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# VOICES

The Voice of Delaware's HIV Community

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## 22nd AIDS Walk Registration and Fundraising Underway

Show your support for the 22nd Annual AIDS Walk Delaware by registering today, collecting pledges and marking your calendar for one of the statewide walks. All funds raised stay in Delaware to help the local community infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. This is the biggest fundraiser of the year. We're counting on the community to join in this event and make it a great success. As in years past the Wilmington walk will be held in Rockford Park. The event will be held Sunday, September 28, 2008. Check-in starts at noon and step-off is at 2 pm. All of the walks will be held rain or shine.



The Kent County and Sussex County walks will be held on Sunday, October 5. The Dover walk will be held at Silver Lake Recreation Area. The Sussex County walk is moving from Georgetown to Grove Park in Rehoboth Beach this year. The downstate walks begin with check-in at 1 pm, and the step-off at 2 pm.

Last year over 6,000 people attended the AIDS Walks and helped raise over \$207,000. The money raised was distributed to organizations and faith communities throughout Delaware that provide programs and services to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. This year we hope to raise \$275,000!

If you haven't already registered, it's simple. Registration is easy and free, and can be done on-line, or over the phone, in minutes. When signing up you may register as an individual walker, join a team or start a team yourself. The next step is to start collecting pledges.

If you work for a large company ask your HR department if they will match the funds that you raise. Some companies will match half of what you raise in pledges, others will match you dollar for dollar. You never know until you ask.

For more information, or to register, visit [www.aidswalkdelaware.org](http://www.aidswalkdelaware.org), or call 302-652-6776. Dogs are welcome, but must be kept on a leash at all times. Check out the website for all sorts of valuable information on topics ranging from fundraising tips to directions to the walk locations. We hope to see you there.



## National HIV Testing Day Promotes Early Diagnosis



June 27, 2008 was National HIV Counseling and Testing Day and organizations across all three counties observed the day with fairs and events to raise awareness of the need for testing. The Delaware Division of Public Health and its community partners provided free, rapid HIV testing to 351 people, statewide. Organizations also distributed the Planning Council's 2008 prevention survey which will be used to determine where HIV/AIDS resources are needed most. The CDC estimates that 25%, or more, of people infected with HIV are not aware of their status. This is why it's important to reach out to the public to bring attention to the need for regular screenings, especially for the most at risk populations.

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# Letter From the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

Several weeks ago the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released some very disturbing statistics about HIV/AIDS infection reporting in the United States. The CDC's latest estimate of infection is higher than previously recorded. In fact it is 40% higher than previously estimated. Although this is a significant increase and it is cause for alarm, there may be a silver lining in all of this.

Since this article broke on Saturday, August 2, 2008 from a report presented at the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, Mexico, I have seen more articles about HIV/AIDS in one week than I have in the past year. Articles about the rise of AIDS deaths in the American South, the enormous increase of HIV infection among the Latino community, the fact that abstinence only programs have NOT dramatically affected a significant decrease in HIV infection, the forgotten AIDS epidemic among American blacks, the lack of funding for prevention programs for men who have sex with men and how stigma still remains one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome in prevention programs. These are just some of the articles that have appeared in the past week!

In all, I've read eleven articles on HIV/AIDS in seven days from a multitude of sources. That's about an 80% increase in my estimation of media coverage over the past year. Not many years ago more than 5,000 reports and articles on HIV/AIDS appeared in U.S. newspapers, magazines and the media annually. Over the years, as HIV/AIDS deaths decreased, the subject of AIDS has flown under the radar with fewer and fewer mentions of it in the media.

To all of us working in the field, we have felt the loss of funding, the lack of media exposure, the silent increase of the infection rate among young MSM, women, African-Americans, seniors and the Latino communities. The hope is that these newly released statistics will have a direct affect on HIV/AIDS funding in the U.S., rejuvenate interest in the media on an epidemic that has NOT gone away, as well as initiate more awareness and community activism.

