

Seeking HIV Tests for All in US Age 15-65

From VOA Learning English, this is the Health Report in Special English.

An independent advisory group is suggesting that everyone in the United States age fifteen to sixty-five should get tested for HIV. HIV is the infection that causes AIDS.



The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force says wider public acceptance of HIV testing could lead to earlier treatment of cases, and further slow the spread of AIDS. The task force is collecting public comments on its [proposed recommendation](#) until December seventeenth.

The sixteen medical experts on the task force are appointed by the government. They examine scientific evidence for and against health care services designed to prevent disease.

Carlos Del Rio is co-director of the Emory Center for AIDS Research in Atlanta, Georgia. He is not a member of the task force, but says early discovery and treatment of HIV is important for two reasons.

"People are less likely to progress to disease and also, as importantly, is people are less likely to transmit to others. So starting therapy early leads to better disease outcomes."

HIV is spread through unprotected sex or contact with an infected person's blood. In two thousand five, the task force recommended testing for all pregnant women and anyone at increased risk of HIV.

Now, says Dr. Del Rio, HIV tests would be offered as an early screening tool. He says that makes more sense than offering it later when people go to the doctor for tests to find out why they are sick.

An estimated 1.2 million Americans have HIV. Each year about fifty thousand more get infected. Up to twenty-five percent of all infected people do not know they have the virus.

But among young people, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

says about sixty percent do not know it. The CDC says one-fourth of new infections in the United States are in young people age thirteen to twenty-four.

December first is World AIDS Day. The latest United Nations AIDS report says twenty-five low- to middle-income countries have cut their rate of new infections in half since two thousand one. Thirteen of those countries are in sub-Saharan Africa.

But UNAIDS researchers say the number of new cases has risen more than thirty-five percent in the Middle East and North Africa since two thousand one.