

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

RYAN WHITE CARE PROGRAM

HEALTHY START OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

CENTRAL HEALTHY START

RURAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA



A Message

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steven Oliva



This newsletter comes on the heels of celebrations of a new year and resolutions for the future. Our feature article, however, takes a look back at the history of an illness that has worldwide impact. This article is a brief refresher on the history of the spread of HIV/AIDS and the public's evolving perception of it.

As demonstrated in the Florida maps on page three, no area of the state is free of the disease. WellFlorida would like to thank the many organizations that serve people living with HIV/AIDS in Florida. Thanks, too, to all of our community partners for their hard work and commitment to their communities in 2007.

This past year, WellFlorida's projects included evaluating the health needs of many communities—rural, mothers and infants throughout the region, HIV/AIDS clients, and those suffering with Traumatic Brain Injury statewide—and making strategic recommendations for the future.

We look forward to another year of working together for healthy communities.

HIV/AIDS: A historical perspective

On December 1, 2007, people around the world united in recognition of World AIDS Day. Since it was first established in 1988, World AIDS Day has been an attempt to raise awareness and prompt global action to fight the spread of the deadly disease. It is estimated that 27 million people have died from the disease since it was first discovered.

The earliest known case of an HIV infection in a human was from a blood sample collected in 1959. Analysis hints that HIV may have stemmed from a single virus in the late 1940s or early 1950s. Many researchers believe that a subspecies of chimpanzees native to Africa is the original source of the virus, and it was introduced to humans when hunters came in contact with infected blood. It is thought to have mutated into the disease-causing agent in the early 1980s, when its spread was helped by the ease of travel by airplane and the sexual revolution.

1979-1981

The *New York Times* reports that Kaposi's sarcoma (referred to as "gay cancer") and Pneumocystis pneumonia are increasingly seen among gay men in New York and California. The Center for Disease



Control (CDC) calls the disease GRID, or Gay-Related Immune Deficiency, stigmatizing the gay community as carriers of the disease in the US. Eventually, AIDS spreads to heterosexuals, intravenous drug users and recipients of blood transfusions, proving the disease doesn't discriminate.

*31 known deaths in the US before 1981
234 deaths in the US during 1981*

1982

The CDC links the new disease to blood and renames it Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS.

Ryan White

Ryan White was born with hemophilia on Dec. 6, 1971 in Kokomo, Indiana. At the age of 13, he contracted HIV from infected blood products he received to treat his hemophilia.

Soon after his diagnosis, he was expelled from school because of concerns that he was a health risk to other students. Teachers and parents supported the action. Ryan and his family fought the decision, and ultimately, the courts ruled in Ryan's favor, and he returned to school.

During the time between his diagnosis in 1984 and his death in 1990, Ryan often spoke out about the challenges he faced and the need for greater compassion towards people with HIV/AIDS. Activists joined his cause to explain to the public that HIV could not be transmitted by casual contact and that it was not just a "gay disease." Ryan White personified this message, as he was a heterosexual, white, middle-class boy—not a part of any of the groups generally associated with the disease.

On August 18, 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act. The Act was reauthorized in 1996, 2000 and 2006. The program serves as a safety-net provider of medical and support services for over 500,000 people with HIV/AIDS each year in the US.

WellFlorida has provided staffing, fiscal administration and support to the Ryan White Program of North Central Florida since 1991.

A brief history of HIV/AIDS, continued

1983

Researchers at the Pasteur Institute in France isolate a retrovirus that they believe is related to AIDS and the CDC warns blood banks of possible problems with blood supplies. Once limited to New York and California, 33 countries around the world confirm cases of the disease. An international committee of scientists renames the virus HIV or Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

1984

"Patient Zero," a Canadian flight attendant, dies from AIDS. He is believed to have introduced the virus into the general population.

1985

AIDS begins to enter the public spotlight when actor Rock Hudson dies of AIDS and Ryan White is expelled from his school in Indiana after being diagnosed with the disease. The first International Conference on AIDS is held in Atlanta, and US President Ronald Reagan mentions the word AIDS in public for the first time.

