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Frederick County Health Department

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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27th World AIDS Day to be Observed in Frederick December 1st

FREDERICK, MD – Several organizations and agencies from the area will join together on Tuesday, December 1st to observe the 27th World AIDS Day. The event will be held at Dublin Roasters, 1780 N. Market Street, 7-9 PM. The public is invited to attend the event.

We are now in the 34th year of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic, and as a nation, we are still struggling to make progress in decreasing the numbers of individuals becoming infected by the disease. For this reason, organizations, agencies, and churches from all over Frederick are joining together to develop a strategy to address the epidemic in our own local community. The December 1st event will be the first collaboration of the newly forming Frederick HIV/AIDS Coalition. Interested or concerned individuals are encouraged to attend.

In July this year, President Obama signed the second National HIV/AIDS Strategy. Until Obama's administration, there had been no U.S. strategy to address our epidemic, though we required other nations receiving American aid to have such a plan. The goals of the newly forming coalition will align closely with the national strategy: 1. To Reduce New HIV Infections, 2. To Increase Access to Care and Improve Health Outcomes for People Living with HIV, and 3. To reduce HIV-Related Health Disparities. Other goals of the coalition will also address the social and spiritual needs of people living with HIV infection.

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“There are approximately 300 individuals in Frederick County known to be living with HIV infection, and an estimated 50-60 more cases who are infected but don’t know it because they haven’t been given an HIV test,” says Debbie Anne, AIDS Certified Nurse with Frederick County Health Department. “Over the past year, the Health Department has been delivering an HIV resource binder to all primary care offices in Frederick County to support and encourage primary care providers to implement routine testing in their offices as a standard of care. In 2013, the U.S. Preventive Task Force Services made HIV screening a grade A recommendation. For the first time in the history of the epidemic, insurance companies must now pay for routine testing as standard preventive care, and providers can be held accountable if a patient does not receive screening and ends up suffering illness as a result of undiagnosed and untreated HIV disease,” says Anne. “We’re trying to get primary care providers on board, and we’re trying to let health care consumers know that this is a service to which they are entitled. It is nice to have other organizations and agencies also interested in addressing the epidemic in Frederick County. We welcome this new coalition,” says Anne.

The World AIDS Day event will feature an informational and Q&A session by Debbie Anne as well as testimonials, poems, songs, and more offered by community members in honor of those we’ve lost to AIDS and in celebration of those now living with HIV. For more information about HIV and World AIDS Day, go to: <https://www.aids.gov/news-and-events/awareness-days/>

The next meeting of the Frederick HIV/AIDS Coalition will take place at Frederick Church of the Brethren, Tuesday, December 15th, 7-8 PM. All are welcome.

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