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NUMBER OF BABIES BORN HIV-POSITIVE AT ALL-TIME LOW



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Tallahassee, Fla.—The number of babies being born with HIV has reached an all-time low—down 95 percent since 1993. In 2014, six babies in Florida were born with HIV infection. At the height of this problem, in 1993, there were 110 HIV-infected babies were born. With proper prenatal care and strict adherence to medication, the rate of perinatal HIV transmission can be reduced to 2 percent or less. In 2014, 505 HIV-infected women gave birth, reflecting a transmission rate of 1.2 percent.

“Every baby born in Florida should have the best chance for a healthy life,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “With advances in HIV treatment, transmission from mother to baby is preventable and all pregnant women should be screened for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.”

The department’s perinatal HIV prevention program is multifaceted – targeting women of childbearing age and medical providers. Medical providers are educated on Florida law, which requires that all pregnant women be tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections unless the woman refuses. HIV-infected pregnant women are educated on the importance of proper prenatal care, adherence to medication and alternatives to breast feeding.

In addition to Florida’s testing law for pregnant women and ongoing education of medical providers, the dramatic decrease in perinatal infections is attributed to decreases in HIV infection among women and programs such as the Targeted Outreach for Pregnant Women Act (TOPWA). Through targeted outreach and testing, at-risk or HIV-infected pregnant women are identified and linked to prenatal care and other needed services, such as substance abuse treatment.

It is estimated that there are 126,000 individuals living with HIV in Florida, and as many as 14 percent or almost 18,000 do not know that they are infected. To combat this problem, the Florida Department of Health has developed a comprehensive program for preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and for providing care and treatment to those already infected. This comprehensive approach includes HIV surveillance, education, prevention, counseling, testing, care and treatment.

For more information please visit www.FloridaAIDS.org.

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