

## School-Centered HIV/STD Prevention for Young Men who have Sex with Men (YMSM)

### Rationale:

Compared with HIV infections in the general population, HIV infections among young men who have sex with men (YMSM) continue to be disproportionately high, especially in communities of color. In 2010, one-quarter (25.7%) of all new HIV infections were among youth aged 13–24, and YMSM accounted for 72.1% of all new HIV infections in that age group. More than half of all the HIV infections among YMSM aged 13–24 were among African Americans (54.4%) and more than one-fifth were among Latinos (21.6%).<sup>1</sup>

Increasing attention has been given to the HIV prevention needs of YMSM; however, these efforts have largely focused on young adults rather than on adolescents. Although teen YMSM (13–19 years old) have typically received HIV prevention services from community-based organizations (CBOs) that focus primarily on runaway or out-of-school youths, there is evidence that YMSM who are in school also are at risk for HIV infection. Review of data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) conducted from 2009 to 2011 among the 12 states and 9 school districts that include same-sex behavior questions indicates that YMSM high school students are more likely than other males to engage in sexual risk-taking behaviors (e.g., ever having had sexual intercourse with four or more persons, not using a condom during last sexual intercourse, having drunk alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse). MSM were also significantly less likely to report having ever been taught in school about acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or HIV infection.<sup>1</sup>

CDC recommends that all adolescents and adults aged 13–64 get routine HIV testing and MSM get HIV testing at least annually.<sup>2</sup> Although many adolescents engage in sexual behaviors that place them at risk for HIV infection, relatively few have been tested for HIV; only 22% of sexually experienced high school students had ever been tested for HIV.<sup>3</sup> In 2011, male high school students (17.6%) were significantly less likely than female high school students (27.2%) to get tested for HIV.<sup>1</sup>

These statistics highlight the need for programs targeted specifically for teen YMSM with a focus on increasing their access to sexual health services, including HIV and STD testing and treatment, and decreasing sexual risk behaviors. Schools can connect YMSM to HIV and STD testing and other sexual health services in their communities, and some schools can offer those services directly to youth. In addition, evidence-based interventions (EBIs) that were developed for other populations of youth or for young adult YMSM can be adapted to reduce HIV risk among youth, specifically by delaying initiation of sexual intercourse and decreasing other sexual risk behaviors (e.g., decreasing the number of sex partners, decreasing the number of times students have unprotected sex, increasing condom use). Schools can connect youth to CBOs that provide these EBIs or offer such programs onsite. Because YMSM are more likely to miss school or drop out, a core component of an HIV prevention program for teen YMSM is creating safe and supportive environments for all students and increasing protective factors through interventions focused on school connectedness and parent engagement.

## Definitions:

1. Young Men who have Sex with Men (YMSM): adolescent or young adult males who have engaged in sexual activity with partners of the same sex. For the purpose of this FOA, activities designed to meet the HIV/STD prevention needs of 13–19 year-old YMSM also will aim to meet those needs for teenage males who have not engaged in sexual activity with partners of the same sex but are attracted to others of the same sex; or who identify as gay or bisexual or have another non-heterosexual identity.

## Resources:

- Fact Sheet on HIV and YMSM  
[http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/pdf/hiv\\_factsheet\\_ymism.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/pdf/hiv_factsheet_ymism.pdf)
- Fact Sheet on HIV Testing Among Adolescents  
[http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/pdf/hivtesting\\_adolescents.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/pdf/hivtesting_adolescents.pdf)
- CDC Vital Signs: HIV Among Youth  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/HIVAmongYouth/>
- CDC LGBTQ Programs At-a-Glance  
<http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-programs.htm>
- FOA PS11-113: HIV Prevention Projects for Young Men of Color Who Have Sex with Men and Young Transgender Persons of Color  
<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/funding/PS11-1113/>

Also see resources for [Sexual Health Services](#), [Exemplary Sexual Health Education](#), and [Safe and Supportive Environments](#)

## References:

1. CDC. Vital Signs: HIV infection, testing, and risk behaviors among youth – United States. *MMWR* 2012;61(47);971–976. Available at [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6147a5.htm?s\\_cid=mm6147a5\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6147a5.htm?s_cid=mm6147a5_w).
2. CDC. Revised recommendations for HIV testing of adults, adolescents, and pregnant women in health-care settings. *MMWR* 2006;55(RR-14). Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5514a1.htm>.
3. CDC. HIV testing among adolescents: what schools and education agencies can do. CDC Web site. Available at [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/pdf/hivtesting\\_adolescents.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/pdf/hivtesting_adolescents.pdf).