A new generation of Americans, straight and gay, young and old, male and female, black and brown, are becoming new statistics every day. Without everyone's help and commitment these statistics can easily return to the epic proportions of the 1980's. Our actions can change this trend by demonstrating to the community that everyone must accept responsibility and must become a part of a solution. Part of the solution lies in creating opportunities to further awareness, directing policy and by taking action. Action has always spoken louder than words! Together ... let's make a difference.

*Peter Houle*



The Delaware HIV Consortium is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating the spread of HIV/AIDS and to creating a seamless continuum of care for all people infected and affected in Delaware.

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# A "BIG" thank you...

## Casual Atmosphere Makes 4th Annual WOW Awards Gala a Delight

We would like to thank everyone who attended the 2008 WOW Awards Gala for making it a great success. The relaxed atmosphere at this year's event was popular with the attendees. Guests enjoyed a variety of exquisite appetizers and entrees, specialty drinks, the famous Moore Brother's wine bar and entertainment such as a caricaturist, magician, and steel drum band. The weather couldn't have been any more perfect and everyone enjoyed the sunset from the patio.

This year's special awardees included: Harriett Cauley, the Ally Award; Marco Ramos, the Community Award; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware, the Corporate Award; Denise Kitson, the Guardian Angel Award; the Honorable Ted Blunt, the Impact Award; Moore Brothers Wine Company, the Leadership Award; Joe Scarborough, the Volunteer of the Year Award; Baxter's Restaurant, the Humanitarian Award; Carolyn Savini, the Ryan White Award; and William Holloway, M.D. posthumously received the Visionary Award. We would like to thank all of our WOW sponsors including:



From left: Tammy Jones, Arlene Bincsik, Nita Holloway



Moore Brother's Wine Co. received the Leadership Award, and Tommy Bahama Ultra Premium Rum served a variety of speciality mojitos at their bar.

Hadfield's Seafood  
Saffron Fine Catering  
Clarion Hotel - The Belle,  
Iron Hill Brewery & Restaurant  
Planning Factory International  
Moore Brothers Wine Company  
Tibotec Therapeutics  
Bristol-Myers Squibb  
Augusta Grille, Kelly Snavely  
Pfizer, Delaware Today,  
PhRMA, BCBS of Delaware  
Tommy Bahama Ultra  
Premium Rum,  
Barron Marketing Communications



Guests enjoy drinks on the deck while watching couples have their caricatures drawn.

### New Employee Joins the Team

John Hinkson was hired in June to replace Carissa Pleiss as the communications coordinator. John graduated from the University of Delaware in 2007 with a B.A. in English with a journalism concentration. John was interested in working in the non-profit field and found the Consortium to be a great place to use his degree.



### Summer Intern Gets Right to Work

Megan Lawless, a junior at UD, has been invaluable and has worked on the WOW gala and the AIDS Walk. Megan volunteered at an orphanage for children with AIDS, in South Africa, in January 2008. "The Consortium was a way for me to get involved with AIDS issues close to home." Megan is working on her degree in international relations with minors in biology and economics. Upon graduation, she would like to work with international health issues.



# A Letter from Washington D.C. By Joe Scarborough, Client Advocate

## Red Ribbon Advocate puts his skills to work...

During the last week of July, thanks to a scholarship provided by the National AIDS Housing Coalition (NAHC), I had the opportunity to attend the National Alliance to End Homelessness annual conference in Washington D.C. The scholarship I received gives consumers like me a chance to attend conferences that we would otherwise not be able to afford. I found that the workshops covered a broad range of involvement, from service providers to client advocacy. Workshops offered by the NAHC were even specific to AIDS housing. Consumer scholarships like the one I received helped expand the diversity of the attendees from across the country. Networking with my fellow peer-advocates was not only inspirational, but helped me see first hand the homelessness issue on a national level, through the eyes of people who were living it.



