



Working Together for the Health of Our Communities

Asian Health Services · Axis Community Health · La Clínica · LifeLong Medical Care

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### **Routine Screening for HIV to Increase in Alameda County**

**Oakland, Calif., June 23, 2014** – Eight local community health organizations in Alameda and Contra Costa counties are working to increase the number of patients who are offered an HIV test as part of routine medical visits. These organizations have implemented universal, opt-out HIV testing into routine medical visits at their clinics and hospitals, aiming to test more than 50,000 people this year and link to care those who are newly diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Between January and May 2014, these routine screening efforts have identified **41 new HIV infections** in Alameda County.

Participating health organizations include:

- Alameda Health Consortium clinics: LifeLong Medical Care, La Clínica de la Raza, Tri-City Health Center, and Asian Health Services
- Highland Hospital Emergency Department
- UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland
- Roots Community Health Alliance
- HIV Education and Prevention Project of Alameda County (HEPPAC)

In Alameda County, the HIV epidemic is expanding. And 16% of those infected with HIV in the United States don't know that they have it. That means that more than 800 HIV-positive individuals in Alameda County could be unaware of their status—and could be spreading the virus to others.

"I applaud the efforts of the collaboration in Alameda County to provide routine HIV screenings," said Congresswoman Barbara Lee. "With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, thousands of individuals are gaining access to care for the first time. With more collaborations like the one based in Alameda County, we can begin to reach our collective goal of achieving an AIDS-free generation."

The routine testing expansion is made possible by Gilead Sciences, through a program known as Frontlines of Communities in the United States (FOCUS). FOCUS is designed to develop replicable model partnerships that embody best practices in HIV screening and linkage to care across America. The program has 94 partnerships in 11 regions across the United States that are heavily affected by HIV, including the Oakland area. The partnerships aim to make routine HIV screening for adults and adolescents a standard of medical care in order to reduce the number of undiagnosed individuals with HIV, decrease the number of those who are diagnosed late and ensure strong linkage to care.

Oakland's expanded HIV testing is conducted at 30 separate clinical sites serving the broadest possible range of at-risk populations, including high-risk women, school-aged youth and hard-hit ethnic minority populations. FOCUS support of the eight community partnerships will increase tests completed in the

county by approximately 50,000 in 2014, and prioritize linking new HIV-positive individuals to care. Identifying and linking new HIV-positive individuals to care has the potential to avert hundreds of new HIV infections in the East Bay region over the coming years.

There are more than 5,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Alameda County, with an average of 200 new diagnoses discovered each year. African Americans make up the majority of new HIV diagnoses, and cases among males are 6.3 times higher than females. Of the women diagnosed, 58% are African American and about half of the diagnoses are attributed to heterosexual contact (Source: [http://www.acphd.org/media/328119/hiv\\_epi\\_2013.pdf](http://www.acphd.org/media/328119/hiv_epi_2013.pdf))