



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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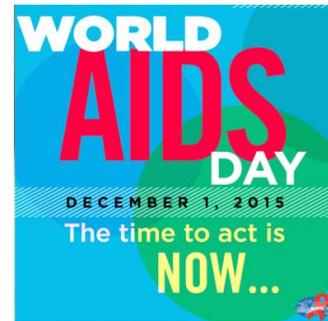
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**World AIDS Day 2015: *The Time to Act Is Now***

**Eau Claire, WI, December 1<sup>st</sup> 2015** – There is no better time than December 1<sup>st</sup>, World AIDS Day, to celebrate progress and recommit ourselves to achieving an AIDS-free generation. To move towards an AIDS-free generation in our community we need to reduce the number of new infections, increase access to care, and reduce the HIV-related health disparities and inequities. Eau Claire City-County Health Department (ECCHD) continues to focus on this vision by providing HIV partner services to 14 northwestern Wisconsin counties.

Partner services programs work by engaging HIV positive people and their partners through prevention counseling, partner notification and help with accessing HIV care services to stop the spread of HIV in Wisconsin. The ECCHD works closely with other local health departments, the Wisconsin Department of Public Health and organizations like AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin to ensure HIV positive people are getting the comprehensive services they need to live long and healthy lives.

In 2014, **226** new cases of HIV infection were diagnosed in Wisconsin. Of the 226 new cases:

- 78% were attributed to men who have sex with men including those who also injected drugs.
- 15% were attributed to high risk heterosexual contact.
- 7% were attributed to injection drug use

To reduce risk through sexual contact use condoms correctly every time you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex. Never inject drugs. If you do, use only sterile injection equipment and never share equipment with others.

Tremendous progress has been made in expanding access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care services. In the field of HIV prevention, we see remarkable advances with the use of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP is a one pill a day prevention option that can be prescribed by your doctor. This can help reduce a person's risk of getting HIV if they are exposed to the virus. When used consistently, several studies show that the risk of getting a HIV infection was up to 92% lower for people using PrEP versus those not using it (Centers for Disease Control).

In line with the National HIV/AIDS vision our community would like to be a place where new HIV infections are rare but when they do occur every person has access to high quality life-extending care, free from stigma and discrimination. To do this we must continue to work together. If you are interested in knowing more about HIV testing or HIV resources, please contact the Eau Claire City-County Health Department at 715-839-4718 or your local health department.