,400 may be eligible for expanded Medicaid, and about 800 may be eligible to [purchase insurance](#) through the state's health-insurance exchange. The department has worked with the state Health Care Authority over the past year to make sure the right health care providers and medications are covered under the various insurance plans available for people with HIV.

Access to quality, comprehensive health care is important for all of the more than 11,000 people diagnosed with HIV in Washington to help people stay healthy and maintain a high quality of life. People who are in health care and taking the medications that control HIV are also less

Health care reform helps fight HIV epidemic

November 26, 2013

Page 2

likely to spread the disease to others. With fewer people able to spread infection, we have a much better chance of reducing the number of people newly diagnosed with HIV every year (about 500 per year).

Health care reform also provides increased opportunities for preventive care for people who are not HIV positive. Insurance plans must now cover recommended preventive services at no additional cost. This means everybody can receive annual screening for HIV without paying cost-shares or deductibles.

The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

###