



September 21, 2006

It is with great pleasure that we offer our support for the HIV testing recommendations released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are grateful that the CDC has recognized the importance of HIV testing and has released a noteworthy strategy to detect and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

It is estimated that of the approximately 1.1 million individuals currently infected with HIV in the United States, 25 percent are unaware of their infection. Untested HIV-positive individuals were more than twice as likely to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors as those aware of their HIV-positive status. The HIV-positive group, unaware of their status, contributes disproportionately to new infections relative to their percentage of the HIV-positive population in the U.S.

In addition to this reality, recent patterns show that HIV/AIDS is increasingly affecting minority populations, particularly African Americans and Hispanics. Minorities account for 70% of new HIV infections in the United States. The rate of infections is also rising among women, who accounted for 21% of new AIDS cases in 2004.

Recently, Congress has done its part by including a testing provision in the Ryan White CARE Act. We view this as the first of many steps that will help us to prepare for the future in dealing with HIV/AIDS. We are pleased with the steps Congress has taken that will allow HIV-positive Americans to know their health status and will allow patients to be moved into immediate care and treatment.

We commend the CDC for their efforts and leadership to help make the prevention of HIV/AIDS a top priority in the United States. It is imperative that individuals are tested as part of routine medical care so that they know their health status and can help stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. Without increased HIV testing, who knows where the epidemic could explode tomorrow. The CDC recommendations are the right place to begin a new HIV/AIDS strategy equipped for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Berry Myers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

President