

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) releases data showing a 48% Increase in US HIV Infections from 2005 to 2006

(Tucson)— **The Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF)** (www.saaf.org) invites members of the southern Arizona community to help address a community health issue- no new HIV infections in southern Arizona- after receiving word from a long awaited report by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) showing its latest data on HIV rates and incidence in the US.

The CDC HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report was quietly released, showing a “catastrophic” **48% increase in US HIV infections between the years 2005 and 2006**. The number of new infections reported in 2005 was 35,537. In 2006, it **jumped to 52,878 new reported cases**. With the lifetime costs of one HIV-infected individual’s treatment and care estimated to be \$600,000, these new CDC surveillance numbers suggest a \$36 billion aggregate cost for caring for these nearly 53,000 individuals.

The CDC HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report is available at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/2006report/pdf/2006SurveillanceReport.pdf>.

Wendell Hicks, Executive Director of the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation says “this news is catastrophic to our community, our country, and to all those at risk, infected or affected by HIV. AIDS Service Organizations across the country were made aware in November 2007 that there would be a significant jump in the number of new reported cases. Obviously, we were hoping that this news was not true. It underscores all of the current prevention efforts and the new innovative approaches organizations are trying to develop that desperately need funding. Because of the delay of this announcement programs and services that can help to reduce the rate of HIV are struggling to continue services financially.”

SAAF provides client services to those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS through food, housing, case management, medication assistance and much more to almost 1200 people annually. In addition SAAF offers the community 7 prevention programs targeted to high risk populations including youth to help reduce the rate of infection in southern Arizona. Last year, because of the tremendous prevention outreach and community education efforts SAAF was able to reach more than 20,000 with critical messages about how someone can reduce their risk for HIV.

To learn how you can join in the fight against HIV and help stop NEW HIV INFECTIONS in our community, please contact Wendell Hicks or Michele Bart at the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation, 520-628-7223 or email micheleb@saaf.org.

The Southern Arizona AIDS Foundations mission is to create and sustain a healthier community through a compassionate, comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS.

For more information about SAAF's programs or services visit www.saaf.org or call 520-628-7223.

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