HIV Antibody Testing & Prevention

Screening Recommendation

- HIV antibody testing is strongly recommended with all cases of sexually transmitted infections diagnosed, including syphilis, gonorrhea, Chlamydia, Herpes simplex virus 2, and incident human papilloma virus.
- HIV antibody testing is strongly recommended with all newly acquired cases of Hepatitis B or C.
- HIV antibody testing is strongly recommended for all pregnant women with each pregnancy with retesting at 36 weeks if a woman has the possibility of HIV exposure during the course of the pregnancy (e.g., new sexually transmitted infection during pregnancy or partner’s HIV status is known to be HIV-infected).
- HIV antibody testing is strongly recommended for injection drug using patients and other patients at risk in chemical and substance abuse programs.

For more information or comments, please call the Clinical Affairs Department at (404) 364-7360

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An Ounce of Prevention
KAISER PERMANENTE-GEORGIA REGION

SPREAD HEALTH AND BE PROUD

By Staycee Benjamin-Stone, MA, CHES, IC®

The “Spread Health” ad for the Thrive campaign encourages us to share good health. The community bicycle in the ad showcases how KP is working to spread health into our communities. Think about how your work at Kaiser Permanente helps improve the lives of our members and spread health to the greater community. Every time you do your job well and/or go that extra mile to help a KP member, it supports the greater good of the organization.

In many respects, 2008 has been a banner year for the organization. Below a few significant organizational accomplishments.

- Throughout this entire year, KPGA patient satisfaction scores have been higher than ever. The score is based on the number of members who say they are highly satisfied with the service they received.
- In July 2008, Kaiser Permanente Georgia was named the 10th “Best Place to Work” by Atlanta Magazine.
- In October 2008, KPGA received the ranking of 27 out of 239 health plans in the nation by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and U.S. News & World Report in their annual survey of commercial health care plans.

Each of us has contributed in some way to these important strides for the organization. So on those days when things have been a bit challenging or you are more tired than usual from your work load, be proud of your contribution. It really does matter to our bottom line. It takes the entire KPGA community to do a good job at spreading health, retaining, and gaining members. As we approach 2009, we have more work to do to keep KP at the top. In these tough economic times, we are up against fierce competition. But Kaiser Permanente is a leader in the health care industry, and we certainly have the tools and resources to stay on top. Let’s make the choice to do just that. So be proud of the good work that you do for Kaiser Permanente Georgia and continue to spread health on the path forward.

Have a safe, healthy, and joyous holiday season!
WORLD AIDS DAY
By Jacqueline Jefferson, RN, MPH

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), December 1st marks the 20th anniversary of World’s AIDS Day. This day is set aside to celebrate the many lives saved by HIV prevention and treatment programs. The CDC estimates that about 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the United States. As the number of people living with HIV increases, so does the opportunity for those with HIV to pass on the virus to others, most often by having sexual intercourse, sharing needles, or from HIV infected women to their babies.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is different from other viruses because it attacks the body’s immune system. The HIV finds and destroys a major component of the immune system called T cells or CD4 cells. If the HIV virus is not discovered and/or treated, it could lead to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS is the advanced stage of HIV. In this stage, the body’s immune system is weakened, T-cells or CD4 cells are very low, and the body will have a difficult time fighting infections and certain cancers.

The only way to know if you have HIV/AIDS is to get tested. This is most important if you have been treated for a sexually transmitted infection like gonorrhea, Chlamydia, or syphilis or have Hepatitis B or C. A blood test checks for antibodies to the virus. Knowing your status may prevent or delay infections in the future and prevent the spread of the virus to others. Currently there is no cure or vaccine for HIV/AIDS. However, with treatment a person can live a long, productive, and healthy life.

December 1st could also be considered a day to get tested and know your status. Please note the KP National Guideline and recommendations for testing that are included in this newsletter.

Kaiser Permanente offers many online resources at kp.org, or you may contact the HIV Case Manager at (770) 431-4114.