

Get Screened Oakland: The Highlights

Get Screened Oakland joins Community AIDS Awareness Week Commemorations

(November 24 - December 2) Beginning and ending with commemorative interfaith celebrations, this year's AIDS Awareness Week had events for the whole community. Coordinated by the December 1 Committee, the week's activities drew the participation of AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs), health care centers, hospitals, churches, social service agencies, colleges and local business establishments. It was a time for all of Alameda County to stop and reflect on the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, the effects of the disease it causes, and its impact on individuals, families, and communities. Below are summaries, in chronological order, of AIDS Awareness Week events.

Monday, November 25

Following the distribution of ecumenical and interfaith materials for clergy/faith community leaders the previous day, AIDS Awareness Week kicked off with a Monday morning press conference hosted by the Alameda County Medical Center Highland Hospital (ACMC/Highland Hospital). The press conference, which was convened by Andrea Breau, the hospital's Public Information Officer, brought together state and local government officials, HIV clinicians, and other health care providers to discuss renewed efforts in response to the HIV epidemic in Alameda County.

During the press conference, it was announced that the State of California, in partnership with ACMC/Highland Hospital and Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, would expand HIV screening in the Emergency Departments through a \$535,000 grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Participating in the press conference were Michelle Roland, MD, Director, Office of AIDS, State of California; Douglas White, MD, Director ACMC Highland Hospital Emergency Department; Silver Sisneros, MD, Chief HIV Services, ACMC; James Taylor, HIV Counselor, ACMC; Steve O'Brien, Director, East Bay AIDS Center, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center; Tazima Jenkins, Business Responds to AIDS; and Marsha A. Martin, Director, Get Screened Oakland.

Belinda Dronkers-Laureta from Asian Family Pride and Bahar Kumar from Asian Pacific Island Wellness Center coordinated an arts-filled evening at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center. The film, "Honor Thy Children" served as the event's center point. The film tells the story of an Asian American family, the Nakatanis, who lose their three children, all sons, to preventable causes: two to HIV disease and the other to urban violence. The film is a powerful story about honor before and after the death of family members. The evening also provided an opportunity to sample Asian culinary and performance arts.

Tuesday, November 26

Kaiser Permanente and the Pacific Center hosted "Surviving, Thriving and Speaking Out." The evening event, which was coordinated by Aaron Testard and Bev Armstrong, brought together staff from the Shanti Project and long-term survivors of HIV disease, who shared stories of strength, hope, and experience living with the virus. The majority of those present had been living with HIV for more than 20 years. Some of the keys they identified to their survival included disclosing HIV status to important and supportive persons, eating healthy foods, avoiding isolation, following medical advice, and developing a routine "practice," be it meditation or volunteering, or serving/helping others. The evening concluded with those present adding parts of their stories to an AIDS timeline.

Wednesday, November 27

Get Screened Oakland and the East Bay AIDS Walk hosted a Community Awards ceremony for more than 200 honorees, guests, and friends at Oakland City Hall. The Oakland Youth Chorus set the tone for a lovely evening of good food, good conversation,

and good fun. Miguel Bustos, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the Mayor, opened the evening's program with remarks on behalf of Mayor Ronald V. Dellums, which included a Mayoral Proclamation declaring November 24, 2007 through December 2, 2007 "AIDS Awareness Week" in Oakland. Michele Brown, Deputy Director, Office of Parks and Recreation emceed the community awards event and extended a special welcome to a League of Cities delegation hosted by Office of Parks and Recreation Director Audree Jones. Councilwoman Jean Quan also gave opening remarks, reminding the attendees that working to address HIV on a community level is also an important agenda item for the Oakland City Council. Following the opening remarks, Ms. Gloria Crowell, Co-Chair of the East Bay AIDS Walk gave financial awards to those participating in the very successful 2007 AIDS Walk. She also presented special recognition awards to the corporate and community sponsors, which included Starbucks, Walgreens, Gilead Sciences, Washington Inn, Pathway Consultants, and Get Screened Oakland. The Children's Hospital Team, Hugs Not Bugs, received this year's largest award: \$15,000.

Marsha A. Martin, Director of Get Screened Oakland thanked all of the attendees and gave special recognition to two community agencies that have worked tirelessly to expand HIV screening as part of Get Screened Oakland: the California Prevention Education Program (CAL-PEP) and Volunteers of America, HIV Health Services. Dr. Martin then introduced the recipients of the Vanguard Award. They include the Office of AIDS, Alameda County; the Levi Strauss Foundation; the San Francisco Foundation; the Gilead Foundation; and the East Bay Community Foundation. The award design, created by Oakland-based sculptor Mario Chiodo, was inspired by his Champions of Humanity outdoor sculpture, which shows a community of individuals with their arms linked together. Get Screened Oakland also presented Special Community Vanguard Awards to Abby Ginzberg and Dedocio Habib, the two community activists who spearheaded the Get Screened Oakland initiative. The evening concluded with a candlelight and gratitude ceremony coordinated by Chad Stafford of The Vital Life Center and Susanne Anderson of Volunteers of America HIV program at City Hall Plaza.

