

Introduction: HIV

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The Immunology Center was established at The Miriam Hospital in 1987, and has provided comprehensive care for a progressively increasing proportion of Rhode Islanders living with HIV since that time. The development of the Immunology Center has enjoyed strong continuing support of the broad Rhode Island community, including federal, state and local legislators, the Miriam Hospital Trustees, the Lifespan Administration, Brown University and the Rhode Island AIDS Services organizations. Their support has been both critical and substantial.

This issue of *Medicine & Health/Rhode Island* provides an overall summary of the patient care programs, with a more detailed description of several areas in which the Brown University faculty have been playing leading roles in clinical research on the national scene. These include:

1. The comprehensive care of women living with HIV, including establishment of the nation's first Menopause Clinic, devoted exclusively to women with HIV infection.
2. An exceptionally effective program, through the Women and Infants Hospital of Rhode Island, for the management of pregnancies in women living with HIV.
3. A regularly scheduled Bone Clinic, devoted exclusively to the problem of osteopenia and osteoporosis in persons living with HIV.
4. One of several nationally recognized Co-infection Clinics devoted to the management of persons living with combined HIV and Hepatitis B and C co-infections, one of the most challenging problems in contemporary medicine.

5. The comprehensive long-term management of incarcerated persons living with, or at risk for, HIV infection. This program, in which Brown University students as well as resident physicians and faculty participate, has been recognized as the national leader in this critical field.
6. Close participation with the Rhode Island Department of Health in an effort to broaden the scope of routine opt-out HIV testing, with the aim of reducing the relatively large number of persons, especially women, who are unaware of their HIV infection until irreversible complications have occurred.

The following articles highlight important components of the Immunology Center program.

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