

## The Catholic Health Care System and HIV/AIDS Prevention in California

The Catholic church is among the many religious institutions responding to the immense suffering that has accompanied the spread of HIV/AIDS. Today, it claims to provide 25 percent of all AIDS care throughout the world<sup>1</sup> through its ministries and its 110,000-plus health-care organizations.<sup>2</sup>

However, by repeatedly condemning the use of condoms as part of a comprehensive prevention strategy, the Catholic hierarchy has taken a very dangerous and ultimately harmful position on preventing the spread of the disease. In addition to insisting that there is no room within Catholic theology to allow the use of condoms, officials of the Catholic church have even gone beyond their personal condemnation and cast doubts on the effectiveness of condoms in fighting AIDS.

The clearest statements representing the point of view of the Vatican were made by Archbishop Javier Lozano, who headed the Vatican delegation to the United Nations' conference on AIDS in 2001. At the meeting, the archbishop called for a prevention strategy revolving around "matrimonial fidelity" and "chastity and abstinence," while excluding "campaigns associated with models of behavior which destroy life and promote the spread of the evil in question"—a clear reference to the safe sex and condom education campaigns that the meeting delegates had affirmed as essential to halting AIDS.<sup>3</sup> More recently, both Pope Benedict XVI and Bishop Elio Sgreccia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, have called into question the effectiveness of condoms. In addition, many of the 4,000 plus bishops around the world lobby their own governments and some work at the United Nations to restrict access to condoms claiming that condoms cause AIDS, not prevent it.

In California, none of the 40 Catholic hospitals we called and only one of the Catholic universities in the state said they provide condoms. And, while the focus of Condoms4Life and Catholics for a Free Choice is on the Catholic hierarchy and institutions, we should point out that the lack of prevention services seems to be a problem at non-sectarian and public hospitals as well as at Catholic hospitals. With millions of dollars being awarded by state and federal government to assist in caring for AIDS patients, this local lack of care and global lack of emphasis on prevention is costing lives.

### The State of HIV & AIDS in California: Vital Statistics

HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death among men aged 25 to 44 and the fourth leading cause of death among women in the same age group. Men who have sex with men account for the highest proportion of reported AIDS cases and HIV-infected individuals who obtained HIV antibody tests at publicly funded sites. Although a substantial proportion (92 percent) of AIDS cases in homosexual men were diagnosed in urban counties, an increasing number of cases are being diagnosed in non-urban/rural counties.<sup>4</sup>

### California in Comparison to the United States

	California	United States
Reported Number of AIDS Cases (since the beginning of the epidemic) <sup>5</sup>	135,221	918,286
New AIDS Cases in 2004 <sup>6</sup>	4,679	44,737
Persons living with AIDS <sup>7</sup>	56,988	415,193

#### Reported Number of AIDS Cases (since the beginning of the epidemic)<sup>8</sup>

1.	New York	166,814
2.	<b>California</b>	<b>135,221</b>
3.	Florida	96,712
4.	Texas	64,479
5.	New Jersey	47,224

#### New AIDS Cases in 2004<sup>9</sup>

1.	New York	7,641
2.	Florida	5,822
3.	<b>California</b>	<b>4,679</b>
4.	Texas	3,298
5.	New Jersey	1,848

### San Francisco

Reported AIDS cases since 1981	26,055
Deaths due to AIDS since 1981	17,520
Estimated new HIV infections per year <sup>10</sup>	1,084
Percentage of gay men living in San Francisco that are HIV positive	31%
Percentage of all AIDS cases that are gay men	75% <sup>11</sup>

### Los Angeles<sup>12</sup>

People living with AIDS	10,830
Reported AIDS cases since the epidemic began	27,030
Estimated number of people living with AIDS or HIV	30,000

### State of California HIV/AIDS Major Funding Streams FY04

The State of California receives significant funding from the federal government to help combat HIV/AIDS. These funding streams include the Ryan White Care Act, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Office of Minority Health (OMH).

