

Nov. 26, 2019

WORLD AIDS DAY IS ON DEC. 1

Contact:

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Pensacola, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Escambia County will observe World AIDS Day by participating in a local memorial event on Sunday, Dec. 1 from 4-6 p.m. CST at Houser Memorial AME Zion Church, 710 E. Jordan St. Each year, World AIDS Day provides a key opportunity to raise awareness, commemorate those who have passed on, and celebrate victories in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The event will feature free HIV testing, keynote speakers, and a candlelight vigil. This year's theme is "Ending the HIV Epidemic: Community by Community."

The CDC estimates that 1.2 million people in the US are living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. One in seven are unaware of their HIV infection.

Since 2015, Escambia County has seen the rate of HIV/AIDS related deaths increase by 24% while the rate for the state of Florida has decreased by 27%. With even more potent single-pill treatment medications available, this can only mean one thing – people are not getting into care and staying in care. There are an estimated 1,439 persons living with HIV or AIDS in Escambia County.

"The good news is that HIV treatment works! And it's even easier to stay in care by taking these single pill regimens each day. Unfortunately, stigma keeps many people from getting the life-saving treatment they need. We need to do better by fighting both HIV and stigma." said Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator, Debbie Carty.

CDC recommends all adolescents and adults (ages 13–64) should be tested for HIV at least once during their lifetime. Persons at increased risk for HIV should be tested annually.

Learn more about [HIV prevention strategies](#) and [Florida's plan to eliminate HIV transmission and reduce HIV-related deaths](#). For more event information, call 850-595-6500, ext. 1500 or 1503.

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