Thursday, November 28

On this day, Get Screened Oakland brought vans, HIV testing, and the Street Team of KMEL Radio to Laney and Merritt Colleges for a program called "Be in the Know." The program encouraged students to learn more about HIV and to get tested. Students who participated in the outreach event received free tickets to Oakland's World AIDS Day Benefit Concert. Fifty-seven students were tested as part of the outreach. That evening, Get Screened Oakland and the Oakland Film Association hosted a showing of the HBO film "Life Support," starring Queen Latifah and Rachel Nicks. The film tells the story of one woman living with HIV. Rachel Nicks, who plays Queen Latifah's daughter in the film, was on hand for the showing. Following the film, Joe Hawkins, Founder of the African American LGBT Film Festival, moderated a panel that included Ms. Nick's; Stefan Christenberry, RN; and HIV Peer Advocate Lizette Green, Edgar Medina, and their 8-day-old son, Eduardo. Participants discussed the importance of getting tested for HIV, knowing one's status, and knowing how to talk with partners and significant others about HIV, sex, and other issues affecting health.

Friday, November 29

WORLD held a Community Summit on HIV and Women. The summit not only highlighted issues affecting women who are living with HIV, but it also created a supportive environment for women with HIV to meet, share stories, and exchange ideas. Held at Merritt School of Nursing, the summit brought together more than 250 women from all across the United States. Topics for summit workshops included HIV prevention for women, health care issues for positive women, legal issues, and how to improve advocacy skills for women. The preceding Thursday evening, WORLD hosted a for positive women only session.

Saturday, December 1- World AIDS Day

HIV information, counseling, and testing were provided at the Emeryville shopping District. Sonya Richey of the California Prevention Education Program (CAL-PEP) coordinated the educational outreach and testing services as part of AIDS Awareness Week. Also on World AIDS Day, a gospel music concert extravaganza was held at Olivet Missionary Baptist Church. Coordinated under the direction of Roosevelt Mosby, Executive Director of Sexual Minorities Alliance of Alameda County (SMAAC), the gospel concert was preceded by four days of workshops on HIV and the faith-community response. And finally on World AIDS Day, Get Screened Oakland hosted a Benefit Concert at Historic Sweets Ballroom in downtown Oakland. The concert's lineup included Sunny Hawkins, Martin Luther, Ise Lyfe, and Talib Kweli. J-Red served as MC. Mayor Ronald V. Dellums joined the crowd of nearly 400 guests for an evening of music, humor, and information about HIV. In his message, Mayor Del-

lums reminded the audience that HIV is preventable, and the only way to know your HIV serostatus is to get tested regularly, like he does.

Sunday, December 2

AIDS Awareness Week concluded with a commemorative service coordinated by Angel Fabian of La Clinica de la Raza at St. Anthony's Church.

Get Screened Oakland wishes to thank all of the agencies and staff who participated in the December 1 Committee for making AIDS Awareness Week a success.

Get Screened Oakland Participates in MAC AIDS Fund NYC Roundtable Discussion and Press Conference

(November 13, 2007) During a roundtable and press conference at the New York City Public Library, MAC AIDS Fund—the largest corporate non-pharmaceutical contributor to HIV/AIDS causes (more than \$100 million since 1994)—released findings from a nine-country survey. Respondents resided in Brazil, China, France, India, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Overall, the survey findings demonstrated a lack of clarity about HIV disease worldwide. Results included the following:

- ◆ Stigma is the top problem feeding the spread of HIV.
- ◆ People believe treatment is more widely available than it is.
- ◆ People increasingly believe there is a cure for HIV.
- ◆ Gender roles and the inability to discuss sex with partners are contributing to HIV's spread.

In addition, the survey found misconceptions about the availability of a cure for HIV/AIDS and the consequences of the disease. Moreover, it revealed signs of stigma against HIV-positive people. Nearly 50% of respondents said they would be uncomfortable walking next to an HIV-positive person; 52% do not want to live in the same house as an HIV-positive person; and 79% do not want to date someone living with HIV/AIDS.

