World AIDS Day 2007

Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise.

This year marks the 26th anniversary since HIV was first recognized in 1981 and we continue our fight against HIV and AIDS. December 1st is World AIDS Day, which began in 1988, to focus global attention on the HIV/AIDS epidemic across the world. This day is about increasing awareness, education, fighting prejudice, and uniting globally to battle against HIV/AIDS. We all have a role to play in this battle, and we need to support the efforts being made.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) an estimated 4.3 million new HIV infections and 2.9 million AIDS deaths occurred during 2006 worldwide, bringing the total persons infected with HIV to 39.5 million. At the end of 2006, North America is reported to have 1.4 million adults and children living with HIV/AIDS and 43,000 newly infected. As we near the end of 2007, according to the Michigan Department of Community Health, there is an estimate of 17,000 residents of Michigan who are living with HIV, over half of whom are AIDS diagnosed. HIV infection continues to increase among those diagnosed at 13-19 and 20-24 years of age. There have been 13 newly diagnosed HIV individuals in the Central Michigan District Health Department service area in the past year.

Some may ask themselves, “What can I do to help?” The answer is simple, go out and become involved in your local areas to promote prevention and education activities, volunteer at local HIV/AIDS organizations, promote continued AIDS funding and research, and educate yourself, your community, and promote a response for World AIDS Day. Wear a red AIDS ribbon; recognize and support the global and local HIV initiatives and the health effects caused by HIV and AIDS in our nation, state, and world.

Help stop prejudice of HIV/AIDS. Most people think of HIV/AIDS as a homosexual disease, seen in injectable drug users and prostitutes. This line of thinking is far from the truth. HIV/AIDS has been diagnosed in all populations, races, age groups, and people whom have sex with the opposite and/or same sex persons. Lorrie Youngs, Health Education Supervisor states, “I want everyone to know that it can affect anyone who is having any type of sex, using drugs
that involve exchanging of body fluids and from a mom to her baby. Individuals will not get HIV from casually touching or kissing. There are many myths about HIV/AIDS that need to be dispelled by education and prevention at the local level, within our communities.”

Central Michigan District Health Department will be doing its part in recognition of World AIDS Day by offering free confidential or anonymous HIV testing on December 3rd and 4th from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. If you need more information about HIV/AIDS or would like to set up an appointment, please call your branch office or (989) 773-5921 ext 109.


This article has been brought to you by the Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the local residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon counties.