

NoFLAC News

The Official Newsletter of the Northwest Florida AIDS Consortium

Winter 2009

TIS THE SEASON

This time of year is full of wonderful things, like quality time with family and friends, hot cocoa, and reading by a fire, just to name a few. We hope this issue of NoFLAC News is just another small thing that will bring you joy this holiday season!

This edition of NoFLAC News contains great articles, including information on World AIDS Day (page 2) and the decrease in HIV/AIDS mortality in Florida (page 2). As before, we have also spotlighted staff members, agencies, and websites that are making huge differences in the lives of our consumers (page 3) and a list of important announcements (page 4).

Remember, this is *your* newsletter. We want to know your thoughts, concerns, and ideas. To submit an article for future editions of the NoFLAC News, please refer to the information below. We look forward to hearing what you have to say!



GLOBAL HIV RATES DECLINE

There is great news: new HIV infections worldwide have decreased by 17 percent over the past eight years! The epidemics in both the Caribbean and Latin America remained stable, while areas like Sub-Saharan Africa, Africa, India, and East Asia, where the pandemic was at its worst, experienced some of the greatest reductions in cases.

Improved treatment and testing are believed to have influenced the decline in cases. Four million people worldwide are on life-saving HIV drugs, which is a tenfold increase over the past five years.

While this is certainly great news, experts warn that the public must not become complacent. While many nations have experienced decreases, the United States is maintaining stable numbers (around 50,000 new HIV infections a year since 2000), and other high income countries are facing increases in cases. In Europe, new HIV cases doubled between 2004 and 2007.

“This is not cured,” said Dr. Margaret Fischl, AIDS researcher at the University of Miami. “The progress now is unmatched. To stop now would negate what took three decades to achieve.”

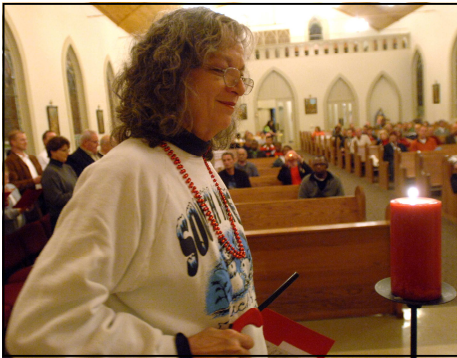
NoFLAC News is published quarterly by the Northwest Florida AIDS/HIV Consortium. Submissions may be sent via email to NoFLACNews@gmail.com. The deadline for Spring 2010 NoFLAC News is March 12, 2010.

NoFLAC News staff reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and content.

WORLD AIDS DAY

Since 1988, organizations around the world have observed December 1st as World AIDS Day. This event was designed to educate the public on the estimated 33 million people who are currently living with HIV or AIDS and the over 25 million people who have died of AIDS since 1981.

North Florida did not have a shortage of great events, and many people braved the rainy weather to attend. Here are just a few of the events that happened in our area:



Lighting of a candle during the World AIDS Day event at St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

Credit: Ben Twingley, staff photographer, Pensacola News Journal. Used with permission.

- The Pensacola World AIDS Day Committee held a ceremony of remembrance at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Pensacola. Mayor Wiggins attended the event and read the World AIDS Day proclamation; Reverend Sandy O'Stein provided an invocation and benediction; the St. Joseph's Catholic Church and Holy Cross Metropolitan Community Church choirs sang; and local Girl Scouts, who create a memorial quilt annually, presented the 2009 memorial quilt.
- AIDS Healthcare Foundation and the University of West Florida held AIDS Compassion and Awareness Week. The events included a screening of *Girl, Positive*, a panel discussion, free HIV testing, music, poetry, art, and a viewing of the Pensacola memorial quilt.
- Gulf Breeze United Methodist Church held a candle-lighting ceremony. Each participant lit two candles: one for a person they knew with the disease and one for a person they did not know.



UWF World AIDS day discussion panel participants.

DECLINE SEEN IN HIV/AIDS DEATHS IN FLORIDA

Information from Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, Surveillance Section

Statewide, and in many counties, a decrease in both the number and rate of deaths due to complications of HIV/AIDS has been confirmed after a detailed analysis of vital statistics data reported between 1989 and 2008. A sharp decline in deaths was first noted in Florida and nationwide between 1995 and 1998 concurrent with the availability of more effective combinations of HIV medicines. Numbers of reported cases and deaths were fairly level between 1999 and 2006 and decreased somewhat in both 2007 and 2008. In 2008, both the reported number of cases and the rate of deaths decreased by 7%. Statewide, deaths in 2008 declined for all persons and most racial ethnic subgroups except for black males and Hispanic females.

