



NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Krissie Mayer or Denise Larson
HIV/AIDS Program
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2378
E-mail: kmayer@nd.gov
denlarson@nd.gov

North Dakota Observes National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

BISMARCK, N.D. – Feb. 7, 2008, marks the eighth annual observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, according to Denise Larson, HIV prevention coordinator for the North Dakota Department of Health.

This national mobilization effort is designed to encourage African Americans across the United States to get educated, get tested, get involved and get treated for HIV/AIDS, as it continues to devastate black communities.

While African Americans represent about 13 percent of the U.S. population, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the group accounts for almost half (49%) of the nation's AIDS cases. In North Dakota, African Americans represent less than 2 percent of the population but account for 11 percent of the cumulative HIV/AIDS cases.

“When we look at HIV by race and ethnicity, we see that African Americans are the most disproportionately affected race in the United States,” Larson said. “One of our ongoing HIV prevention efforts is to encourage everyone at risk to get tested for HIV, which is offered free of charge at test sites throughout the state.”

For information about HIV testing and other HIV/AIDS services, call the North Dakota Department of Health HIV/AIDS Program hotline at 800.70.NDHIV or visit the program's website at www.ndhealth.gov/hiv.

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