1986

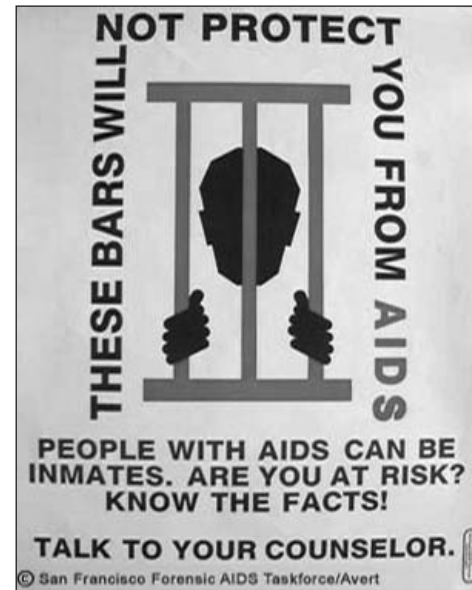
16,301 cumulative deaths in the US five years since AIDS was first identified

1987

Retrovir (AZT) emerges as a new treatment approved by the FDA, extending the lives of people with AIDS. In response to public pressure, President Reagan finally acknowledges the HIV problem and calls AIDS "public enemy no. 1."

1988

The US government bans discrimination against federal workers with HIV and mails 107 million copies of "Understanding AIDS," a booklet by Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, to every household.



An early example of an American AIDS poster by Forensic AIDS Project, 1985

1990

Ryan White, 19, dies after years of fighting to stay in school and battling AIDS. Later, Congress passes the Ryan White CARE Act to provide government-sponsored funds for the care of people infected with HIV who have no other resources.

The number of people living with HIV and AIDS in the US rises to 1 million

1991

10 million people have HIV worldwide

1992

The first drugs to be used in combination with AZT are approved by the FDA.

1993

Several French senior officials are jailed for knowingly selling HIV-tainted blood, resulting in the infection of hundreds of transfusion recipients. The CDC redefines AIDS to include opportunistic infections.

1994

Clinical trials demonstrate that AZT used during pregnancy and at the time

of delivery reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV from 25.5% to 8.3%.

1996

Powerful HIV-fighting drugs called protease inhibitors become widely available. Used with existing HIV drugs, they give patients and scientists new hope in eliminating HIV. However, a year later, scientists discover that HIV "hides" in the body, making total elimination of the virus impossible.

1998

The first human trials of an AIDS vaccine begin in the US. European drug companies ignore US patent law and begin making generic versions of HIV medication in order to make HIV drugs affordable for the hardest hit areas of Africa. In response, US companies file lawsuits to stop such practices.

2001

US pharmaceutical companies drop the lawsuits. Since 1981, 21 million people worldwide have died from AIDS, including 17 million from Sub-Saharan Africa. 31 million people are now living with HIV worldwide, the majority from African nations.

2005

The cumulative estimated number of deaths due to AIDS in the US through 2005 was 550,394. Worldwide, 4.9 million people were newly infected with HIV and 40.3 million are living with HIV/AIDS.

2007

"We are well into the third decade of a scourge that has expanded exponentially beyond a small specific group to almost every corner of the globe... Yet, today still 70% of infected people don't have access to life-saving therapies. Many still face stigma, economic deprivation and rejection because of their infection. Many still don't have access to basic information or simple interventions that will reduce risk. This is not the time for complacency nor apathy. It is the time for compassionate leadership that recognizes that the voiceless are often those who suffer most—who can they turn to if their leaders do not listen and heed their cries?" — **Archbishop Emeritus Desmond M Tutu**

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov); About.com (www.about.com); AIDS Education Global Information System—or AEGIS (www.aegis.com); World AIDS Campaign (www.worldaidscampaign.info); HIV/AIDS Power Point Presentation by the Alachua County Health Department.

