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WISCONSIN PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL

Assure safe and healthy people by monitoring progress on the state health plan, Healthiest Wisconsin 2010, and on the readiness for public health emergencies.

RESOLUTION: February 12, 2010

In the interests of meeting the goals of *Healthiest Wisconsin 2010*, the state health plan, for reducing HIV infections that result from high-risk sexual behaviors, the Wisconsin Public Health Council submits the following resolution to the Legislature and the Governor of Wisconsin:

Whereas, HIV infection and AIDS remains a serious health threat to the people of Wisconsin; and

Whereas, approximately 11,000 cases of HIV have been reported to the Wisconsin Division of Public Health since the beginning of the HIV epidemic; and

Whereas, approximately 7,000 persons reported are presumed to be currently alive, and another 1,850 individuals in Wisconsin are estimated to be infected with the disease but do not know it; and

Whereas, HIV infection disproportionately impacts minority populations in Wisconsin, with over half of all HIV cases reported annually diagnosed among racial and ethnic minorities; and

Whereas, 35-40% of individuals do not get diagnosed until they are within 1 year of an AIDS diagnosis, and may have been living with HIV for 8-10 years prior to diagnosis;

Whereas, transmission from individuals who are unaware of their infection accounts for 54-70% of new HIV infections; and

Whereas, early HIV testing and treatment are critical to breaking the chain of HIV transmission; and

Whereas, prevention strategies that maximize voluntary HIV screening have proven to be highly effective in controlling the spread of HIV; and

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Whereas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended streamlining the HIV testing process to encourage routine HIV testing and to increase HIV diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

Whereas, the elimination of written informed consent for HIV testing will make testing for the disease similar to other health conditions and will reduce barriers to testing;

Now, be it resolved that Wisconsin should increase HIV testing by adopting AB 659, which will result in:

1. Eliminating the requirement for written informed consent for HIV testing.
2. Instituting a consent process that requires patients to be notified that they will be tested for HIV unless they decline.
3. Upholding patient rights to self-determination and privacy by assuring that the patient's acceptance of testing is voluntary, providing an opportunity for the patient to ask questions and decline testing, and penalizing inappropriate release of test results and discrimination against those who are HIV-infected.