The data suggests that the decline in HIV/AIDS deaths may be due to progress in effectiveness of treatments, better linkage to care, increased access to testing and earlier detection of infection, and better adherence to medications.

The data was based on a review of vital statistics data only and includes persons who resided in Florida who died of HIV/AIDS-related causes (as recorded on the death certificate) whether they were a reported case in Florida or not. Further research is being conducted to evaluate causes of death and to further enhance the completeness of this information.

Cause of Death Data among Persons Aged 25-44 in 2008:

- Overall, HIV was the 6th leading cause of death for all persons in this age group (down from 5th in 2007),
- HIV was the 1st leading cause among blacks,
- HIV was the 6th leading cause of death among males and the 4th leading cause among females (down from 3rd in 2007).

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: MEET DR. BARBARA WADE, MD, FACP

Submitted by Scott Mickley, Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program Office

Dr. Wade is the founder and medical director of the Ryan White funded HIV/AIDS Clinic in Pensacola and has been treating HIV patients since the beginning of the pandemic. Dr. Wade is widely recognized for her expertise in the treatment of HIV/AIDS, and many of her patients have been enjoying the benefits of her knowledge and superior care for many years.



Dr. Barbara Wade

On a more personal note, although Dr. Wade is very well known for her professionalism, her patients also find her to be a very compassionate practitioner who takes a sincere interest in their well-being. In our longtime professional association, Dr. Wade has frequently stepped outside her professional role to demonstrate how much she truly cares for patients, celebrating their successes and grieving their loss. Recently, she extended her role even further by establishing the non-profit HIV Care Center, Inc. Dr. Wade took on this task to secure funding to better provide for patient's unmet needs that are barriers to their care. We are very fortunate to have such a highly regarded, dedicated, competent, and caring physician as our Ryan White Medical Care leader. To learn more about Dr. Wade, please visit <http://www.infectioncenter.com>.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT: OASIS

Submitted by Butch McKay of OASIS

Okaloosa AIDS Support and Informational Services, Inc. (OASIS) was a dream of David Neal, a young man living with AIDS. When David arrived in Okaloosa County to visit family and friends, he found that there were no services for people living with the disease. His dream of establishing an organization for people living with HIV/AIDS became a reality in October 1991 when OASIS became a 501(C)3 agency serving the HIV positive community. Although David died the following April, his dream still lives today.

OASIS provides a wide range of services to Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties, including case management, targeted testing for high risk men who have sex with men, and HIV education and prevention services for heterosexual African Americans. Each year, OASIS holds a Positive Living HIV Treatment and Prevention Conference for individuals living with HIV/AIDS and those who work to support them. Finally, OASIS manages the GEARS Center in Pensacola, a drop in center for gay and bisexual men between the ages of 18 and 29.

OASIS is located at 4 Jackson Street NE in Fort Walton Beach. The phone number is 850-314-0950.

HIV/AIDS RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT: FIRST CALL FOR HELP

Submitted by Jennifer Benz of the Center for Prevention and Treatment of Infections

Trying to wade through the exhaustive list of agencies in the community can often be overwhelming. A local resource funded by United Way helps providers and consumers with this task. The mission of First Call for Help is to "provide the public with **FREE** comprehensive, current, and accurate information and referrals that address health and human service needs." First Call for Help has served as a vital resource for our HIV community by doing the legwork that allows providers the ability to quickly and effectively obtain resource information for individuals who are in need.

First Call for Help offers information on community resources in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Calhoun, Jackson, Holmes, and Washington Counties. They can be reached at 850-595-5905 from 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Saturday and 1 to 5pm on Sunday. In addition, individuals may utilize their resource-packed website at www.fcfh.info that includes a search engine of community resources as well as single page resource lists which can be printed and utilized by providers to direct consumers to local agencies for services such as food assistance or financial information.