Adults and children estimated to be living with HIV, 2006

North America
1.4 million

Caribbean
250,000

Latin America
1.7 million

Western and Central Europe
740,000

Middle East and North Africa
460,000

Sub-Saharan Africa
24.7 million

Eastern Europe and Central Asia
1.7 million

East Asia
750,000

South and South East Asia
7.8 million

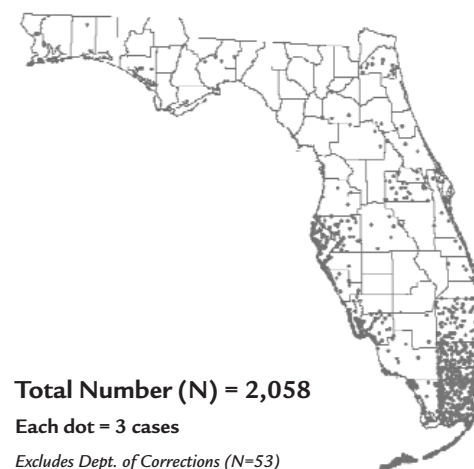
Oceania
81,000

Total: 39.5 million

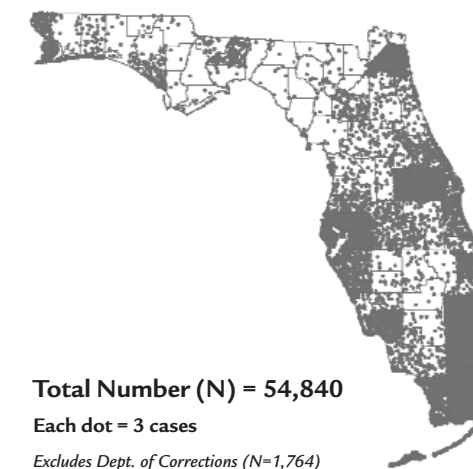
Source: World Health Organization

Reported AIDS Cases in Florida...

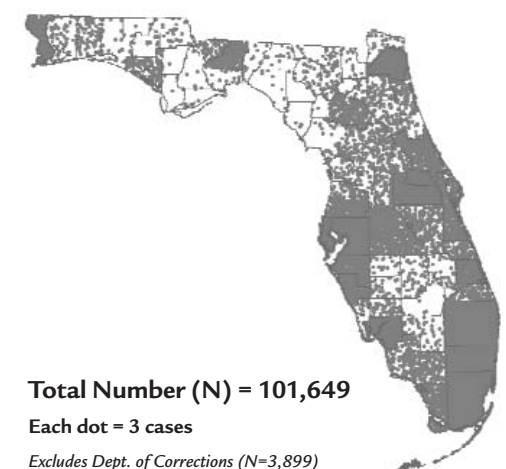
through 1986



through 1996



through 2006





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Tri-County Connects

Serve your community, by being on WellFlorida's Board of Directors. We currently have openings for representatives from:

- Citrus County*
- Dixie County*
- Hernando County*
- Lafayette County*
- Levy County*
- Marion County*
- Suwannee County*

Please contact Katelyn Allen at kallen@wellflorida.org or 352-313-6500 ext. 100 for more information.

“Tri-County Connects: Voicing the Vision of Local Healthcare Providers,” a forum moderated by WellFlorida on Oct. 11 in Chiefland, gave providers an opportunity to discuss the new Tri-County Hospital and learn of community health survey findings. Franklin Schupp, the hospital's CEO, was the keynote speaker at the event.

WellFlorida surveyed residents of Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy counties. Survey results identified the top three barriers to healthcare in the counties as lack of local specialist providers, cost of healthcare, and lack of health insurance. Of the respondents, 87.7 percent were pleased the hospital is coming to the area. Overall, respondents felt the hospital will improve access to healthcare by increasing the number and types of providers and decrease the distances traveled for care.

Tri-County Hospital is scheduled to open in April 2010. The 60-bed hospital, operated by Ameris Health Systems, will be built on 20 acres of land in Chiefland on County Road 320. It will offer an emergency room, surgery, physical therapy, obstetrics, gynecology and a pharmacy. Ameris determined that the Tri-

County area needed a full-service hospital three years ago. However, Ameris' initial Certificate of Need (CON) application was turned down. In the process of applying for their second CON, the company raised \$61 million from local businesses. Schupp said this showed the desire of residents to have a hospital in the area.

At “Tri-County Connects,” current local providers voiced concerns that preventative care and education are lacking. One provider noted that opening the hospital without providing education to residents is simply putting a Band-Aid over the healthcare problems in the community. Some providers are also worried about competition from the future hospital. Schupp said that Ameris will try to work with existing providers to enhance and expand the services in the community.

Partners for the event included Trenton Medical Center Inc., Bell Family Healthcare, Suwannee River AHEC, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Inc., Lake City Community College, and Chiefland Medical Center, LLC.

—Kristen Scheff, Public Relations Intern



United Way of Suwannee Valley