

CDC approximates 240,000 in U.S. are unaware they have HIV

FORT HOOD, Texas – Accepting the reality of a particular situation may seem too difficult to face, but when it comes to health, or more specifically, a potential HIV infection, knowing is better than not knowing.

Sometimes people ignore personal responsibility through rationalization, denial, avoidance, and making excuses; however, avoiding the truth will only serve to prolong suffering and sometimes leads to tragic consequences.

Despite circulating myths or rumors about this ultimately deadly virus, HIV infection is all too prevalent. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, it claims the lives of 33.4 million people worldwide. Other facts about HIV infection are:

- Nearly 600,000 men, women, and children in the United States have died from complications of HIV infection, or AIDS.
- An estimated 1.2 million people are currently living with HIV in the United States.
- Approximately 240,000 people in the United States are unaware they are infected.
- Knowing your status will lead to individual empowerment to stay healthy and to quickly obtain medical treatment in the event of HIV infection.

Our public health agencies at the federal, state, and local levels are committed to safeguard the health of our communities. This is accomplished by educating the public and engaging in health promotion events. Promoting discussion of the realities of HIV/AIDS in our community such as rates of infection, at-risk populations, and the relationship between sexually transmitted infections and HIV transmission encourages individuals to get tested and links them to medical care.

Since 1988, when the United Nations General Assembly officially declared December 1st World AIDS Day, organizations around the globe have engaged in efforts to prevent HIV infection and advocate for those who are infected.

Many of us face challenges that may seem too complex to deal with in an already complicated world. In truth however, we need to face facts if we seriously expect to navigate through life as painlessly as possible. You owe it to yourself, your family and your friends to know your status. Remember, testing is the only way to identify the nearly 240,000 people in the United States currently living with HIV who are unaware of their infection. For additional information, please contact Army Public Health Nursing at 254-287-6789 or visit the Center for Disease Control website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/index.htm> .

