



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

Office of Communications

*Dori Henry
Karen Black
410-767-6490*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Maryland Commemorates the 12th Annual National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.
The 2012 theme is
“I Am My Brother/Sister’s Keeper: Fight HIV/AIDS”.

Baltimore, MD (February 7, 2012) – The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s (DHMH) Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration (IDEHA) will observe National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD) on February 7. DHMH joins national African American organizations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local public health agencies’ efforts to address the disproportionate impact of the HIV epidemic in African American communities throughout the nation. African Americans have the highest rates of HIV among all racial/ethnic groups in the nation.

“People should talk openly about risk behaviors and encourage their friends and loved ones to get tested for HIV,” said DHMH Secretary Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. “If you or someone you know is living with HIV, get treatment. It can save your life and theirs.”

DHMH is committed to achieving the National HIV/AIDS Strategy goal of reducing HIV-related disparities. Many local health departments and community-based organizations throughout the State are engaged in activities to increase awareness about HIV in African American communities.

“Approximately 78% of Maryland’s HIV cases are among African Americans,” said Heather Hauck, Director of IDEHA. “Initiatives across the state, to increase access to health care and address health disparities, will help improve HIV health outcomes in Maryland.”

According to the CDC, despite representing only 14 % of the US population in 2009, African Americans accounted for 44% of all new HIV infections in that year. In Maryland, as of the end of 2010, 1-in-55 African-American men and 1-in-98 African-American women were living with HIV.

For information about HIV prevention, testing, treatment and support services, please call 410-767-5227 or go to <http://ideha.dhmh.maryland.gov> . You can visit www.nationalblackaidsday.org to find NBHAAD for events near you.