



## **Knowledge and Attitudes About HIV in Minnesota 2003 Survey Commissioned by Minnesota AIDS Project**

Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP) polled Minnesotans in August 2003 to check-in on their basic knowledge about HIV. The poll follows a national survey conducted in 2000 revealed that Americans were not clear in their understanding about how HIV is transmitted. Minnesota AIDS Project (MAP) replicated that survey on a statewide basis in 2001 to understand what Minnesotans knew and understood about HIV. At that time MAP learned that 52 percent of Minnesotans were unsure or didn't know if HIV could be transmitted through a cough or a sneeze.

Uncertainty about HIV transmission leads to confusion when assessing transmission risk and taking appropriate action to respond. The uncertainty also contributes to the "social disease" of stigma, misuse of medical data and discrimination that accompanies the HIV epidemic.

MAP commissioned a new poll to determine if the "knowledge gap" still exists. Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. of Washington, D.C. did the survey from August 25 through August 27, 2003. A total of 625 Minnesotans were interviewed statewide by telephone. The survey has a margin of error of 4 percent.

Information about the results or interpretations of these findings may be directed to Minnesota AIDS Project community affairs, 612-373-2459 or [bob.tracy@mnaidsproject.org](mailto:bob.tracy@mnaidsproject.org)

## **Knowledge about HIV Transmission**

### **General Observations**

There has been some progress in closing the "knowledge gap," however many Minnesotans are still unclear about the basics of transmission.

- About half are accurate and certain in their knowledge.
- About 10 percent indicate that they had little or no knowledge about HIV.
- People living in Greater Minnesota were less certain about risks of transmission of HIV.

### **Sharing a Drinking Glass**

**Statement:** I believe it is possible to contract HIV from a drinking glass used by a person who has the disease.

**Result:** One third of Minnesotans are still unclear about the basics of HIV transmission.

- **35 percent of Minnesotans don't know or are *not certain* about whether HIV can be transmitted by sharing a drinking glass.**
- 65 percent are certain that HIV cannot be transmitted by sharing a drinking glass. This is an increase from 56 percent in 2001.
- Greater Minnesota respondents were less certain about risk through sharing a drinking glass that those living in the Twin Cities.

	Do Not Know or are Not Certain				Certain
Population	DK	ST Agree	SW Agree	SW Disagree	<b>ST Disagree</b>
Statewide	5%	2%	7%	21%	<b>65%</b>
Twin Cities	3%	2%	5%	20%	<b>70%</b>
Greater MN	8%	2%	10%	23%	<b>57%</b>

### Toilet Seats

**Statement:** I believe HIV might be contracted from a public toilet.

**Result:** One third of Minnesotans are unclear about the basics of HIV transmission.

- **38 percent of Minnesotans do not know or are *not certain* about whether HIV can be transmitted from a toilet seat.**
- 62 percent are certain that HIV cannot be transmitted from a toilet seat, up from 57 percent.
- Greater Minnesota respondents were less certain about risk from a toilet seat that those in the Twin Cities.

	Do Not Know or are Not Certain				Certain
Population	DK	ST Agree	SW Agree	SW Disagree	<b>ST Disagree</b>
Statewide	4%	4%	9%	21%	<b>62%</b>
Twin Cities	3%	2%	5%	22%	<b>68%</b>
Greater MN	6%	6%	17%	20%	<b>51%</b>

### Coughing or Sneezing

**Statement:** I believe HIV might be transmitted through a cough or sneeze.

**Result:** Minnesotans are unclear about the basics of transmission.

- **43 percent of Minnesotans do not know or are *not certain* about whether HIV can be transmitted through a cough or a sneeze.**
- 57 percent are certain that HIV cannot be transmitted through a cough or a sneeze.

	Do Not Know or are Not Certain				Certain
Population	DK	ST Agree	SW Agree	SW Disagree	<b>ST Disagree</b>
Statewide	5%	2%	11%	25%	<b>57%</b>
Twin Cities	5%	3%	5%	28%	<b>59%</b>
Greater MN	5%	1%	20%	21%	<b>53%</b>

## Casual Contact

**Statement:** I believe HIV might be transmitted by touching a person who is infected with the virus.

**Results:** Minnesotans are unclear about the basics of HIV transmission.

- **29 percent of Minnesotans do not know or are *not certain* about whether HIV can be transmitted by casual contact with an HIV-positive person.**
- 71 percent are certain that HIV cannot be transmitted through casual contact.
- More than one third of respondents in Greater Minnesota believe this to be true.

