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July 16, 2008

TO: HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

SUBJECT: FIRST ANNUAL NATIONAL CLINICIANS HIV/AIDS TESTING
AND AWARENESS DAY - JULY 21, 2008

Up to 160,000 people in California are estimated to be living with HIV or AIDS and up to 50,000 Californians have HIV but are unaware of it. California ranks second in the nation only behind New York in total reported AIDS cases.

The National Minority AIDS Education and Training Center (NMAETC) has designated July 21, 2008, as the first annual National Clinicians HIV/AIDS Testing and Awareness Day. This is an important opportunity for all health care professionals to get personally involved in HIV prevention and care, even if they do not provide HIV-related patient care. Clinicians themselves can demonstrate to their patients and the community both the importance and the ease of routine testing for HIV/AIDS.

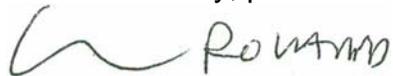
Health care providers play a critical role in diagnosing HIV. Many people infected with HIV receive services at health care facilities and are never tested for HIV. In September 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new guidelines for HIV testing in the United States and recommended making HIV testing part of routine medical care for all Americans ages 13 to 64. In January of this year, California Assembly Bill 682 (Berg, Statutes of 2007) was enacted. The new law removes barriers to routine HIV testing and screening, by eliminating the requirement for the specific written consent for HIV testing for patients in medical settings as part of an individual's regular medical care.

I invite you to join me by participating with other health care providers at the California Department of Public Health in *National Clinicians HIV/AIDS Testing and Awareness Day*. You can participate by:

1. **Taking an HIV test.** In leading by example, you and members of your organization can take a powerful step toward reducing the stigma and uncertainty of HIV/AIDS.

2. **Getting more information on performing HIV tests.** NMAETC and the Pacific AIDS Education and Training Center (PAETC) www.aids-ed.org can provide information on protocols and methodologies. They can also provide information on culturally appropriate ways to approach patients about HIV tests and how to encourage them to obtain care. Also, see the Office of AIDS (OA) information regarding HIV testing in health care settings: www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/AIDS/Pages/OAHIVTestHCS.aspx.
3. **Increasing your awareness about HIV counseling, testing, and linkages** within your community. Increasing this knowledge will strengthen your ability to link patients with appropriate support services: visit OA's Web site at www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/AIDS or www.aidshotline.org or (800) 367-AIDS and www.hivinfo.org/links/lhj.htm for services across California.
4. **Receiving training tailored to your specific needs.** NMAETC and PAETC can deliver training to primary care physicians and other clinicians who are new to HIV/AIDS treatment or who desire to strengthen their skills. Additional training for health and medical professionals is also available from the California STD/HIV Prevention Training Center at: www.stdhivtraining.org.
5. **Getting expert consultation for clinicians on HIV testing.** The National HIV/AIDS Clinicians' Consultation Center (NCCC) can provide you free clinical consultation on all aspects of HIV testing, including performing and interpreting tests and disclosing test results through their Warmline [(800) 933-3413], and on testing pregnant women and their infants through the Perinatal HIV Hotline [(888) 448-8765]. NCCC also provides a comprehensive Compendium of State HIV Testing Laws on its Web site at: www.nccc.ucsf.edu.

I urge you to participate by taking action for the health of Californians. For further information on how you can get involved in National Clinicians HIV/AIDS Testing and Awareness Day, please visit NMAETC's Web site at: www.nmaetc.org.



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