



## Equality in HIV/AIDS Treatment and Prevention

With the rate of HIV infections rising dramatically in Massachusetts, it's clear the fight against AIDS is far from over. HIV/AIDS is a health concern that affects all citizens of the Commonwealth, but the epidemic has a disparate impact on gay men.

The situation is even more dire for younger gay men and people of color: rates for both groups are rising at alarming rates, and communities of color continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.

And thousands of people in Massachusetts are infected each year without knowing it - even though early diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS can have a significant impact on life expectancy.

If we are to counter these disturbing trends, we need to improve education, awareness, and prevention efforts, particularly in high risk communities - and we need to make sure everyone has access to HIV testing and treatment programs so we can stop the spread of this disease.

Working with AIDS Action and Fenway Community Health, MassEquality supports 2008 initiatives:

- **Increase funding for HIV/AIDS treatment & prevention programs.**

Increased funding for prevention and testing programs will help us put a stop to the rise in HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts, particularly among those people most at risk.

Additional investments in culturally relevant prevention programs, rapid testing, and other services for high risk communities are vitally necessary to reduce the racial and ethnic disparities in HIV/AIDS infection rates.

Finally, increased funding for treatment programs will help us ensure that all citizens of the Commonwealth have access to affordable, high quality care: life saving treatment programs, health care, and necessary support services such as housing, nutrition, mental health counseling, legal advocacy and transportation.

More and more people are infected with this incurable disease every single day - which is why we can't afford to wait any longer for adequate HIV/AIDS funding in Massachusetts.

*Note: to view the online version of this document, please visit:*

<http://www.massequality.org/ourwork/equality/hiv aids/>