Population	Do Not Know or are Not Certain				Certain
	DK	ST Agree	SW Agree	SW Disagree	<b>ST Disagree</b>
Statewide	4%	3%	7%	15%	<b>71%</b>
Twin Cities	3%	2%	3%	15%	<b>77%</b>
Greater MN	6%	5%	13%	15%	<b>61%</b>

## HIV in the Workplace

**Statement:** I would feel uncomfortable working in the same office or area as a co-worker with HIV.

**Results:** Uncertainty about transmission leads to concerns in the workplace.

- **48 percent of Minnesotans don't know how they feel or have some level of discomfort working with someone with HIV.**
- 52 percent strongly disagree with this statement.
- One-third of respondents in Greater Minnesota express concern about having an HIV-positive co-worker.

Population	Do Not Know or are Not Certain				Certain
	DK	ST Agree	SW Agree	SW Disagree	<b>ST Disagree</b>
Statewide	5%	8%	12%	23%	<b>52%</b>
Twin Cities	5%	3%	8%	28%	<b>56%</b>
Greater MN	5%	16%	18%	15%	<b>46%</b>

**Statement:** My employer needs to tell me if a co-worker has HIV.

**Results:** Uncertainty about transmission leads to concerns in the workplace.

- **69 percent of Minnesotans believe this to be true, to some extent or another or have not formed an opinion about employer disclosure.**
- Only 31 percent strongly disagree with this statement.

Population	Do Not Know or are Not Certain				Certain
	DK	ST Agree	SW Agree	SW Disagree	<b>ST Disagree</b>
Statewide	5%	27%	23%	14%	<b>31%</b>
Twin Cities	2%	23%	22%	22%	<b>38%</b>
Greater MN	10%	33%	24%	24%	<b>21%</b>

**Statement:** I trust the health-related information I get from my employer.

**Results:** Employers are in a unique position to share health-related information with employees and their families

- **61 percent of Minnesotans have some degree of trust in the health-related information they receive from their employer.**
- 7 percent strongly disagree with this statement and 12 percent don't know.
- Respondents in Greater Minnesota were even more likely to trust the information they receive from employers.

	Do Not Know or are Not Certain				Certain
Population	DK	ST Agree	SW Agree	SW Disagree	ST Disagree
Statewide	12%	36%	37%	8%	<b>7%</b>
Twin Cities	11%	35%	35%	11%	<b>8%</b>
Greater MN	13%	38%	40%	3%	<b>6%</b>

**Statement:** At the first sign of illness, my employer should dismiss a co-worker who has HIV.

**Results:** Uncertainty about transmission leads to concerns in the workplace.

- **41 percent of Minnesotans agree with this statement, to some degree or another, or do not know.**
- 59 percent strongly disagree with this statement.
- One-third of respondents in Greater Minnesota agree with this statement or are unsure.

	Do Not Know or are Not Certain				Certain
Population	DK	ST Agree	SW Agree	SW Disagree	ST Disagree
Statewide	4%	8%	6%	23%	<b>59%</b>
Twin Cities	3%	6%	5%	22%	<b>64%</b>
Greater MN	6%	11%	8%	24%	<b>51%</b>

**Statement:** Has your employer provided information or education about HIV to you or your co-workers.

**Results:** Some Minnesota employers are investing in their employees and community by providing education.

- **31 percent of Minnesotans surveyed received HIV information in the workplace.**
- 68 percent either have not received HIV information in the workplace or are not sure.
- 50 percent of respondents in Greater Minnesota did receive information in the workplace.

Population	Not Sure	Yes	No
Statewide	12%	31%	<b>57%</b>
Twin Cities	10%	28%	<b>62%</b>
Greater MN	15%	35%	<b>50%</b>

## Use of Public Funds for Gay/Bi HIV Sex Ed

Approximately two-thirds of the people living with HIV in Minnesota are gay or bisexual men. Public health programs for this population include specific and sexually detailed information.

**Question: Which of the following statements comes closer to your view (order rotated):**

**It is appropriate to use public funds to provide specific and sexually detailed information that gay and bisexual men can use to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV,**

**or**

**Providing specific and sexually detailed information for gay and bisexual men to use to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV promotes homosexuality and is therefore, not an appropriate use of public funds.**

**Result:** 63% of Minnesotans believe that it is appropriate to use public funds to provide targeted HIV information to gay and bisexual men, even if sexually specific and sexually detailed information is used.

Population	Not Sure	Not Appropriate	Appropriate
Statewide	13%	24%	<b>63%</b>
Twin Cities	13%	19%	<b>68%</b>
Greater MN	13%	31%	<b>56%</b>