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Governor

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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Local Events Planned*

**National Latino AIDS Awareness Day is October 15, 2007**

October 15 will mark the fifth annual National Latino AIDS Awareness Day. This day marks an opportunity to increase awareness of the devastating and disproportionate effects of AIDS in the Latino community. National Latino AIDS Awareness Day is also a day to encourage HIV testing and to push for support from public officials and religious leaders.

While Latinos only make up about 14 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 19 percent of the AIDS cases in the U.S. since the start of the epidemic. In 2004, Latinos accounted for 20 percent of the new AIDS cases in the U.S. As of 2004, more than 93,000 Latinos in the U.S. have died as a result of AIDS-related illnesses, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that more than 80,000 Hispanics are currently infected with AIDS. More than 60 percent of Latino HIV and AIDS cases are found in California, New York, New Jersey, Texas, **Florida** and Puerto Rico.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is a serious threat to the Hispanic/Latino community. In addition to being a population seriously affected by HIV, Hispanics/Latinos continue to face challenges in accessing health care, prevention services and HIV treatment. In 2004, HIV/AIDS was the fourth leading cause of death among Hispanic/Latino men and women aged 35 to 44.

**Locally, the Pinellas County Health Department will partner for the fourth year with St. Pete College's (SPC) North campuses to provide prevention education to Latino residents and SPC students. In observance of National Latino AIDS Awareness Day and Hispanic Heritage Month, the health department will participate in the SPC Salsa Festival on Oct. 11, 2007 at the Tarpon Springs Campus from 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM in the Fine Arts Auditorium.**

For more information about HIV/AIDS, please contact the Pinellas County Health Department or visit the National Latino AIDS Awareness Day website at <http://www.nlaad.org>.

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