



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO M.D.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

For Immediate Release: November 26, 2007

07-88

**WORLD AIDS DAY IN HAWAII TO FOCUS ON
NEED FOR SOCIAL TOLERANCE**

HONOLULU -- On Saturday, December 1, Hawaii will join communities throughout the world in a unified observance of World AIDS Day.

"World AIDS Day is the only international day which involves comprehensive, coordinated action to address the HIV epidemic. It's also another opportunity to give Hawaii residents information about ways the epidemic affects friends, neighbors and co-workers, as well as how it impacts those abroad," says Nancy Kern, HIV/STD prevention coordinator for the Hawaii State Department of Health.

Kern says that although it has been 25 years since HIV was first identified, it remains a highly stigmatized condition. A key goal of World AIDS Day is to continue to educate and increase compassion for those who are at-risk and HIV-positive.

The following statistics reflect the level of HIV and AIDS exposure in Hawaii:

- An estimated 2,300 to 3,200 individuals are HIV positive;
- As of June 30, 2007, there were 2,975 reported cases of AIDS;
- A total of 89 new AIDS cases were reported from July 2006 to June 2007 (90 percent of these cases were among males); and

(more)

- Hawai'i has a relatively low rate of reported AIDS cases among injection drug users (seven percent). This is due in part to the statewide needle exchange program, which has been operating since 1990.

To mark this year's World AIDS Day, Hawai'i will host a series of events on December 1 that explore some of the major issues and challenges of the AIDS epidemic. These include films at the University of Hawai'i and Queen's Medical Center; a "quilt of flowers" at Kapiolani Community College in remembrance of those affected by AIDS; and a presentation of the Suzanne Richmond-Crum award, an honor that is dedicated to the memory of the former director of the Hawai'i Seropositivity and Medical Management Program (HSPAMM).

World Aids Day information and events on O'ahu and the neighbor islands can be found at: www.worldaidsdayhawaii.org/.

###

For more information, contact:

Nancy Kern
STD/AIDS Prevention Branch
Phone (808) 733-9281