

# *Pearls for Medical Providers*

## HIV Routine Testing

### *“HIV has Become a Chronic, Manageable Disease”*

*“You are not going to die”* This message should be reinforced with the vast majority of patients at the time of HIV diagnosis.

For those whose HIV is recognized, who get into care, stay in care, and are able to adhere to recommended therapy, HIV infection has become a manageable disease, in many ways similar to diabetes, high blood pressure, or asthma.

Survival has increased dramatically, from only months following diagnosis to over 24 years, according to one study in 2006.<sup>1</sup> New drug development and other innovations in HIV care are likely to lead to further increases in this survival estimate.

### *“Getting to Care & Staying in Care Saves Lives”*

In one recent study, investigators at Baylor found that HIV-positive patients with care visits in only one quarter of a year had nearly twice the risk of dying compared to those with visits in all four quarters.<sup>2-3</sup>

### *“New Treatment Options for HIV Have Revolutionized Care”*

- Many newer drug regimens are taken only once daily
- Pill burden is decreased by new fixed dose combinations
- Additional, new classes of antiretrovirals have become available in just the last year
- Side effect profiles of newer regimens are negligible compared to prior generations'
- Guidelines generally support deferring drug therapy until CD4 is less than 350

### *“Routine HIV Screening Increases Survival with HIV”*

Two analyses published in NEJM estimated that widespread institution of screening for HIV increases survival with HIV an average of 1.5 years.<sup>4</sup>

### *“Recognition of HIV Empowers Patients to Protect their Partners”*

HIV testing/detection allows disclosure of status to sex and needle sharing partners, which decreases subsequent HIV exposures.

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### References

1. Dr. Bruce Schackman, "The Lifetime Cost of Current HIV Care in the United States," *Medical Care* November 2006
2. Dr. Thomas Giordano, "Retention in Care: A Challenge to Survival with HIV Infection," *CID* 2007;44:1493-1499
3. Dr. Laura Cheever, "Engaging HIV-Infected Patients in Care: Their Lives Depend on It," *CID* 2007:44, June 1, 2007
4. Dr. Samuel Bozette, "Routine Screening for HIV Infection — Timely and Cost-Effective," *NEJM* 2005; 352 (6): 620-1; February 10, 2005