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PRESS RELEASE

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WORLD AIDS DAY

Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Community by Community

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – In observance of World AIDS Day on December 1st, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is joining local partners in recognizing the achievements made in HIV Prevention. World AIDS Day is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to remember those who have lost their lives to AIDS-related illness. This year's theme is "*Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Community by Community*".

The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to get tested. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](http://www.cdc.gov), about one in seven people in the United States who have HIV don't know that they are HIV positive. Some people who test positive for HIV were not aware of their risk or need for testing. CDC recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care. People with the following risk factors should get tested more often.

- Men who have sex with other men
- Sex with an HIV-positive partner
- More than one sex partner
- Injection drug use
- Exchanged sex for drugs or money
- Diagnosed with or sought treatment for another [sexually transmitted disease](#) such as Gonorrhea, Syphilis and Chlamydia

In Santa Barbara County, the burden of HIV/AIDS cases remained steady in 2018.

- There were 32 newly reported HIV infected cases of which 31% were simultaneously diagnosed with AIDS
- 549 residents living with HIV/AIDS
- 34% of newly diagnosed HIV cases were co-infected with an additional sexually transmitted disease

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HIV is a preventable disease. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an HIV prevention strategy in which antiretroviral drugs are used to protect HIV-negative people from HIV infection. PrEP has the potential to prevent HIV among individuals at very high risk for becoming infected with HIV, and provides individuals, clinicians, and HIV prevention workers with another option for HIV prevention. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), when taken consistently, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection in people who are at high risk by up to 92%.

For more information and to view the 2018 HIV Annual Report, visit www.sbcphd.org/hiv