



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

November 25, 2009

Julie Davids
Senior Consultant
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)
80-A Fourth Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Dear Ms. Davids:

Thank you for your attendance at the 2009 National HIV Prevention Conference, as well as your inquiry regarding progress the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP) has made towards several commitments outlined in a December 2008 letter from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to the Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP). CHAMP and its partners in the HIV Prevention Justice Alliance are important colleagues in NCHHSTP's efforts to ensure that laws and public policies are rooted in science, not stigma or fear, and that they support, rather than impede, HIV prevention efforts at the national, state, and local levels.

The issuance of CDC's Revised Recommendations for HIV Testing in 2006 was an integral part of CDC's effort to make HIV testing routine in the health care setting. And as you are aware, on November 2, 2009, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a final rule that removed HIV infection from the list of diseases that can keep people who are not U.S. citizens from entering the United States. These are both important steps in removing any stigma related to HIV testing or HIV infection.

Below, I have outlined where NCHHSTP stands with respect to each of the activities for which you have requested updates.

1. **Update "Rumors, Myths, and Hoaxes" section on CDC's website:** We are in the process of both updating and expanding this section of the CDC website, and we anticipate completing this task by mid-December 2009. Importantly, the expanded section will include a new podcast that addresses common myths and explores in greater detail how the circulation and persistence of rumors and myths reinforce the discrimination and stigma associated with HIV infection. When the website and podcast are ready, we will send an HIV Update to our partners and other key stakeholders, alerting them to key changes in the site and promoting the new podcast.

Additionally, we will feature an article in the December DHAP News (which is distributed to external partners, as well as NCHHSTP staff) that highlights the revisions and additions to "Rumors, Myths, and Hoaxes" portion of the CDC website.

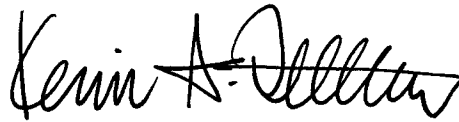
2. **Update and expand CDC factsheets and Questions and Answers (Q&As) addressing HIV transmission:** We are in the process of implementing a new, comprehensive strategy to systematically update all of the fact sheets we make available through the CDC website and other communication channels. The revision process will begin in January 2010, and we have prioritized the HIV transmission fact sheet to ensure that it is among the first to be updated and expanded. We anticipate that the new fact sheet (and an accompanying question and answer set) will be available online in the first quarter of calendar year 2010; as with the "Rumors, Myths, and Hoaxes" podcast and website improvements, we will disseminate a HIV Update to our partners and other key stakeholder, notifying them that an updated fact sheet and Q&As on HIV transmission are available.

3. **Internal talking points for CDC staff and health departments:** We are in final stages of developing a set of talking points that address criminal transmission and exposure laws and other state and local justice policies that affect the lives of persons living with HIV. These talking points should be finalized by mid-December 2009, at which time we will share them internally and with our partners in state and local health departments.
4. **Survey state health departments to determine whether they currently have collaborative and/or communicative relationships in place with criminal justice personnel (e.g. local prosecutors, correctional staff, law enforcement):** CDC considered the feasibility of conducting this activity but decided not to undertake it due to the length of time required to obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (the survey would have been subject to the requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act.) We think it would be better to use time and resources to focus on other activities related to criminal justice issues.
5. **Develop a communications strategy, plan, and tools (e.g. informational brochures, question and answer sets) to facilitate collaboration and communication between state health department and criminal justice staff:** This activity was predicated on our having successfully completed the previously referenced survey. Thus, our inability to move forward with the survey effectively precludes our completing this activity as well.

I hope this update reinforces your confidence in CDC's commitment to addressing misinformation about HIV/AIDS and redressing its negative consequences (e.g., stigma, discrimination) for persons living with HIV—particularly in those instances when misinformation enshrines discrimination in law.

Once again, thank you for your inquiry, and your commitment to HIV prevention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin A. Fenton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "F".

Kevin A. Fenton, M.D., Ph.D., F.F.P.H.
Director
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and
TB Prevention