Ryan White Care Act	\$256,850,921
CDC HIV/AIDS Funding	\$74,536,880
HOPWA Program Funding	\$32,150,270
SAMHSA HIV/AIDS Funding	\$15,857,593
OMH HIV/AIDS Funding	\$1,682,844
<b>TOTAL FUNDS FY04 for HIV/AIDS<sup>13</sup></b>	<b>\$381,078,508</b>

A key component of the Ryan White Act, which provides well over 50 percent of all funding, is Title III, Early Intervention Services. Under this title, key prevention services eligible for funding under the act include “HIV testing, risk reduction counseling and transmission prevention.”<sup>14</sup> Only seven percent of the \$250 million plus went to Title III activities in FY2004 in California.<sup>15</sup>

### Catholic Dioceses and Charities in California

The Catholic hierarchy’s presence in California is typical of most states. There are two archdioceses—the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles—and nine dioceses. Within this network of dioceses, there are twelve chapters of Catholic Charities—the arm of the various dioceses that assist the needy, impoverished and disabled with a variety of services from housing to health care. Only the Catholic Charities branch in San Francisco admits to spending any money on HIV/AIDS care.

Catholic Charities	HIV and AIDS Programs	Overall Government Funding in FY2004
San Francisco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasure Island Housing</li> <li>• Derek Silva Community</li> <li>• Leland House</li> <li>• Peter Claver Community</li> <li>• Guerrero House</li> <li>• HIV Direct Services (rent subsidies via CARE act)</li> </ul>	\$19,821,697
Los Angeles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIDS/HIV Ministry of the Archdiocese (provides “liturgical, educational and networking resources and referrals...we bring a Catholic voice to the experience of HIV/AIDS.”<sup>16</sup>)</li> </ul>	\$19,581,352

### Catholic Dioceses and Charities in California (cont.)

Catholic Charities	HIV and AIDS Programs	Overall Government Funding in FY2004
Fresno	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nothing specific, health care outreach services offered</li> </ul>	\$1,121,262
Monterey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nothing specific, counseling services offered</li> </ul>	\$0
East Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HIV Short term housing</li> <li>HIV/AIDS Housing Advocacy</li> </ul>	\$1,187,954
Orange County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	\$1,479,415
Sacramento	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HIV ministry has as one of its services “Public Education in AIDS Prevention”<sup>17</sup></li> </ul>	\$1,171,210
San Diego	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diocesan HIV and AIDS ministry hosts retreats and events as well as offering a speaker’s bureau</li> </ul>	\$11,524,439
San Jose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, but individual counseling services includes counseling for those with “HIV/AIDS issues”</li> </ul>	\$8,021,578
Santa Rosa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, but Free to Be, a program targeted at youth, focuses on abstinence-only education</li> </ul>	\$1,690,322
Stockton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No, but limited health services offered</li> </ul>	\$1,024,872

### Catholic Health Care Institutions and HIV/AIDS Prevention

The influence of the Catholic hierarchy can also be seen in the California health care system. In California, there are 40 Catholic hospitals and medical centers. We called each institution and asked them a series of questions related to HIV and AIDS.<sup>18</sup> We asked them if they provided any HIV and AIDS services, and if so, whether they provided preventive services and if condoms were included.

Number of Hospitals Called	40
Do not provide services or referral	5
Do not provides services but referred to local public health department	4
Do not provide services but referred to mental health hotline	2
Referred to infectious diseases department	2
Referred to lab for testing	4
Transferred caller to a dead-end (non-working number or department that could not help)	18
Transferred caller to ER	3
Provide services	2
Provide condoms	0

### Catholic Schools – Universities, Colleges and High Schools

The reach of the Catholic hierarchy extends also to the schools. In California, there are 13 Catholic universities and colleges and 108 Catholic high schools (both private and diocesan). Combined, more than 114,000 students attend a Catholic school beyond elementary school.<sup>19</sup> While each diocese has its own guidelines for sexuality education, telephone calls revealed that the emphasis was placed on abstinence as the only means to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV, and in Los Angeles educators are not allowed to even mention condoms.

