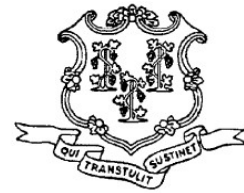


# News



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Connecticut Department of Public Health

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## **State Recognizes March 10<sup>th</sup> as National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day**

*HIV tests will be available free-of-charge at numerous locations throughout state*

**Hartford** – Local organizations throughout the state funded by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) will provide free HIV testing activities March 10<sup>th</sup> in recognition of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

“National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day recognizes the growing impact the HIV epidemic is having on women and girls throughout the country,” stated DPH Commissioner Dr. J. Robert Galvin. “The number of women and girls diagnosed with AIDS has grown significantly and it is important that they are aware of their HIV status and do what they can to protect themselves from this horrible disease.”

In 2005, women represented 26 percent of new AIDS diagnoses, compared to only 11 percent of new AIDS cases reported in 1990. Most women are infected with HIV through heterosexual contact and injection drug use. Women of color are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. AIDS is now the leading cause of death for African American women ages 25 to 34.

Federal health officials estimate that 25% of HIV infected people in the United States do not know their HIV status. In 2006, an estimated 56,300 new HIV infections occurred in the United States, representing a 40% increase over the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) previous estimate of 40,000 new infections per year. In Connecticut, 19,123 people have been reported with HIV infection and 8,263 have died since 1982.

There are several agencies throughout the state that will be offering free HIV testing at no charge. Please see the attached for a list of agencies or call (860) 509-7801. Anyone who is 13 years of age or older can be treated or tested confidentially and without parental consent.

The Connecticut General Assembly last year passed House Bill 6391, An Act Concerning Revisions to the HIV Testing Consent Law. This law, which went into effect July 1, 2009, facilitates routine HIV screening in health care settings by eliminating the requirement for a separate written or oral consent for HIV testing. Testing is still voluntary.

*The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state’s leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph) or call (860) 509-7270.*

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## **National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Activities**

### **Bridgeport - Greater Bridgeport Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program**

March 5, 2010, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. - Mount Aery Baptist Church, 73 Frank Street, Bridgeport: Offering dinner, free HIV testing and other health screenings. All women attending will receive a free personal gift bag.

### **Hartford**

March 10, 2010 - Soromundi Commons, 135 Broad Street, Hartford: Free testing and Voices (an HIV prevention intervention) (Latino Community Services)

### **New Haven**

March 10, 2010 - Crossroads, 54 East Ramsdell Street, New Haven: Free Testing (New Haven Health Department)

March 10, 2010 - Cornell Scott Hill Health Center, OB/GYN Clinic, 400 Columbus Avenue, New Haven: Free testing

March 10, 2010 - Yale New Haven Hospital, Adolescent Clinic and Women's Center all day, 20 York Street, New Haven: Free testing

### **Norwalk**

March 10, 2010, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. - Washington Village Housing Complex, Day Street, Norwalk: Free testing (Norwalk Health Department)

### **Waterbury**

March 10, 2010, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. – Grace Baptist Church, 65 Kingsbury Street, Waterbury: Free testing (Waterbury Health Department)