In addition to workshops and round-table discussions, the conference gave participants the chance to meet with their congressmen and staff, by arranging "Hill Visits." A delegate from each state is assigned as Captain, and takes the responsibility for making the necessary arrangements and scheduling

appointments. During the conference, it is the duty of the Captain to meet with the others from their state and coordinate the states advocacy activities. Several Captains meetings are held by both the NAHC and the Alliance to End Homelessness to assist them with materials or anything else they may need. I proudly accepted the role, becoming the first NAHC scholarship recipient to act as State Captain. Over those three days in July, I shared in a common story with other clients from across the country, and learned from each individual. I was blessed to have spent time with "Howard," a former addict, and disabled man unable to walk or speak, who was now in stable housing and one of the most inspiring people I have ever met. I also had a chance to speak to staff members of all three of my congressmen. I am directly affected by the decisions that they make, and not only is there a place for me and my story in that decision, it is welcomed and needed. It was good to learn that no matter who we are, or what our cause, the doors and ears of our government are open to us. All we have to do is SPEAK UP.

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Joe Scarborough, with Sister Jean Rupertus, OSF, Program Director at House of Joseph II, at the conference in Washington D.C.



## John Baker Leaves AIDS Delaware After 12 Years

growth under his leadership, including the expansion of offices and services throughout the state. One of his greatest accomplishments was working with Peter Houle and the Delaware HIV Consortium to grow the AIDS Walk to a statewide event that in recent years has raised more than \$200K, annually.

Originally hired by AIDS Delaware in 1997, John came to head the agency in 2000. John's background in commercial banking was very helpful in securing a variety of funding for growth, especially as public funding decreased, as it still does today. John says he intends to stay connected with AIDS Delaware, especially in youth awareness programs.

At the GMHC John will be the Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations. "My new position will allow me to continue with my mission, and it enables me to reach more people." John's last day was August 8, 2008 and Deputy Director John Klein is fulfilling John Baker's duties until a new executive director is named.

## A Client's Voice

Leroy has been receiving rental assistance from the Delaware HIV Consortium's housing assistance program since June 1, 2008 when he moved into his own apartment in Wilmington. Before that he had been living with his brother, but Leroy wasn't given a key to the house and had to be in by 11 pm. "I was under a lot of stress there," Leroy says. There was a lot of tension and I wanted to get out, but I didn't have anywhere to go."

Like everyone else on the housing waiting list, Leroy waited four long years to obtain assistance. Before moving in with his brother, Leroy had spent months in the hospital due to back problems, but went from using a wheelchair to walking with a cane. The new apartment is located on the first floor and it's right next to the bus stop - both things Leroy loves about his apartment. "I'm just happy that I can wake up in my own place, take my meds, eat breakfast and be independent," says Leroy. He says he likes to get out during the day to visit with family and friends. He's staying strong by taking his medications every day, which can be attributed in part to the success of stable and affordable housing as provided by the rental voucher assistance program.

"I like to go out and talk to [needy] people about the programs that are out there to help them," Leroy says. "Visiting with other people with health problems makes me feel good, and it feels even better when I get to go back to my own place at the end of the day."

Continued from page 1...

Beautiful Gate Outreach Center tested 125 people at their event. This year's theme was "It's a Family Affair," stressing the importance of testing for persons of all ages and genders. HIV Counselor Coordinator, Suzanne Tait, said 65 men and 60 women of all ages were tested. "Had it not been for the downpours in the afternoon we probably would have tested even more."

CAMPsafe Program Director Sal Seeley, says 19 people got tested at CAMP Rehoboth. "Lots of new people, and those who are at high-risk got tested," says Sal. "That's really what's most important."

The Kent County Reproductive and Sexual Health Clinic tested 44 people, compared to just 27 in 2007. Senior Health Program Representative, Charlotte Robertson, says there were no preliminary positives to report, which is always good news.