We also called each of the Catholic universities and colleges in California and asked them if they provided condoms for students. If they did not, we asked them for a referral.<sup>20</sup>

<b>Number of Catholic universities and colleges</b>	<b>13</b>
Number of students enrolled	42,574
Universities that provide condoms for students through student health services	1
Universities that do not provide condoms but provided caller other options (pharmacy, clinics off campus)	3
Universities that do not provide condoms and do not provide referral	8

Note: One school was excluded from the survey as it is a convent that trains nuns.

### Statements of the California Catholic Hierarchy

In 1989, Archbishop Mahony from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles was the chair of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) when it approved a policy statement on condoms. He told the bishops that young people should avoid “being trapped into the ‘safe sex’ myth, which is both a lie and a fraud.”<sup>21</sup> In another interview, he said, “The only secure way to stop the disease is total self-control and abstinence.”<sup>22</sup>

### Catholic Statistics

In order to understand the influence of the Catholic hierarchy, and by implication, the extent to which people are influenced by Catholic teachings against condoms, it is useful to consider some of the following statistics.<sup>23</sup>

	<b>Catholic Hospitals</b>	<b>Number of Patients Assisted</b>	<b>Health Care Centers</b>	<b>Number of Patients Assisted</b>
<b>Archdiocese of Los Angeles</b>	13	1,296,706	7	13,403
<b>Archdiocese of San Francisco</b>	3	468,513	20	200,000
<b>Total for All Archdioceses and Dioceses in California</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4,652,646</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>260,006</b>

	<b>Colleges and Universities</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>High Schools (Private, Parish and Diocesan)</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Students under any Form of Catholic Instruction</b>
<b>Archdiocese of Los Angeles</b>	5	11,845	50	30,219	379,576
<b>Archdiocese of San Francisco</b>	3	11,499	14	8,373	63,665
<b>Total for All Archdioceses and Dioceses in California</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42,574</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>71,731</b>	<b>803,705</b>

### Resources

**California AIDS/HIV Hotline (English & Spanish):**  
(800) 367-AIDS (2437)

**San Francisco AIDS Foundation**  
995 Market St #200  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone number: (415) 487-3000  
Website: www.sfaf.org

**California AIDS Clearinghouse**  
1443 N. Martel Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
Phone: (323) 845-4180  
Toll free: (888) 611-4222  
Email: info@hivinfo.org  
Website: www.hivinfo.org

**AIDS Project Los Angeles**  
The David Geffen Center  
611 South Kingsley Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90005  
Phone: (213)201.1600  
Website: www.apla.org

**Being Alive People with HIV/AIDS Action Coalition**  
621 North San Vicente Boulevard  
West Hollywood, CA 90069  
Phone: 310.289.2551  
Email: info@beingalivela.org  
Website: www.beingalivela.org

<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Special Session on HIV/AIDS, June 27, 2001, Intervention of Archbishop Javier Lozano Barragán, President of the Pontifical Council on Pastoral Health Care.

([www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/secretariat\\_state/documents/rc\\_seg-st\\_doc\\_20010627\\_un-aids\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/secretariat_state/documents/rc_seg-st_doc_20010627_un-aids_en.html), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>2</sup> Pontifical Council on Pastoral Health Care, XVII International Conference, "The Identity of Catholic Health Care Institutions," November 7, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Lozano, "Aspects of Response to the AIDS Pandemic," UN Special Session, Aug. 2, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors "Prevention Profile: California."

([www.nastad.org/documents/public/prevention\\_profile/PP\\_California.pdf](http://www.nastad.org/documents/public/prevention_profile/PP_California.pdf), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>5</sup> Kaiser State Health Facts, "California: Cumulative AIDS Cases."

([www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=Cumulative+AIDS+Cases](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=Cumulative+AIDS+Cases), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>6</sup> Kaiser State Health Facts, "California: New AIDS Cases in 2004."

