

For Immediate Release

Feb. 7 is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Along with communities all over the nation, the Western North Carolina AIDS Project (WNCAP) will be honoring National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on February 7. Consistent with the national theme of this event, WNCAP urges residents of Western North Carolina to “Get Educated! Get Tested! Get Involved! Get Treated!”

Of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States, HIV/AIDS has affected Black Americans more than any other. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that Black Americans have more illness (although Black Americans account for about 13 percent of the U.S. population, Black Americans account for about 49 percent of the people who get HIV and AIDS), experience shorter survival times (Blacks with AIDS often don’t live as long as people of other races and ethnic groups with AIDS), and more deaths (for Black Americans, HIV/AIDS is a leading cause of death).

Free and confidential HIV testing is available every weekday at the Buncombe County Health Center, 35 Woodfin Street in downtown Asheville (250-5109), and also at Western North Carolina Community Health Services, 10 Ridgelawn Road in West Asheville (285-0622). Walk-ins are welcome at both locations, but appointments are preferred for individuals seeking testing at the Buncombe County Health Center.

Other testing locations across WNC or anywhere in the U.S. can be found by texting a zip code to “Know it” or searching the web at www.hivtest.org.

WNCAP health educators are available to facilitate group sessions focused on HIV/AIDS. WNCAP also provides prevention supplies and educational materials about HIV/AIDS, STDs, Hepatitis-C and harm reduction strategies. One-on-one consultation and information is also available. WNCAP services are free of charge.

A unique opportunity exists for African-American women to participate in a group session known as SISTA, which stand for Sisters Informing Sisters on Topics about AIDS. SISTA was developed for African-American women and consists of five two-hour sessions delivered in community settings. The sessions are gender and culturally relevant and include behavioral skills practice, lectures and discussion, role play and take home exercises.

For more information about SISTA or other WNCAP prevention programs and activities, please call 828-252-7489 or go the web at www.WNCAP.org.

The mission of WNCAP, founded in 1986, is to provide HIV-related services to the people of Western North Carolina through client services, prevention education and outreach in a collaborative and financially responsible manner.

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