



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**State Public Health Officer Joins International Leaders to Commemorate
World AIDS Day December 1, 2011**

SACRAMENTO – Dr. Ron Chapman, Director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and State Health Officer, urges all Californians to continue fighting HIV/AIDS by observing the 23rd annual World AIDS Day on December 1, 2011. This year World AIDS Day coincides with the unveiling of a new theme for the global campaign: [Getting to Zero: Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths.](#) The World AIDS Campaign will launch December 1 and run through December 1, 2015.

HIV/AIDS continues to be a serious public health threat in California today. At the end of 2009 there were an estimated 121,619 people in California living with HIV or AIDS. The number of individuals living with HIV/AIDS has increased at a steady rate (average 9.5 percent increase per year) due to relatively steady new infection rates coupled with the success of antiretroviral therapy in treating HIV/AIDS, dramatically extending the lifespan of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

“One important way we can prevent the spread of HIV is to ensure that everyone knows their HIV status. With this knowledge, individuals can take steps to protect themselves and their partners and receive life-saving medical care if they are HIV positive,” said Dr. Chapman. “HIV medications not only help HIV infected persons live longer, healthier lives, but also decrease the chance that they will transmit HIV.”

CDPH Office of AIDS has several programs and new initiatives that align with both the World AIDS Day theme of *Getting to Zero* and with the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, which include minimizing the number of new HIV infections, enhancing linkages to care and treatment for individuals who are already infected with HIV/AIDS, and decreasing HIV/AIDS-related health disparities.

In observance of World AIDS Day, The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) released a brief [Trends in Hospitalization of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS in California, 1988 to 2008](#) on November 30, 2011. This brief shows a sharp decline in the hospitalization rate of persons living with HIV/AIDS and a major decline in the in-hospital mortality rate following the introduction of highly effective combination antiretroviral therapy in the mid-1990s, emphasizing the importance of continued access to antiretroviral drug therapy in maintaining improved health outcomes for persons living with HIV/AIDS. CDPH and OSHPD will host a joint media call on November 30th to address questions related to the brief and this press release.

“I urge Californians to protect themselves and others from HIV infection and to support those who are already infected” said Dr. Chapman.

For additional information about World AIDS Day and scheduled events contact your local health department. To locate HIV testing services, contact your local health department or the [California HIV/AIDS Service Referral Project](#) at (800) 367-AIDS (2437). For additional information regarding HIV/AIDS programs and services visit the following websites:

- [California Department of Public Health/Office of AIDS](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [AIDS.gov](#)
- [World AIDS Campaign](#)

www.cdph.ca.gov

