

MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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Erie County HIV Task Force hosts World AIDS Day Recognition

Erie, PA – The Erie County HIV Task Force will host a World AIDS Day Recognition Program on Monday, Dec. 2, at 5:15 p.m. in the Admiral Room at Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. Since 1988, World AIDS Day is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV, and remember those who have died.

This year's theme is "Communities Make a Difference." The program features community speakers addressing the importance of HIV prevention – including information on PrEP – and will highlight an HIV Peer Survivor Story. The program will conclude with a candlelight service to remember those who have lost their lives due to HIV.

HIV and AIDS remain a persistent problem for the United States and countries around the world. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the United States. In fact, in 2018 nearly 1,000 people were diagnosed with HIV in Pennsylvania. However, there has been great progress in prevention and treatment of HIV. Antiretroviral therapy (ART) has substantially reduced AIDS-related deaths. The goal of HIV treatment is to get the amount of HIV to an undetectable level so that there is "effectively no risk" of that person spreading HIV.

The Erie County HIV Task Force aims to prevent HIV infection in our community. One of the ways to prevent HIV infection is to make sure that all persons who are sexually active get tested for HIV. Medications and treatment are available for HIV. Knowing your HIV status allows the opportunity for early treatment and control of the infection. Delays in treatment can lead to further HIV transmission and reduction in the length and quality of life for these individuals.

"I encourage all Erie County residents who are sexually active to get tested for HIV," said County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper. "The only way to know whether or not you have HIV is to get tested because you can have the infection and still feel healthy."

Free HIV testing is available at the following locations:

- Erie County Department of Health, 606 W. Second St.
- Adagio Health, 240 W. 11th St.
- Adagio Health, 118 Plum St. (Edinboro)
- Community Health Net, 1202 State St.

For more information about testing, call the Erie County Department of Health at 814-451-6700.

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