Ray Collins, Contract Manager for the Division of Public Health, says 201 individuals in New Castle County, 89 from Kent County and 61 from Sussex County were tested. The CDC recommends that everyone age 13-64 receive routine HIV screenings as part of regular medical care. If you would like more information on where you can get tested call the Consortium office or visit our website.

Despite rising overall HIV prevalence and rising incidence in key populations, the CDC's budget for domestic HIV prevention has actually declined by about 20 percent since 2001.

### \$300K in Ryan White Carry-over Funds to be Distributed by the Delaware HIV Consortium

In July 2008 the Delaware Division of Public Health awarded the Delaware HIV Consortium an additional \$300,000 for HIV supportive services. These dollars are considered "carryover dollars", which means that they were unexpended dollars from an earlier fiscal year. The dollars supporting this award were carryover dollars from fiscal year 2006 that were reallocated by the federal government to the states and territories receiving Ryan White funds.

Nearly all of the \$300,000 will fund direct client service programs throughout the state. Effective July 1st, the Consortium was able to increase the reimbursement rate for HIV/AIDS case management services. This Fall the Consortium's housing program will use a portion of these dollars to support existing vouchers to clients, as well as to move a dozen clients off the housing program's waiting list.

The influx of carryover dollars provided some flexibility in the use of funds already in the Consortium budget. So far new contracts have been written for two agencies that lost the funding for their food programs during budget cuts last year: AIDS Delaware and the Ministry of Caring. Most importantly, the amount of service available through Emergency Financial Assistance Programs funded by Ryan White dollars was significantly increased. Total dollars allocated for client assistance was more than doubled, and program caps were raised.

## News & Events...



Rita Devlin Salvo and Alyson Lang hand out surveys at the LACC's block party

### 1st Annual "Keepin' It Real" Block Party at LACC

Twenty-six people were tested at The Latin American Community Center's first annual Keepin' It Real Block Party on Saturday, August 9, 2008. Brandywine Counseling provided rapid HIV testing in their mobile testing van. The event also featured information booths by the Consortium, AIDS Delaware, Each One Teach One, and others. Those who attended enjoyed free burgers and hot dogs as they danced to a DJ, viewed AIDS quilts and browsed information about HIV/AIDS and healthy lifestyles.

### Latino Population at High Risk for HIV

A recent report from the *Washington Post* highlights the sharp increase in HIV infections among the Latino population. According to a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 19 percent of all new AIDS cases in the U.S. occurred among the Latino population which currently makes up only 15 percent of the total population. The *Post* went on to discuss the cultural factors that often lead to these new infections. African Americans continue to have the highest rate of new HIV infections, but the Latino population is the fastest growing minority group in the U.S.

Many Latinos, especially immigrants, are disconnected from being educated about HIV/AIDS or getting tested. Language barriers make it harder for Latinos to get the information they need. Illegal immigrants are often fearful of getting tested (especially when they're asked to provide ID) or receiving treatment, because they fear arrest and deportation.

A *New York Times* article from August 7 discussed Mexican men who have sex with men (MSM) but keep the act a secret. Many gay Mexicans report strong cultural disapproval of homosexuality. The majority of MSM in Mexico do not identify themselves as gay. And, many who do engage in MSM activity often do not use condoms, putting their female partners at risk, too. One Mexican man says he tries to spread the message of condom use to MSM without much luck. He says the response he hears most is that because they are not gay themselves, they are not at risk.

While the HIV prevalence in the general population is 0.3 percent, among MSM it approaches 15 percent, according to the *Times*. In major U.S. cities, according to the *Post*, as many as 1 in 4 gay Hispanic men is HIV infected. When people delay getting tested they risk passing the infection on to others. They also put themselves at higher risk since the earlier a person is diagnosed and begins taking the proper medications, the longer their life expectancy.

### Southern AIDS Crisis in the United States

A July report by the Southern AIDS Coalition (SAC) says that 52 percent of all HIV positive (not AIDS defined) persons in the U.S. live in the South, with Delaware included in the 17-state southern region. And, while AIDS deaths elsewhere in the country remained steady or fell between 2001 and 2006, the South saw a 10 percent rise in AIDS deaths.