Announcements

- Ryan White Services at Sacred Heart Health System in Pensacola is offering a women's support group designed to bring HIV positive women together to share their concerns of living with HIV/AIDS. The group, named Live Your Life Out Loud, meets Thursday mornings from 10:00am until noon in the Physician's Conference Room at Sacred Heart Hospital. The group is open to all female clients, with case manager referral. For more information, please call 850-416-4150 to speak to a SHHS Ryan White staff member.
- It is not too late to get your seasonal or H1N1 flu shots. You should consider getting the flu shot, even if you have already had the flu. The seasonal and H1N1 vaccines are both available, free of charge, at the Escambia CHD. Additionally, if you have not had pneumococcal vaccine in the past five years, you will want to update that as well. You can get all three of these vaccines at the same visit. To learn more about the novel H1N1 virus, please call the Florida DOH Hotline at 1.877.352.3581. or visit the CDC website at http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/hiv_flu.htm. There is an HIV/AIDS specific H1N1 fact sheet available at <http://www.cfenet.ubc.ca>.
- The 13th annual Positive Living Conference for the Prevention & Treatment of HIV Disease will be held March 12-14, 2010 at the Ramada Plaza Beach Resort in Fort Walton Beach. Applications will be posted on the OASIS website (<http://www.aidsoasis.org>) in December. Applications go fast, so please get yours in early! For more information, call 850-314-0950.
- OASIS would like to thank the Area 1 care system for their support during the "Miles of Smiles" grant competition.
- OASIS will be hosting a client Christmas party on December 21 at 6 p.m. at the OASIS office.
- The Okaloosa CHD Ryan White program welcomes Joan Lio, RN and Donna Taylor, RN to their team.

UPCOMING HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAYS:

- **February 7th** - National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (<http://www.blackaidsday.org>)
- **March 1st through March 7th** - The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS (<http://www.balmingilead.org/programs/weekofprayer2009>)
- **March 10th** - National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (<http://www.womenshealth.gov/nwghaad>)
- **March 20th** - National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (<http://www.nnaapc.org>)

Northwest Florida AIDS Consortium (NoFLAC)

Mission Statement

The mission of the Consortium is to plan a comprehensive array of HIV/AIDS services spanning from prevention to early intervention and patient care through active, open and inclusive community planning processes that emphasize delivery of quality and effective services to all clients and communities affected by HIV/AIDS within the boundaries of DOH Area 1 (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties).

Consortium Vision Statement

The vision of the Consortium is: "Public and private individuals and agencies working cooperatively in an atmosphere of mutual trust, dignity and respect to plan a seamless continuum of accessible, high quality services for all people of Area 1 affected by HIV/AIDS across the lifespan."

Area 1 HIV/AIDS Resources Telephone Directory

Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program
595-0260, 6345, 6337, 6635
<http://escambiahealth.com/hiv/hiv.htm>

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Center for Prevention & Treatment of Infections
HIV Care Center Inc
476-3131
<http://www.infectioncenter.com/hiv-care-center>

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AIDS Healthcare Foundation
1-800-832-0778
<http://www.aidshealth.org/>

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Okaloosa County Health Dept - Ryan White Part C Clinic
833-9240 ext. 2153 (Fort Walton Beach)
http://www.floridashealth.com/chdOkaloosa/Services/Clinical_Services.html

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Appetite for Life
470-9111
<http://www.appetite4life.org/>

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Lutheran Services Florida
497-7157
<http://www.lsfnet.org/1/Services/Adult/RyanWhiteAIDS.htm>

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AIDS OASIS
314-0950 (Fort Walton Beach)
http://www.aidsosis.org/AIDSoasis/About_Us.html

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SHAPE Program
494-7171

Community Information Network, Inc.
470-9155
<http://www.cinpcola.org/>

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Santa Rosa Minority HIV/AIDS Task Force
623-2616 (Milton)

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Okaloosa Minority HIV/AIDS Task Force
682-4186 (Crestview)

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Case Management Services at Sacred Heart Hospital
416-6833
<http://www.sacred-heart.org/hiv aids.asp>

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Children's Medical Services – ID Clinic
484-5040
<http://www.cms-kids.com/contact/regions/pensacola.html>

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The Seton Center (OB/GYN)
484-9400
<http://www.sacred-heart.org/page.asp?ID=98>

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The Florida AIDS Hotline
1-800-FLA-AIDS
<http://www.211bigbend.org/hotlines/hiv/index.htm>

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CDC - AIDS Information
1-800-232-4636 and 1-800-232-6348 TTY
<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/>