

Governor Quinn Commemorates World AIDS Day

Written by Nafia Khan

Monday, 12 December 2011 09:55

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Encourages Commitment to Prevention, Education, Access to Healthcare

CHICAGO – December 1, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn commemorated World AIDS Day today by urging Illinois residents to support raising awareness, and providing access to education and quality healthcare in the global effort to stop the spread of HIV infection.

“There has been tremendous and groundbreaking work done worldwide to educate the public in the effort to prevent the further transmission of HIV,” Governor Quinn said. “But as we observe the 23rd World AIDS Day, and the 30th anniversary of the first reported cases of HIV/AIDS, we must continue working globally and locally to reach our goal of zero AIDS-related deaths.”

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS estimates that 33 million adults and 2.5

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million children are living with HIV worldwide. As a result, the theme for the 2011 World AIDS Day - observed every Dec. 1 since 1988 - is "Getting to Zero."

Illinois has the 7th highest number of AIDS cases in the nation, with 38,265 cases reported since 1981, with half of those cases being African-American. Of the Illinois residents diagnosed since 1981, 20,970 have died. The Illinois Department of Public Health sponsors several groundbreaking programs and funds many organizations statewide that aim to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. The department also provides access to healthcare services for those living with the disease, including an HIV/AIDS and STD hotline:

[1-800-243-2](tel:1-800-243-2437)

[437](tel:1-800-243-2437)

Other programs include:

- Quality of Life Endowment Fund – Proceeds from the "Red Ribbon Cash" scratch off lottery game are used to fund organizations providing HIV/AIDS prevention and support services.
- AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) – Serves 4,100 low-income persons diagnosed with HIV/AIDS per month access life-saving anti-retroviral drugs.
- BASUAH – Brothers and Sisters United Against HIV/AIDS program promotes HIV/AIDS awareness among communities of color, which are disproportionately impacted by the disease, through education, collaboration and community engagement. Visit BASUAH.org for more information.
- Text 2 Survive – Allows public to find free testing sites and health events via mobile phone by texting "EVENT", "IL" or "ALERT" plus 5-digit ZIP Code to 36363. Spanish speakers can text "CENTRO" plus 5-digit ZIP Code to 36363.

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At today's event, Governor Quinn was joined by Congressman Danny K. Davis (D-Ill.), State Sen. Jacqueline Collins (D-Chicago), Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Bechara Choucair, and Kathi Braswell, executive director of the Ruth Rothstein CORE Center, one of the largest HIV/AIDS clinics in the United States.

Governor Quinn also declared today World AIDS Day, presenting the following proclamation:

WHEREAS, preventing the transmission of HIV infection and stopping the spread of AIDS requires a worldwide effort to increase communication, education and action; and

WHEREAS, estimates from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS on the global AIDS epidemic show that around 33 million adults and 2.5 million children were living with HIV at the end of 2009; and

WHEREAS, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois has the seventh highest number of AIDS cases in the nation, with 38,265 reported cases of AIDS since 1981. Of those diagnosed with the disease, about 20,970 have died; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has designated December 1 of each year as World AIDS Day, a day to expand and strengthen the worldwide effort to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS; and

WHEREAS, this year marks the 23rd anniversary of World AIDS Day and the 30th anniversary of the first reported cases of HIV/AIDS. While we have come a long way since then, there is still much more to be done; and

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WHEREAS, the theme for World AIDS Day 2011 is “Getting to Zero” Global leaders have pledged to work towards universal access to HIV and AIDS treatment, prevention and care, recognizing these as fundamental human rights. Valuable progress has been made in increasing access to HIV and AIDS services, yet greater commitment is needed around the world if the goal of universal access is to be achieved; and

WHEREAS, the campaign calls on all sectors of society such as families, communities and civil society organizations, as well as governments, to take the initiative and provide leadership on AIDS; and

WHEREAS, this day in Illinois is commemorated by a number of events across the state, including the dimming of the lights atop the Illinois State Capitol dome and at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago during the evening hours to coincide with the dimming of the lights at the White House in tribute to those infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS:

THEREFORE, I, Pat Quinn, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim December 1, 2011 as WORLD AIDS DAY in Illinois, and encourage all residents to take part in activities and observances designed to increase awareness and understanding of AIDS, to take part in AIDS prevention activities and programs, and to join in the efforts to prevent transmission of HIV and further spread of AIDS.

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