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For Immediate Release
February 3, 2011

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Federal Report Highlights High Male-to-Male HIV Transmission Rates in City *City of Milwaukee Health Department Joins Community Partners to Increase Awareness on National Black HIV/ AIDS Day*

HIV cases among young Black men who have sex with men increased significantly throughout Wisconsin, but particularly in Milwaukee County, over the last decade, federal health officials announced Thursday.

The report, published in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, found that the increases in HIV rates among young Black men who have sex with men are primarily due to engagement in high risk sexual behavior and non-disclosure of HIV status.

"We have been aware of this issue for some time and have been taking proactive steps to address the rising rates of HIV among men who have sex with men in our city," said Mayor Tom Barrett. "I encourage everyone, but particularly African Americans and Hispanics, to get tested so that they know their HIV status."

On Monday, February 7, the Health Department in partnership with UMOS and the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin will provide free and confidential HIV and STD testing to recognize National Black HIV/ AIDS Awareness Day.

The event will be held at Heartlove Place, located at 3229 N. Martin Luther King Drive, from 3 pm - 7 pm.

Last summer, Commissioner Baker unveiled the city's multi-phased plan to address Milwaukee's high HIV rates by announcing a partnership with Diverse and Resilient, Inc. to help reach young African-American men who have sex with men (MSM).

Over the past six months the group has developed a framework for HIV prevention among young Black men who have sex with men in the community. Results from their findings will be ready this summer.

"The findings from the CDC study are not surprising and reflect trends that we've been seeing nationally," said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. "The City of Milwaukee Health Department is committed to addressing HIV rates in our city and is working closely with targeted community organizations to provide HIV education and promote risk behavior prevention and reduction throughout the community and specifically to the MSM population."

In addition to HIV testing, the Health Department offers screening for sexually transmitted infections (STDs), HIV counseling, medical case management for women living with HIV, presentations to community groups, and participation in health fairs.

Think Health. Act Now!