

# Primary care crucial for preventing new HIV infections

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(HealthDay)—Primary care providers will play an important role in

preventing the next wave of HIV infections, according to a report published in *Medical Economics*.

Sebastian Ruhs, M.D., Ph.D., from Chase Brexton Health Care's Infectious Diseases Center of Excellence in Baltimore, notes that he is witnessing an increase in HIV cases among young, healthy adults. He also reports that these patients will turn to primary care for advice, testing, and treatment.

According to Ruhs, in addition to the 1.1 million cases of HIV diagnosed each year, about 150,000 individuals have HIV and don't know it. In order to help people understand their role in preventing further virus transmission, the U=U ("undetectable means untransmittable") campaign has been launched, focusing on educating HIV-positive individuals that they are not contagious with an undetectable viral load. New infections are occurring in high-risk groups, including men who have sex with men and ethnic minorities. These patients are often young and healthy and will not necessarily seek care in specialty centers; primary care providers may be the only ones who have medical contact with them. Intravenous drug users also represent a major concern and can be identified early on by primary care providers.

"The bottom line to [primary care physicians](#) is that HIV is [a] very well-treatable disease now that can be managed in the [primary care](#) setting or together with an infectious disease provider," Ruhs said in a statement.

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