

# HIV/AIDS among American Indians (AI) and Alaska Natives (AN) in New Mexico

## Statistics

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- In 2005, American Indians made up 10.3% of all newly reported AIDS cases (1).
- Compared to other racial/ethnic groups, American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number of cumulative HIV/AIDS cases reported. Through 2004, 131 AIDS cases and 60 HIV cases have been reported for AI/AN (2).
- As of December 31, 2004, 133 AI/ANs were reported living with HIV/AIDS (2).
- Through 2004, 58 AI/AN with AIDS have died (2).

### Primary mode of transmission

- Among AI/AN HIV/AIDS cases reported through 2004, males made up 79% of the cases. Male-to-male sexual contact represented the largest transmission category among AI/AN males (63%), and heterosexual contact was the leading risk factor for AI/AN females (49%) (2).

## Risk Factors

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**There are multiple risk factors that contribute to high rates of HIV. Of these, two health risk factors, substance abuse and sexually transmitted diseases, and one general risk factor, poverty, is highlighted, since all three are universally prominent in most AI and AN and communities.**

- Sexually transmitted infections increase the risk of HIV transmission. American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest rate of chlamydia infections, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rates of syphilis and gonorrhea infections, respectively. The number of chlamydia cases among AI/AN females was almost 5 times greater than that of AI/AN males in 2004 (3).
- Substance abuse increases the likelihood of engaging in risk behaviors. New Mexico is among the states with the greatest proportion of AI/AN admissions to substance abuse treatment centers (30%) (43).
- Poverty increases an individual's vulnerability to HIV infection. Approximately 36% of AI/ANs in New Mexico live below the poverty level, compared to 18% of the state's general population (5). Consequently, access to healthcare, HIV testing and prevention services, and education are limited.

## Surveillance

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- New Mexico is among the 33 areas whose data is included in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's annual HIV/AIDS surveillance report, because they have been reporting HIV by name since January 1998. HIV data from states that implemented confidential name-based HIV reporting after 1999 were excluded from the analysis of HIV/AIDS cases in the most recent report (6).
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## Ryan White CARE Act

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- New Mexico is among the states with the largest proportion of AI/AN AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) clients. In 2004, 5% of New Mexico's ADAP clients were AI/AN, and 5% of clients receiving other Title II services were AI/AN in 2001 (7,8).

## Additional Resources

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- New Mexico Department of Health, HIV/AIDS Epidemiology data: <http://www.health.state.nm.us/hiv-aids.html>.
- New Mexico Department of Health, STD Epidemiology data: <http://www.health.state.nm.us/std.html>.
- National Native American AIDS Prevention Center: [www.nnaapc.org](http://www.nnaapc.org); 303-542-2036.

## References

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