

DC Female Condom program highly effective in preventing HIV infections

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A new economic analysis, conducted by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and featured in the current issue of Springer's journal *AIDS and Behavior*, showed that the DC Female Condom program, a public-private partnership to provide and promote female condoms, prevented enough HIV infections in the first year alone to save over \$8 million in future medical care costs (over and above the cost of the program). This means that for every dollar spent on the program, there was a cost savings of nearly \$20.

This coalition led by the DC Department of Health (DOH) with support from the Washington AIDS Partnership, CVS/Caremark and the Female Health Company provided educational services and distributed more than 200,000 female condoms in areas in the District with disproportionately high [HIV prevalence](#) rates among women. The MAC AIDS Fund provided funding support for the project, which subsequently engaged five community-based organizations already working in the field of women's health and HIV/STD prevention to assist with education and distribution activities.

"These results clearly indicate that delivery of, and education about, female condoms is an effective HIV prevention intervention and an outstanding public health investment. Similar community HIV prevention programs involving the [female condom](#) should be explored for replication in other high risk areas," said Dr. David R. Holtgrave, professor and chair of the Department of Health Behavior and Society at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and a national

expert in evaluating the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of HIV prevention interventions.

Women, particularly [African American women](#) in urban areas like the District, are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Black women account for roughly 57 percent of new HIV infections in all American women and 90 percent of all new HIV infections in the District. The success and affordability of this pilot program suggests that promotion and education of the female condom can have significant impact to improve the health of women who are at risk of contracting HIV.

"We are extremely excited and encouraged by the success of the DC female condom program. The District still has a serious HIV epidemic and women are at risk. It is critical that we empower women, especially those at greatest risk, to take control by increasing awareness of the female condom and providing both education and access to this highly effective and affordable option that empowers women to protect themselves," said Dr. Gregory Pappas, Senior Deputy Director HIV/AIDS STD Administration, DC Department of [Health](#).

More information: Holtgrave DR et al. (2012). Cost-Utility Analysis of a Female Condom Promotion Program in Washington, DC. AIDS and Behavior; [DOI 10.1007/s10461-012-0174-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-012-0174-5)

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