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## **Number of those living with HIV/AIDS dramatically increases in Riverside County using new data system**

After state health officials changed the way they collect health data, the estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Riverside County grew significantly, according to a report released by county health officials.

The 51 percent increase does not mean the frequency of the illness has spiked, the five-page report states. In past years, estimates were based on the location where individuals lived at the time of diagnosis, regardless of where they received treatment. Improved data collection can now better track patients and more accurately reflects where they live, the report states. Officials estimate that nearly 3,000 more people living with HIV/AIDS have moved into Riverside County than moved away in recent years.

The largest increase occurred in the eastern county, which includes Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley.

“We’ve always suspected the number of people living with HIV/AIDS was higher than previously reported,” said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, public health officer for Riverside County. “This data gives us a more accurate picture of what’s happening

in Riverside County and the challenges facing patients, medical providers and the systems that serve them.”

In Riverside County, 5,552 cases were reported for 2016 (using the most recent data available), compared to 8,404 under the new calculations for the same period. The rate per 100,000 residents increased from 236 to 357 during that time. Health officials suspect improved healthcare and the well-established HIV/AIDS care and support infrastructure in the eastern portion of the county might have caused the migration.

To read the full report, visit

[http://www.rivcohealthdata.org/Portals/0/Documents/DATA\\_REPORTS/COMMUNICABLE\\_DISEASE/HIVAIDS/hiv\\_data\\_report.pdf?ver=2017-11-27-153342-710](http://www.rivcohealthdata.org/Portals/0/Documents/DATA_REPORTS/COMMUNICABLE_DISEASE/HIVAIDS/hiv_data_report.pdf?ver=2017-11-27-153342-710).