

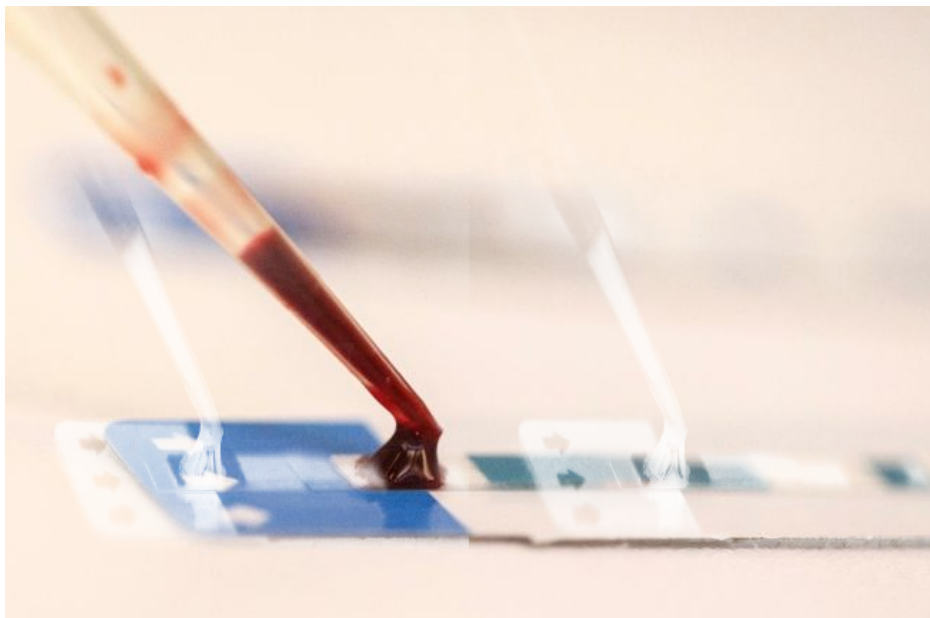
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# Care shifts for Vancouver HIV patients

By [Michael Mui](#), 24 Hours Vancouver  
 Monday, December 1, 2014 4:54:30 PST PM



A nurse samples some blood for an HIV test. (REUTERS)

A disease that once saw hundreds of new cases each year in British Columbia has slowed to a trickle, and the new challenges for combating HIV have shifted towards continuous support of those taking treatment.

That's according to Maxine Davis, executive director at the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation, who said on Monday that the number of patients who require long-term care are expected to keep growing.

"While people are not dying of AIDS, they are living with serious medical conditions that are more complicated by HIV and by aging, and by other health and life circumstances that people have," she said.

Advancements in treatment, Davis said, have resulted in people who now live with HIV, but have low risks of infecting others as long as they continue treatment.

But many diagnosed with the disease come from marginalized lifestyles where HIV may only be one of many concerns.

The Dr. Peter AIDS Centre, for example, serves 400 people currently and while the majority do not require intensive 24-hour care, there are only two dozen beds available for those who do.

Other challenges include continuing to encourage testing — a program at Vancouver Coastal Health that asks anyone getting a blood test if they want an HIV test as well is one step in that direction, Davis said.

According to Vancouver Coastal Health, 76 people have been diagnosed with HIV since the program began in late 2011 — 35,000 tests have been completed so far.

Davis added the last challenge is to get those who are already on treatment — but don't need intensive care — to continue taking treatment at home without supervision.

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