

Attachment 2b
Comment to Initial 60-Day Notice



February 3, 2021

THE AIDS INSTITUTE

Maryam I. Daneshvar
CDC Acting Reports Clearance Officer
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
MS-D74
Atlanta, GA 30333

September 26, 2007

Re: Comments on Proposed Data Collection [*Federal Register*: August 1, 2007 (Volume 72, Number 147), pp. 42097-42098]

Dear Ms. Daneshvar:

The AIDS Institute would like to express our strong support for CDC's proposed project on rapid HIV testing in community mental health settings, particularly those serving African Americans. People with chronic mental illnesses are at an increased risk for HIV infection. Mental health clinics provide a critical opportunity for HIV rapid testing, counseling, and prevention efforts.

More mental health providers need to offer HIV counseling, testing, and linkages to care, especially those serving African American communities. African Americans make up 13% of the United States population, yet account for 49% (18,121) of the new HIV/AIDS diagnosis in 2005. African Americans are at a higher risk for HIV because of associated risk factors, such as substance use, lack of awareness of HIV serostatus, sexual risk factors, STDs, homophobia and concealment of homosexual behavior, and socioeconomic issues.

The public mental health safety net of hospitals, community health centers, and local health departments are vital to many African Americans, especially those in high-need populations. Nearly 1 in 4 African Americans is uninsured, compared to 16% of the general U.S. population. Only 1/3 of Americans with a mental illness or a mental health problem access care. However, the percentage of African Americans receiving needed care is only 1/2 that of non-Hispanic whites. In addition, according to NIH, one in three persons with HIV/AIDS may suffer from depression.

The AIDS Institute strongly supports HIV testing in community mental health settings and we believe this is an excellent opportunity to address the linkages between mental health and HIV risk for African Americans and to assess client demographics, current

behaviors facilitating HIV transmission, current psychiatric symptoms, access and barriers to HIV testing, prevention, and treatment services, and adherence to psychiatric and medical treatment regimens.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Gene Copello". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dr. A. Gene Copello
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