

June 21, 2005

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF ANTIRETROVIRAL AGENTS AND THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTIONS IN HIV-INFECTED ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides guidance and recommendations for the use of viral load assays, immunologic tests, resistance assays, antiretroviral agents, and pharmacological agents for prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections in the management of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) disease.

2. BACKGROUND

a. Options for the clinical management of HIV-infected individuals based on virologic and immunologic factors have changed substantially in recent years and continue to change as new medications and reformulations of existing drugs are released. Since 1996, national guidelines have been published by the Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV Infection, convened by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

b. Opportunistic infection prevention guidelines have been published since 1995 by a panel convened by the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA).

c. Opportunistic infection treatment guidelines have been published by a panel convened by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the HIV Medicine Association of the Infectious Disease Society of America.

d. These three sets of guidelines share the following features:

(1) They are labeled as guidelines, indicating that the recommendations should be considered in the context of the individual patient situation and the community where the patient is being managed.

(2) They are evidence based. For each therapeutic recommendation, the strength and quality of the evidence supporting it are indicated using the rating system of the IDSA.

(3) They have been developed by a broadly based panel that included representatives from academic medical centers, federal government agencies, community-based practices, and consumer advocates.

(4) They are available in print media and on the Internet.

(5) They were reviewed by respective members of each panel to ensure the recommendations were complete and in agreement, where possible and appropriate.

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(6) They are endorsed by the CDC, the National Institutes of Health, the HIV Medicine Association of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the Swiss Society for Infectious Diseases, and the European Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Clinical Society.

(7) They are intended to complement more comprehensive textbooks, journals, and other relevant informational materials.

(8) They require periodic updating; this will be done primarily on the Internet-based version.

e. The recommendations contained in these guidelines are not intended to be a substitute for the judgment of a clinician who is an expert in the care of HIV-infected individuals. They are, however, based on the current understanding of the pathogenesis of HIV and intend to translate scientific principles and data obtained from clinical experience into recommendations that can be used by the clinician and patient to make therapeutic and prophylaxis decisions. Other groups also publish guidelines that clinicians may wish to consult.

f. As with treatment of any chronic condition, therapeutic decisions require a mutual understanding between the patient and health care provider regarding the benefits and risks of treatment.

g. VA has previously adopted the January 28, 2000, version and subsequent versions and updates of the DHHS "Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents" and the August 20, 1999, version and subsequent versions and updates of the "1999 USPHS-IDSA Guidelines for the Prevention of Opportunistic Infections in Persons with Human Immunodeficiency Virus" as its guidelines.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that VA medical facilities provide state-of-the-art, high quality care, consistent with VA guidelines for all medical care, to eligible veterans with HIV infection.

4. ACTION: In addition to the January 28, 2000, version and subsequent versions and updates of the DHHS "Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents" and the August 20, 1999, version and subsequent versions and updates of the "1999 USPHS-IDSA Guidelines for the Prevention of Opportunistic Infections in Persons with Human Immunodeficiency Virus," this Directive further adopts the December 17, 2004, version and subsequent versions and updates of the CDC, NIH, HIV Medicine Association of the IDSA "Treatment of Opportunistic Infection Among HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents" as an official VA guideline. *NOTE: These documents are available in electronic format online at <http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov>. Instructions for obtaining print copies are available at the same Web site.*

5. REFERENCES

a. DHHS Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV Infection. "Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV -Infected Adults and Adolescents," October 29, 2004. http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/adult/AA_102904.html

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b. United States Public Health Service (USPHS) and Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA). "2001 USPHS-IDSA Guidelines for the Prevention of Opportunistic Infections in Persons Infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus," November 29, 2001. http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/op_infections/OI_112801.html

c. "Treating Opportunistic Infections Among HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents: Recommendations from CDC, the National Institutes of Health, and the HIV Medicine Association/Infectious Diseases Society of America." December 17, 2004. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5315a1.htm>

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: Director, HIV and Hepatitis C Program, Public Health Strategic Health Care Group (13B), is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be referred to 202-273-8567.

7. RESCISSION: VHA Directive 2000-018 is rescinded. This Directive expires June 30, 2010.

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Under Secretary for Health

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