([www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=New+AIDS+Cases](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=New+AIDS+Cases), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>7</sup> Kaiser State Health Facts, "California: Persons living with AIDS."

([www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=Persons+Living+with+AIDS](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=Persons+Living+with+AIDS), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>8</sup> Kaiser State Health Facts, "Reported Number of AIDS Cases, Cumulative through December 2004." ([www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=compare&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=Cumulative+AIDS+Cases&topic=Cumulative+AIDS+Cases+All+Ages](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=compare&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=Cumulative+AIDS+Cases&topic=Cumulative+AIDS+Cases+All+Ages), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>9</sup> Kaiser State Health Facts, "New AIDS Cases in 2004."

([www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=compare&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=New+AIDS+Cases&topic=New+AIDS+Cases+All+Ages](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=compare&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=New+AIDS+Cases&topic=New+AIDS+Cases+All+Ages), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>10</sup> San Francisco AIDS Foundation, "Statistics."

([www.sfaf.org/aboutaids/statistics](http://www.sfaf.org/aboutaids/statistics), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>11</sup> Carole Migden, "Back to basics on AIDS/HIV prevention," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 8, 2004.

([www.sfoxaminer.com/articles/2005/12/08/opinion/20051208\\_op04\\_migden.txt](http://www.sfoxaminer.com/articles/2005/12/08/opinion/20051208_op04_migden.txt), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>12</sup> City of Los Angeles AIDS Coordinator's Office, "City HIV/AIDS Statistics," ([www.lacityaids.org/hiv\\_stats.htm](http://www.lacityaids.org/hiv_stats.htm), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>13</sup> Kaiser State Health Facts, "California: HIV/AIDS Funding."

([www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=HIV%2fAIDS+Funding](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=HIV%2fAIDS+Funding), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>14</sup> Judith A. Johnson and Paulette C. Morgan, "AIDS Ryan White Care Act,"

CRS Report for Congress, February 17, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Kaiser State Health Facts, "California: Distribution of Ryan White CARE Act Funding By Title, FY2004." ([www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=Ryan+White+CARE+Act&topic=Funding+by+Title](http://www.statehealthfacts.org/cgi-bin/healthfacts.cgi?action=profile&area=California&category=HIV%2fAIDS&subcategory=Ryan+White+CARE+Act&topic=Funding+by+Title), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>16</sup> Archdiocese of Los Angeles, "AIDS/HIV Ministry."

([www.archdiocese.la/ministry/hiv/index.php](http://www.archdiocese.la/ministry/hiv/index.php), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>17</sup> Diocese of Sacramento, "Catholic HIV/AIDS Ministry." ([www.diocese-sacramento.org/hiv-aids/index.htm](http://www.diocese-sacramento.org/hiv-aids/index.htm), viewed February 3, 2006.)

<sup>18</sup> Telephone calls made on January 24, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> PJ Kenedy & Sons, "The Official Catholic Directory," 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Telephone calls made on January 27, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> UPI, "AIDS activists walk out on Christmas mass," December 25, 1989.

<sup>22</sup> Larry Witham, "Bishops reject condom use in statement about AIDS," *Washington Times*, November 10, 1989.

<sup>23</sup> PJ Kenedy & Sons, "The Official Catholic Directory," 2005.

*Condoms4Life is an unprecedented worldwide public education effort to raise public awareness about the devastating effect of the bishops' ban on condoms. The campaign was launched on World AIDS Day 2001 with the display of billboards and ads in subways and newspapers saying, "Banning Condoms Kills." The campaign is sponsored by Catholics for a Free Choice, its partners in Europe and Latin America and colleagues in Africa and Asia.*

### **Condoms4Life**

1436 U Street NW, Suite 301

Washington, DC 20009

Phone: (202) 986-6093

Fax: (202) 332-7995

Email: [info@condoms4life.org](mailto:info@condoms4life.org)

Website: [www.condoms4life.org](http://www.condoms4life.org)