The South contains only 36 percent of the US population, but has 16 of the top 20 metropolitan areas (80%) with the highest rate of AIDS cases, in 2006. The report, titled "Southern States Manifesto 2008," also noted that the South has a higher percentage of new AIDS cases among persons living in non-metropolitan areas than other regions of the U.S. It is reported that rural residents have a harder time accessing the appropriate medical care, sometimes having to drive hours to reach an infection disease specialist.

Highlighted elsewhere in the report is the fact that there is still a lot of stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and how it is acquired, especially in the South. MSM who live in rural areas are highly stigmatized, especially among black men. The report states, "Bisexually active men may deny risky behavior or expect women partners to take responsibility for health checks, including for HIV/AIDS. Ironically the secrecy caused by this stigma leads to increasing HIV rates for women, especially black women." This is another example of why getting tested for HIV on a yearly basis, even those in "monogamous relationships," is a critical part of keeping yourself informed and healthy, says the SAC.

# What's keeping us busy...

## Consortium Receives \$10,000 Award From Local Foundation

In June, the Delaware HIV Consortium received a \$10,000 grant from a local foundation that wishes to remain anonymous. The proceeds will be used to fund various activities of the Consortium and the Planning Council. The Planning Council is a statewide organization comprised of over 100 individuals including clinicians, case managers, mental health workers, prevention educators, counselors, and persons infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS. Planning Council members play a vital role in determining how HIV/AIDS should be addressed in Delaware and where federal and state funding for prevention and treatment should be allocated. Its sub-groups conduct surveys, hold focus group and town hall meetings, produce a Resource Guide, and offer educational outreach opportunities for the community.

Grant funds are being used to buy educational materials, augment the costs of printing the new Resource Guide, and defray meeting ex-

penses. "Planning Council members are devoted workers," said Rita Devlin Salvo, Manager of Community Planning. "Right now, for instance, they are working on the 2009 - 2011 Resource Guide. The previous 90 page guide was distributed to 6,000 clients and service providers. It is a valuable tool, and everyone is ready and waiting for the update." Peter Houle, Executive Director of the Consortium added, "We are very grateful for the support. We seek to leverage funding from a variety of sources to help us in our efforts, and we are thrilled to have a new foundation partnering with us."



The Consortium's new tabletop display board debuts at the 1st Annual "Keepin' It Real Block Party" at the LACC.

## National HIV Testing Day Kicks-Off Prevention Survey

The Planning Council partnered with the Department of Public Health and local testing organizations to kick-off the use of its 2008 Prevention Survey at nine statewide National HIV Testing Day sites on June 27, 2008. At the same time, the survey was distributed to outreach and educational sites for continued completion through September 30.

The 2008 Prevention Survey asks basic questions regarding behaviors that can put a person at risk for contracting or spreading HIV/AIDS. Said Rita Devlin Salvo, "The 2008 Prevention Survey is one of a number of tools utilized by the Planning Council to examine the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Delaware. Other tools include consumer surveys, provider surveys, focus group meetings, and agency capacity surveys." By examining people's perception about the disease, the Delaware HIV Planning Counsel can determine educational needs in the community for people of all ages and make funding recommendations regarding outreach services.

The survey also is being used at community events throughout the state. Salvo commented, "We've received over 500 completed forms to date. We are hopeful that we'll have useful information to analyze."

## Hopeful Signs in Housing

In August, twenty-three people were taken off the Housing Assistance Program's wait list. While this is encouraging news it should be noted that more than seventeen new people have been added to the list. Currently there are 322 people on the wait list, and they spend an average of 4 years on the list before they receive housing assistance.

### SAVE THE DATE

.....  
WOW Awards Gala  
Saturday, April 25, 2009  
Hosted by the Augusta Grille  
Clarion Hotel - The Belle  
1612 N. DuPont Hwy.  
New Castle, DE 19720

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