HIV/AIDS—30 Years (9/11)


Thirty years ago Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) published a report of Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia in five previously healthy young men in Los Angeles, California; two had died. This report later was acknowledged as the first published scientific account of what would become known as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Thirty years after that first report, the most recent estimate is that 33.3 million persons were living with HIV infection worldwide at the end of 2009.

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 1,178,350 persons were living with HIV at the end of 2008, with 594,496 having died from AIDS since 1981. At this 30-year mark, efforts are being accelerated under the National HIV/AIDS Strategy of the United States, with goals of reducing the number of persons who become infected with HIV, increasing access to care and optimizing health outcomes for persons living with HIV, and reducing HIV-related health disparities.

DECS Comment: The June 5, 1981 MMWR article describing the first cases of AIDS is available by clicking here. There have been many advances in the HIV/AIDS epidemic due to the efforts of numerous individuals and organizations. Despite this, there is still much to accomplish to stop this epidemic that has claimed the lives of more than half a million persons in the United States and more than 25 million persons worldwide. Additional information about HIV/AIDS is available by visiting the CDC Web site at www.cdc.gov/hiv/default.htm.