The MAC AIDS Fund commissioned the survey in order to bring into focus people affected by and most at risk for HIV disease twenty-five years into the global pandemic. To discuss the findings and their implications, the Fund invited a group of policy experts, advocates, and program implementers to discuss the study's implications. The panelists included Dr. Thomas Kenyon, Principal Deputy Coordinator and Chief Medical Officer in the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, U.S. Department of State; Geeta Gupta Rao, Ph.D., President, International Center for Research on Women; Jennifer Kates, Vice President and Director of HIV Policy, Kaiser Family Foundation; Marsha A. Martin, DSW, Get Screened Oakland; Anthony Rapp, star of Broadway musical "Rent"; and MAC AIDS Fund Executive Director Nancy Mahon.

Each panelist was asked to comment on the findings and their implications. Marsha Martin discussed the findings within the context of Get Screened Oakland. She remarked that all of the findings have echoes in most communities today, especially those urban communities with large numbers of people of color and immigrants. All agreed with Ms. Mahon's closing remarks: "Today, more than 25 years after the emergence of the disease, it is startling to learn that facts about HIV/AIDS are still a guessing game for much of the world and that many are still in the dark about the undeniable reality that HIV/AIDS shockingly remains a top global killer. Social stigmas that plagued us then are still limiting progress now. Understanding the insights from the survey will help take us to the next level of policy, prevention, care in the fight against AIDS."

Scaling up HIV testing a new focus at three National Conferences

This fall, three national conferences highlighted HIV testing programs this fall: the annual meetings of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS (USCA) in November and the National HIV Prevention Conference in December. All featured workshops, roundtables, and institutes on expanding HIV screening and making it a routine part of medical care. Staff from Get Screened Oakland attended and participated in all of the HIV screening sessions.

At this year's APHA meeting, *Politics and Public Health*, more than 20 scientific sessions brought together researchers, epidemiologists and clinicians to discuss everything from emerging issues and lessons learned in HIV screening, to making HIV testing routine in emergency departments, to acceptance of opt-out testing, to organizational factors associated with citywide testing programs, to assessing barriers to acceptances of HIV testing on historically Black College and University campuses, to politics and policy of implementing HIV testing.

At the U.S. Conference on AIDS, *One Family, One Voice, One Spirit*, HIV testing was the subject of a daylong, pre-conference institute sponsored by The AIDS Institute: "Doing It Right at Home and Abroad." The HIV Testing and Counseling Institute began with the provocative question, "What's the Buzz about HIV testing?" and ended with representatives from New York City and Los Angeles describing their efforts to scale up testing, especially within the African American community. In between, participants listened to experts in HIV testing. Dr. Bernard Branson, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, gave an overview of the new testing guidelines. Dr. Todd Korthius, U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, described the process necessary to make HIV testing eligible for Medicaid reimbursement. Drs. Kathleen Clanon and Steve O'Brien also presented timely information on topics related to HIV testing, including client confidentiality, cultural competence in counseling, determining who will pay for HIV testing, and linkage to care issues.

Finally, at the National HIV Prevention Conference, *Promoting Synergy Between Science and Program*, the following topics were covered in many workshops, roundtables, and hallway conversations: HIV testing, making HIV testing routine, and scaling up HIV testing programs. At one session, *Scaling up Counseling and Testing: New Guidelines and Practical Approaches*, Marsha A. Martin, Director, Get Screened Oakland, moderated the session and highlighted Oakland's counseling and testing efforts. Dr. Douglas White, Director of the Alameda County Medical Center Emergency Room, presented on the successful implementation of routine HIV testing in the emergency room. Dr. Donna Futterman, Director, Adolescent AIDS Program, Montefiore Hospital, Bronx, New York and developer of Assess, Counsel, Test and Support (ACTS), an evidenced-based system to implement routine HIV testing, gave an overview of the program. ACTS, she said, was designed to streamline HIV testing in hospitals. A randomized-controlled study of the ACTS model, conducted by Dr. Futterman and her colleagues, showed the ACTS model to be statistically significant in increasing the number of HIV tests conducted and reducing the amount of time in the testing encounter. The session concluded with Dr. Bernard Branson, who gave highlights from community efforts to implement routine testing.

In the News

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa announces citywide HIV Initiative, Follows Dellums Lead

Los Angeles, CA (November 30, 2007) Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa launched a citywide drive to encourage 1 million Angelenos to get tested for HIV by the end of 2011. Following the lead of Oakland Mayor Ronald V. Dellums, Mayor Villaraigosa stated, "If we are going to eliminate HIV in Los Angeles, we need to get past the stereotypes and stigma and make HIV testing a routine part of health care for all Angelenos. This initiative is about moving to make HIV testing easy, accessible, and free for all Angelenos." Working with a range of community partners, LA's testing drive will eventually include a host of programs conducted with private and public schools and colleges, local faith-based groups, sports events, concerts, and community events.

