

## HIV/AIDS Deaths in North Carolina

Unlike chronic diseases with high death rates such as cancer or cardiovascular diseases, HIV/AIDS is a killer of the young and middle-aged, so significant years of potential life may be lost when an HIV/AIDS death occurs. Thus there is much interest in monitoring and preventing HIV/AIDS-related deaths. HIV/AIDS increased in ranking as a cause of death through the mid-1990s to become one of the ten leading causes of death. Since then, HIV/AIDS has declined in overall ranking of causes of death, primarily because of the introduction of new, more effective AIDS treatments. The sharp declines first noted after the introduction of new treatments have slowed in recent years, which could be signaling changes in treatment effectiveness or problems in health care delivery. According to preliminary data from the National Center for Health Statistics, the national HIV/AIDS death rate in 2000 was 5.2 deaths per 100,000 population. HIV/AIDS still ranks high (5th) as a cause of death for 25-44 year olds.

According to the North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics (NCSCHS), in North Carolina there were 462 deaths associated with HIV/AIDS in 2000, the same as in 1999. In 1998, 432 HIV/AIDS-related deaths occurred, with a resultant rate of 5.7 per 100,000. Just as HIV/AIDS morbidity (illness) disproportionately affects certain populations, so does HIV/AIDS mortality (death). In 1998, the minority death rate for HIV/AIDS was 19.7 per 100,000 while the rate for whites was 1.6 (a twelve-fold difference). The 1998 age-adjusted death rate for males was 8.3 per 100,000 and the rate for females was 3.2.

Although adjusted rates for death are a typical measure of trends for comparing risk among groups, observing changes in the actual number of deaths can also be very useful (see note below for data limitations). Since most morbidity for HIV/AIDS occurs in young and middle-aged adults, this data will focus on deaths for individuals 15 to 44 years of age (data from other sources may include other groupings). According to the NCSCHS, 302 HIV/AIDS deaths were recorded in 2000 for 15 to 44 year olds, slightly up from 1999 when 285 deaths were recorded. HIV/AIDS remained the 6th leading cause of death for this age group. Since 1995, there has been an overall 60% decrease in HIV/AIDS-related deaths (776:302) for this age group. The decrease was greater for whites (77%) than African Americans (52%). Most of the increase from 1999 to 2000 is attributed to an increase in deaths for African American males (169 deaths in 2000 as compared to 131 in 1999).

*Note: Mortality data are coded from death certificates collected by the State's registrars. Reporting is nearly 100% complete, as death certificates are required for every death. However, the causes of death are based on information recorded by the certifying physician and may be inaccurate or incomplete. Due to under-reporting of certain causes of death, the number of HIV-related deaths and the spectrum of related conditions will be underestimated to some extent. Coding for deaths changed in 1999 to the ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases) system. This new scheme allows for more deaths to be better coded and correctly associated with the causative diseases. Thus, before 1999, HIV/AIDS deaths are understated as compared to 1999 and 2000 deaths. For this report, HIV/AIDS deaths include only death reports which directly indicated HIV/AIDS as one of the underlying causes of death.*



### NC HIV/AIDS Deaths 1995-2000 for Persons 15-44 Years of Age\*

		Year of Death						Percent Change (one year comparisons)				
Race		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00
White		264	185	87	71	79	61	-29.9	-53.0	-18.4	11.3	-22.8
African American		500	431	255	236	203	239	-13.8	-40.8	-7.5	-14.0	17.7
Other		12	5	1	1	3	2	-58.3	-80.0	0.0	200.0	-33.3
Total		776	621	343	308	285	302	-20.0	-44.8	-10.2	-7.5	6.0

  

		Year of Death						Percent Change (one year comparisons)				
Race	Sex	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00
White	Male	249	165	77	60	65	47	-33.7	-53.3	-22.1	8.3	-27.7
	Female	15	20	10	11	14	14	33.3	-50.0	10.0	27.3	0.0
African American	Male	381	371	182	151	131	169	-2.6	-50.9	-17.0	-13.2	29.0
	Female	119	114	73	85	72	70	-4.2	-36.0	16.4	-15.3	-2.8

\* Source: North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics

### Leading Causes of Death in North Carolina All Persons Ages 15-44 Years

