



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 26, 2014

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Pittsburgh Health Corps Supports Activities Promoting World AIDS Day

PITTSBURGH – The Pittsburgh Health Corps (PHC), an AmeriCorps community service program administered by the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), is supporting the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force (PATF) and its activities promoting World AIDS Day, December 1.

Areej Ali, a Pittsburgh native and PHC member placed with PATF, recruited and trained volunteers to help with assembling about 10,000 SafeSex kits for distribution around World AIDS Day.

The kits, which contain condoms and HIV/AIDS information, are intended to boost outreach capacity and testing for PATF and access to prevention and care for individuals, thereby reducing the disparities and stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS. According to ACHD statistics, HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects certain segments of society such as women, men who have sex with men (MSM) and African-American men.

Access to education and prevention information can help reduce these disparities and that's why people need to be made aware of the risks and empowered with knowledge about protection and prevention.

Stigma is another barrier to HIV/AIDS testing and treatment. Some people fear the stigma of a positive test result more than the virus itself. One in six HIV-positive individuals are unaware they have the virus.

"The best way to combat the stigma is to talk about the virus," said Ali, who as a PHC member helps PATF reach college students, speaking on campuses and spreading awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Ali teaches college students that there is something they can do, telling them to keep an open mind, get tested, encourage others to get tested and that everyone can help fight the stigma and cause a dramatic decrease in the rates of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

PATF is hosting these events on World AIDS Day, December 1, in partnership with (Pittsburgh) RED:

- The Galaxy Ball, 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. Wyndham Hotel, Oakland, voguing competition and free HIV testing.
- World AIDS Day Rally and March, 8:45 p.m. to 11 p.m., Carnegie Mellon University to University of Pittsburgh's William Pitt Union in Oakland, ending with a health fair, food and drag show.
- M2M Project's First Wednesday, 6 to 9 p.m., Cruze Bar, Strip District, voguing, food, free HIV testing.
- Free HIV Testing, 7:30 to 9 p.m., Judah Fellowship, Northside; December 2, 3:30 to 7:30 p.m., Christian Church, Wilksburg; and December 7, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Destiny of Faith.

More Information

Visit www.patf.org, www.facebook.com/PittsburghRED, or www.nationalhealthcorps.org/pittsburghh.

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