



Rick Scott
Governor

H. Frank Farmer, Jr., MD, PhD, FACP
State Surgeon General

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Contact: DOH Office of Communications
Jessica Hammonds, (850) 245-4111

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOGNIZES NATIONAL LATINO AIDS
AWARENESS DAY**

New HIV testing initiative for Latinos will be unveiled on October 12, 2011

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Department of Health (DOH) and community partners will observe National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD) on October 15, 2011, marking the last day of Hispanic Heritage Month in the U.S. and the ninth anniversary of NLAAD. This year's theme, **Latinos Unite! Let's stay Healthy! Get Tested for HIV**, emphasizes the importance of promoting healthy communities statewide and nationally.

"Increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS in our communities is very crucial in reducing the stigma that is very often associated with this disease. Making sure testing becomes a routine part of health care visits and ensuring that those who test positive receive prompt medical care are essential tools in combatting the prevalence of this disease," said DOH's Division Director of Disease Control Dr. Julia Gill. "The most promising way to reduce HIV/AIDS in our state is for everyone to work together to promote and encourage awareness, testing and access to treatment."

This year, DOH's Bureau of HIV/AIDS will unveil a new HIV testing initiative for Latinos. The "Test 112,000 by 2012" initiative seeks to respond to the HIV crisis by uniting Latino leaders, businesses, churches, community-based organizations and many others in Florida in the fight against the spread of HIV. "Getting tested and treated for HIV/AIDS can save your life and others," said DOH's Chief of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS Thomas Liberti. "By educating ourselves and the people we know, together, we can begin to reverse both the stigma and spread of this life altering disease in our state."

The unveiling of the New HIV Testing Initiative for Latinos will take place during a press conference in Miami:

Date: Wednesday, October 12, 2011
Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am
Location: Latin Chamber of Commerce of USA (CAMACOL)
1401 West Flagler Street, Miami

Scheduled speakers include: Thomas Liberti, Chief, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, DOH; Kira Villamizar, HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator, Miami-Dade County Health Department and Dr. Ana Maria Polo, Host of Telemundo's "Caso Cerrado," program and the "Test 112,000 by 2012" Statewide Ambassador.

DOH and county health departments throughout the state will partner with numerous community-based organizations and leaders to demonstrate their commitment to reducing

HIV/AIDS disparities in Florida's Latino communities. Events are planned throughout the Florida for NLAAD. For more information or for a complete list of events and activities planned in your area, contact your local county health department or visit www.WeMakeTheChange.com.

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