Oakland became the first city in California to create and implement a citywide program designed to make HIV testing a routine part of health care. Get Screened Oakland welcomes Mayor Villaraigosa's announcement and is pleased to have LA as a partner in the effort to expand HIV screening in the state of California.

Announcements

National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities presents: The 2008 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS

Atlanta, GA (December 18, 2007) – NAESM will host its fourth annual National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS from January 24 – 27, 2008 in Oakland, California at the Oakland Hilton Airport Hotel, One Hegenberger Road, Oakland, CA 94612, to help strengthen HIV/AIDS research, prevention, and care strategies targeting African American men who have sex with men (MSM).

The conference's theme is, "Breaking Barriers. Moving Forward." With this theme, attendees and supporters are encouraged to eliminate barriers and move forward with new and improved HIV mobilization, prevention, and care strategies that ultimately strengthen the African American MSM community.

This conference is unique in that it is the only one of its kind in the nation that specifically focuses on African American MSM and HIV/AIDS. In the United States, African Americans continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS in spite of only representing 12% of the total population (CDC). More alarming, most infections are African American MSM.

In January 2007, the conference occurred in Charlotte, North Carolina where more than 200 persons attended and 42 workshops that were offered. When asked if they felt that the conference increased knowledge, practicality, and networking opportunities, 90% of those who responded agreed.

During this extraordinary conference in 2008, participants can choose to attend a number of institutions, workshops, roundtable discussion groups, and poster sessions to gain new insights or information about trends, studies, interventions strategies, research, or other topics. This conference also provides attendees excellent opportunities for establishing collaborations between service providers, creating or improving networks with other organizations, sharing strategies that work, and improving prevention efforts for African American MSM overall.

Organizations, corporations, and other groups interested in supporting this unique endeavor can submit or provide sponsorships, in-kind services, volunteers, and donations. **For individuals interested in sharing or presenting information that will directly impact African American MSM, abstracts for institutes, workshops, roundtables, and posters are being accepted for review.** For more information about this conference or NAESM, visit www.naesmonline.org.

National Latino Hispanic AIDS Leadership Summit : Tuesday, January 29 – Wednesday, January 30, Washington Plaza Hotel, Washington, DC 20005

Why are we creating a National Latino AIDS Agenda?

HIV/AIDS continues at unabated levels in the Latino community. HIV/AIDS continues to devastate Latinos/Hispanics across the United States, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Latinos are the fastest growing population in the United States and the second most affected by HIV and AIDS in both incidence and prevalence. According to the CDC, by the end of 2005 more than 77,000 Latinos/Hispanics have died from HIV/AIDS. The facts published by the CDC last year for infections and AIDS cases in 2004 should give anyone deep concern. Latinos are three times more likely than Whites to be HIV positive or to have an AIDS diagnosis. Latinos account for 18% of the deaths to date but are 14% of the U.S. population. What is being done at the local, state or federal level to change the continued doubt and fear this epidemic is continuing to inflict on our community?

We must join together as a community to develop an agenda that will represent our definition of what the underlying problems are and to suggest and to prioritize the changes that we see as necessary to reverse this epidemic of indifference. We need to set our Latino AIDS agenda for action. Then the public health establishment and elected officials can be educated about the whole Latino community and HIV/AIDS.

The working process is set to achieve a National Latino/Hispanic AIDS Action Leadership Summit on January 29-30, 2008. For more information and a partial listing of participating organizations visit: www.latinoAIDSagenda.org

Community Calendar

Get Screened Oakland wishes everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Upcoming Events and Dates to Keep in Mind

January 2008

Th. 1/24 - Su. 1/27

2008 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS "Breaking Barriers, Moving Forward", National AIDS Education and Services for Minorities, Inc (NAESM), Oakland, CA www.naesmonline.org

Tu. 1/29 - W. 1/30

National Latino Hispanic AIDS Leadership Summit; Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20005; To register online, visit www.latinoaidsagenda.org; For questions, contact Stephanie Pena at spena@aidsagenda.org or at 212-675-3288, ext. 351

February 2008

Tu. 2/7

African American AIDS Awareness Day; For more information, link to www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days

March 2008

Su. 3/2 - Sa. 3/8

The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS; For more information, contact The Balm In Gilead at www.thebalmingilead or 888-225-6243

Mon. 3/10

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, For more information, link to www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days

Th. 3/20

National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; For more information, link to www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days

June 2008

W. 6/11 - Sa. 6/14

HIV Prevention Leadership Summit; Detroit, MI; For more information, send e-mail to conferences@nmac.org or call 202-483-6622; abstracts due 1/10/08