



For Immediate Release: November 10, 2008

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Twentieth Anniversary of World AIDS Day Brings Needed Attention to the Disease

World AIDS Day, held on December 1 each year, is an occasion for people around the world to raise awareness about the international health threat presented by HIV/AIDS.

Since 1981, more than 65 million people have been infected with HIV worldwide. An estimated 1.2 million Americans—and 39 million people globally—are living with HIV/AIDS today.

“Research has shown that a large proportion of young people are not concerned about becoming infected with HIV, however, everyone needs accurate, age-appropriate information about AIDS,” states Richard L. Vogt, MD, Executive Director of Tri-County Health Department. “This includes how to talk with a potential partner about abstinence or safer sex, how to use a condom correctly and where to get tested for HIV.

“Testing is vitally important since it’s estimated that more than 15,000 people are currently living with HIV or AIDS in Colorado, and that one-in-four people who are HIV-positive are unaware that they are positive, since they have not been tested,” Vogt added.

Tri-County Health Department offers free HIV/AIDS testing through a partnership with Denver Health, which offers free, confidential HIV testing and counseling at 605 Bannock Street. Call 303-436-7251 for more information.

For more information about HIV/AIDS or World AIDS Day, visit the Tri-County Health Department website at www.tchd.org/hivaids.htm. The site includes frequently asked questions, an A-to-Z index of AIDS topics, links to local and national agencies, and suggestions about how to get involved in AIDS education, prevention, treatment and support.

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