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September 1, 2009

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HIV/AIDS among Florida's men reaches critical levels

Report shows that 72 percent of new infections are among adult men.

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Health (DOH) today released a report entitled, "[Man Up: The Crisis of HIV/AIDS Among Florida's Men](#)." The report, which seeks to mobilize men to eliminate their risk for acquiring or transmitting the virus, revealed that **1 in every 123 adult men in Florida was living with HIV/AIDS through 2008**. The report quantifies racial/ethnic disparities and ranks the 67 counties in the state accordingly.

Key findings include:

- In Florida, 1 in 209 white men, compared to 1 in 44 black men and 1 in 117 Hispanic men, is living with HIV/AIDS.
- The statewide rate among black men was 4.8 times that of white men and 2.7 times that of Hispanic men. Hispanic men were impacted with HIV/AIDS 1.8 times more than white men.
- The highest rate in any racial/ethnic group was seen in Miami-Dade County, where 1 in 29 black men was living with HIV/AIDS in 2008. Following close behind was Palm Beach County (1 in 31) and St. Lucie County (1 in 32).
- The highest rate of white men living with HIV/AIDS was in Monroe County (1 in 55).

The goal of the report is to stimulate the development and implementation of community action plans aimed at preventing the further spread of HIV/AIDS among Florida's men and their partners. The Bureau of HIV/AIDS recommends that local communities and healthcare providers:

- encourage men to "man up" and take responsibility for the consequences of their sexual actions and other HIV risk behaviors;
- create an enabling environment to support awareness of men's health issues;
- engage in a dialogue about men's health, including awareness of HIV and other STIs and the need for testing;
- create a coalition of providers to address the health needs of men, including health disparities and access to care;

- more -

- engage in a public awareness campaign addressing men's health issues to promote holistic health strategies;
- expand and strengthen responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic among males.

Recommendations for individuals include: being faithful and honest, using condoms, getting an annual physical examination, seeking treatment, avoiding drugs and alcohol, and engaging in open conversations. The Florida HIV/AIDS hotline (1.800.FLA.AIDS) provides valuable HIV/AIDS-related information, community referrals, and supportive counseling. In addition, Florida residents can text their zip code to "477493" to find the nearest HIV testing site.

"Perhaps the single most important preventive measure is for people to know their own HIV status," said Thomas Liberti, chief of the DOH Bureau of HIV/AIDS. "If they are uninfected, this knowledge helps them protect themselves; if they are infected, the information helps them to protect their partners and to seek care and treatment for themselves."

The report found that while minority men are more heavily impacted than white men, HIV cases among black men decreased during 1999-2008. Death rates among all racial/ethnic groups have also decreased. Compared with 2006, HIV/AIDS deaths decreased 11 percent among white men, 16 percent among black men and 15 percent among Hispanic men.

To address the findings, local county health departments are planning community meetings that will outline next steps. For more information about HIV/AIDS in your community, please contact your local county health department or visit www.WeMakeTheChange.com.

This report is the fourth in a series published by the Bureau of HIV/AIDS that focuses on various key demographic groups at increased risk for HIV/AIDS in Florida. The series includes Silence is Death (2006), which addressed blacks; Out in the Open (2007), which addressed MSM; and Organizing to Survive (2008), which focused on women. These three reports can be found at the Bureau Web site, www.floridaaids.org.

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