

Date: 4/18/06
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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Since 2002, in the State of California, persons diagnosed with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are reported to the California office of AIDS and the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia using an alphanumeric based system. On Monday April 17, 2006 Governor Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill 699 (Soto) that implements a confidential names-based reporting system for new HIV cases in the state. The California Assembly in March approved the bill, and the Senate approved it earlier this month. The new reporting system will ensure that California does not lose about \$50 million in federal funds annually for HIV/AIDS treatment.

New provisions under the [Ryan White CARE Act](#) mean that states reporting new HIV cases using codes will not receive federal funds beginning Oct. 1, 2006. "I am signing [SB] 699 to protect California's federal funding for vital HIV and AIDS services and to strengthen confidentiality protections of HIV and AIDS patient information," Schwarzenegger said in a letter to members of the California Senate (Schwarzenegger [letter](#), 4/17).

SB 699 requires names-based reporting of HIV infections to the local Health Officer. Thirty-eight States and Territories currently use HIV names-based reporting. California

has decided to change the reporting methodology to ensure compatibility with other jurisdictions and to secure its fair share of Federal allocations of funding for the care and treatment of HIV/AIDS clients. Tracking the HIV epidemic accurately is critical in determining where to allocate treatment and prevention grants. AIDS cases are currently reported by name in California, but because symptoms of AIDS can take up to a decade to appear, AIDS data is not considered an accurate way to trace the spread of the disease.

In Santa Barbara County over 140 people have been reported to be living with the HIV virus. The Santa Barbara County HIV/AIDS Office will be contacting all medical providers and testing laboratories to alert them of the change in reporting requirements. According to Dr. Elliot Schulman, Director of the Public Health Department and County Health Officer, "Although the state's system is changing to a name-based reporting system, absolute confidentiality will remain intact with this system. Patients should remain confident that not only will this assist with care management and tracking, but strict confidentiality will remain in-place."

For additional information, providers and laboratory staff should contact the HIV/AIDS Services Office at (805) 681-5120 or by confidential fax at (805) 681-5436.