



Charlie Crist
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte-Ros, M.D., M.P.H.
State Surgeon General

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day – February 7, 2008
Get Educated, Get Tested, Get Involved, Get Treated

Did you know that one in 98 Blacks in Pinellas County has HIV? To call attention to this health crisis in the Black community, the **Pinellas County Health Department's Disease Control Division** will observe the eighth annual **National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, February 7, 2008**. The Health Department will collaborate with Metropolitan Charities and the St. Petersburg Healthy Start Federal Project to offer prevention education and free HIV, hepatitis and syphilis testing from 12:00 noon to 5:00 pm. This event will take place on February 7 at Metropolitan Charities, 3170 Third Avenue North, St. Petersburg. Rapid HIV testing will be available. Gifts will be given to each person getting a test.

Additionally, all six churches of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Test Pilot Project will offer testing on February 7 to show unity and their commitment to heal and educate the community. Free HIV testing will be offered from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the following locations:

1. Greene Chapel A.M.E. - Largo
2. Moore's Chapel A.M.E. - St. Petersburg
3. St. Mark A.M.E. - St. Petersburg
4. Collins Temple A.M.E. - St. Petersburg
5. Gregg Temple A.M.E. - Tampa
6. St. Luke A.M.E. – Tampa

Statistics:

- In Florida in 2005, HIV was the third leading cause of death for African American males and females between the ages of 25 and 44.
- African Americans comprise approximately 14 percent of the Florida's population, but more than half of the AIDS cases.
- In 2005, African Americans accounted for 53 percent of deaths due to HIV.

(MORE)

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Here is some information from the recent Florida Department of Health Report **“Silence is Death: The Crisis of HIV/AIDS in Florida’s Black Communities.”**

More Blacks in Florida live with HIV, or are already dead from AIDS, than any other racial or ethnic group. In Florida in 2005, one in 58 non-Hispanic Black males and one in 83 non-Hispanic Black females were living with a diagnosed case of HIV/AIDS. This in comparison to one in 310 non-Hispanic White males, one in 1,625 non-Hispanic White females, one in 148 Hispanic males and one in 553 Hispanic females. There are HIV/AIDS gaps between Blacks and Whites and gaps between Hispanics and Whites – but the Black/White gap is the widest by far.

- **HIV Cases:** A confirmed positive HIV test must be reported to the Florida Department of Health by every laboratory, as well as by any physician who diagnoses or treats a case (since July 1997).
- **AIDS Cases:** All persons who diagnose or treat an AIDS case must report it to the Florida Department of Health (since 1983).
 - Approximately 90% of all diagnosed HIV cases and AIDS cases are reported, which is the highest completeness rate of all diseases.
 - Through 2005, nearly 137,000 HIV/AIDS cases have been reported in Florida; 55,000 have died.
- **PLWHA:** Person living with HIV/AIDS at a given time (reported case).
 - Through 2005, there were 81,585 PLWHAs in Florida.
 - Blacks account for 51% of all PLWHAs, but only 14% of the population.
 - HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death among black males and black females aged 25-44 years.

You can access the “Silence is Death Report,” as well as another report, “Out in the Open: The Continuing Crisis of HIV/AIDS Among Florida’s Men Who Have Sex with Men,” and view many other HIV/AIDS statistics, reports and campaigns by visiting http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Disease_ctrl/aids/index.html

The most important thing to know: HIV is 100 percent preventable!

For more information: www.pinellashealth.com or www.blackaidsday.org

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