

Updated guidelines highlight primary care needs of those living with HIV

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With HIV patients living longer thanks to advances in treatment, the primary care needs of those living with HIV have never been more important. Updated, evidence-based guidelines from the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) are designed to help providers manage the care of those living with this complex chronic infection.

"While improvements in antiretroviral therapy have improved the prognosis for many HIV patients, data from recent studies suggest those living with HIV are at higher risk for developing common health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, or cancer," said Judith A. Aberg, MD, FIDSA, lead author of the new guidelines, which appear in the Sept. 1 issue of *Clinical Infectious Diseases* and are available online. "Now more than ever, it's imperative that HIV care providers be aware of the primary care needs of their patients, and that includes routine screening for these kinds of conditions."

Developed by an expert panel, the updated, evidence-based guidelines outline recommended screening tests for common health problems in the context of [HIV infection](#). Information about recommended immunizations, along with dose and regimen details, is provided as well. Last updated in 2004, the guidelines also emphasize the importance of patients adhering to a comprehensive program of care rather than focusing solely on a medication regimen.

"For people living with HIV, it's not just about adherence to medication,

it's also about adherence to care," said Dr. Aberg, director of virology at New York University School of Medicine and Bellevue Hospital Center in New York City. "These patients must have access to a range of services to help them stay engaged in their medical care and should receive the regular monitoring and medical attention this chronic infection demands."

This approach complements a model of care—the medical home—that emphasizes a comprehensive, personalized, patient-centered approach coordinated by a team of health providers with specific roles. "Many HIV programs are effectively using the medical home model today to manage the complex needs of HIV patients," said Michael S. Saag, MD, FIDSA, HIVMA chair-elect. "This successful track record offers a valuable lesson, not only for [HIV](#) care but for all patients, as lawmakers finalize health care reforms."

Source: [Infectious Diseases](#) Society of America ([news](#) : [web](#))

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