



Indiana State
Department of Health
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Michael R. Pence
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Jerome M. Adams, MD, MPH
State Health Commissioner

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Eugene McCray, MD
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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, & TB Prevention
Division of HIV AIDS Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE, MS D21
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Re: Letter of Invitation

In early 2015, the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) undertook a massive public health response to control an unprecedented HIV outbreak caused by unsafe injection of drugs, notably oxymorphone, in a medically underserved rural area of southern Indiana. With technical assistance from the CDC, the ISDH endeavored to rapidly locate and test infected persons. As of August 1, 2015, 174 HIV infections have been identified, caused by a single strain of HIV that spread explosively through a vulnerable population already burdened by widespread hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection.

Steps taken already to prevent further HIV infections include establishment of a syringe services program (SSP) and provision of addiction services, referral of HIV-infected persons for treatment to improve health and reduce HIV spread, and referral of at-risk HIV-uninfected persons to prevention services, including HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and regular retesting for HIV infection.

Diagnoses of new infections have slowed, in part because many of the infections diagnosed thus far were prevalent. However, the risk for new infections has not been completely eliminated. Questions critical to effective control remain, including but not limited to, i) how are prescription-type opioids procured, prepared, shared, and injected; and, ii) what are the barriers to accessing care (e.g., antiretroviral treatment) and prevention services (e.g., SSP, PrEP, HIV retesting).

Indiana requests additional assistance from CDC technical experts to address the following objectives:

- Identify effective control measures unique to the circumstances of this outbreak
- Characterize the facilitators and barriers to accessing these and other prevention services

The information will be used to inform guidance on safe injection practices and other HIV control methods and to increase demand for and use of prevention services.

The primary purpose of data collection is to identify prevention and control measures. The ISDH may elect to disseminate data via publication and/or presentation. The ISDH owns all data collected, analyzed, and reported. The CDC may be requested to advise about research methodology or to co-author publications or presentations to disseminate the data. The CDC may not publish or present the data without prior approval and clearance from the ISDH.

Sincerely,

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