

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health District Promotes Confidential HIV Testing for Latino AIDS Awareness Day

(Las Vegas, Nev., - October 15, 2004) - The Clark County Health District Office of AIDS will promote confidential HIV testing today in recognition of the second annual Latino AIDS Awareness Day (Dia Nacional Latino por la Concientizacion del SIDA).

"The observance marks an important opportunity to spread awareness of the devastating and disproportionate effects HIV and AIDS are having in the Latino community," said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer.

According to U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rate of new HIV infections among Latinos rose by 26 percent last year. Additionally, a nearly 9-year decline in deaths among Latinos due to HIV/AIDS is now reversing. In Clark County, approximately 15 percent of AIDS cases and 14 percent of HIV infections occur in Latinos.

"It is vital that we continue to address health disparities among Nevada's racially and ethnically diverse communities," said Rick Reich, Communicable Disease, AIDS Services Supervisor for the health district. "Testing is the only way to determine a person's HIV status. Additionally, it slows the spread of HIV by alerting people who are unknowingly infected," said Reich.

The theme of the second annual National Latino AIDS Awareness Day is "open your eyes: HIV has no borders" ("abre los ojos: el VIH no tiene fronteras"). The event seeks to raise awareness of the disease, prevent future infections and educate the Latino community in an effort to minimize the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Latino community and ensure an improved quality of life for Latinos living with the disease.

To find out more about the local observance of National Latino AIDS Awareness Day, contact Cherie-Filler Maietta with the health district office of AIDS at (702) 759-0726.

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