

NATIONAL NATIVE HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

Raising awareness about HIV/AIDS among

American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians

MARCH 21, 2007 A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

In Native cultures, the cycle and celebration of life are defined by the change in seasons, and ceremonies are held to recognize the passing of one season and the beginning of another. Each of the four seasons has special meaning, yet spring in particular represents a time for new beginnings, cellular regeneration, birth, and profound change. As March 21 officially marks the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, Native community stakeholders from around the nation have selected this day to commemorate the first annual National Native (American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian) HIV/AIDS Awareness Day -- **March 21, 2007**.

What can YOU do to Celebrate the Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day?

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Hold an education session in a local community center or school. Talk as openly and honestly as possible about HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, but be sensitive to the people who are present.
- Hold a town hall meeting to discuss what the community needs to know about its own HIV risks.
- Have a lunch to talk with elders about HIV and other issues affecting the health and wellbeing of our communities – asking for their guidance, ideas, and support.

IN YOUR TRIBE OR URBAN NATIVE COMMUNITY

- Call for a Tribal proclamation to commemorate March 21st as an official HIV/AIDS Awareness Day for your tribe. Acknowledge "Resolution # SAC-06-002" that passed through the National Congress of American Indians 2006 Annual Session in Sacramento, California.
- Call for Tribal recognition that prevention and care of HIV/STIs/HCV are a priority in the community.
- Meet with local AIDS service organizations to learn more about how HIV affects your community; partner with these organizations to hold an awareness-raising event that is Native-specific.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

- Get HIV tested! It's important to know your HIV status to protect yourself and others. To locate a testing site near you, go to: <http://www.hivtest.org/index.htm> or talk with your doctor.
- Learn more about HIV/AIDS and its impact on your community. Talk privately with your doctor about HIV.
- Protect yourself against HIV infection. Know the risks associated with sex and drug use. Contact your local AIDS service organization or health department for safer sex materials.

HELP AND TEACH OTHERS

- Organize a meeting with friends, neighbors, or other concerned community members to discuss sexual and drug health/issues in your community- together, people can make things happen!
- Volunteer at a local HIV/AIDS organization.
- Post fact sheets about HIV/AIDS on bulletin boards and in local newsletters.



HIV continues to increase among Native people as it has over the past decade; in fact, American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have the **third highest rate** (above whites) of AIDS diagnoses, despite having the smallest population.



This **HIV/AIDS Awareness Day** will challenge Native people to create a greater awareness of the risks of **HIV/AIDS** to our communities; to reflect on those who have passed, and those who are infected and affected by **HIV/AIDS**; to call for increased resources for testing and early detection; and to seek support for increasing our treatment and care options.



March 21, 2007 will be a day to "**Protect Our Future, Protect Our People and Celebrate Life!**"

BE A FRIEND AND LEADER

- Help someone living with HIV/AIDS by being a friend.
- Talk to your spiritual leaders to gain their support for HIV/AIDS prevention and get them to consider talking about HIV to the congregation in order to stop the stigma associated with this disease.



How can you get help to organize an Awareness Day activity?

Contact one of the three agencies listed below for help with brainstorming and organizing events for the first annual Native American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on March 21, 2007. Materials can either be downloaded from the websites listed or provided to you by calling the phone numbers.

1. Colorado State University's **Center for Applied Studies in American Ethnicity** (CASAE): Call (970) 491-0251 or visit our website at <http://happ.colostate.edu>
2. The **Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.** (ITCA): Call (602) 258-ITCA or visit our website at www.itcaonline.com/nshapp
3. The **National Native American AIDS Prevention Center** (NNAAPC): Call (303) 542-2047 or visit our website at www.nnaapc.org

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