



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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#### **Event encourages HIV awareness in black community**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day will be held Feb. 7. This year's theme is "Get Educated, Get Involved, Get Tested." To call attention to the crisis of HIV/AIDS in the black community, more than 60 cities nationwide will participate in the observance.

In Montgomery, East Central Alabama HIV Prevention Network, a coalition of universities, service agencies and faith organizations, is planning an HIV awareness event Feb. 7 between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Dexter Avenue/King Memorial Baptist Church.

The objective of the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day is to encourage individuals to become educated about HIV and how to prevent becoming infected, to get tested and to know their HIV status as well as get involved in advocating for the resources needed to fight the disease.

In 2003 blacks represented 70 percent of all reported HIV infections and AIDS cases in Alabama, even though the state's population is only 26 percent black. In 2003 black males made up 45.2

percent of all cases and black females made up 24.8 percent of all cases.

The epidemic significantly affects both men and women in the black community. In 2003 the rate of HIV/AIDS diagnosis for black males was six times the rate for white males. The rate of HIV/AIDS diagnosis for black females was more than 12 times that for white females. Black women made up 81 percent of newly diagnosed cases in 2003, among women.

Local service organizations and county health departments are available throughout the state for HIV testing, treatment services and referrals. For further information regarding locations and telephone numbers for service providers please contact the Alabama Department of Public Health HIV/AIDS Division at 1-800-228-0469.

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