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Dear friends and colleagues:

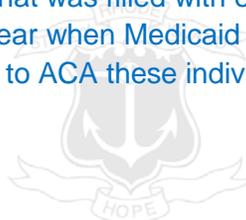
World AIDS Day, observed on 1 December every year, is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. The United Nations has once again proclaimed “*Getting to Zero*” as the campaign theme for World AIDS Day. That means zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

The National World AIDS Day theme is similar to the global theme, and is *Focus, Partner, Achieve: An AIDS-Free Generation*.



World AIDS Day holds a special meaning to me. Over the many years I have been in this field, I have had the privilege of witnessing some unbelievable achievements in this "battle." Today we find there are more people living with AIDS and HIV than ever before. ***The key word here is living!!!*** In the first decade of the epidemic we endured many, many deaths due to inadequate treatments and the lack of accessible and available healthcare. Today, pharmacological interventions have increased the possibilities for people living with HIV so that they may achieve viral suppression. ***As a matter of fact, more than 87% of those people living with HIV that are enrolled in the Rhode Island Ryan White program, are virally suppressed (due to the availability of and access to life saving HIV medications).***

In addition, we are so proud that more than 250 people living with HIV in Rhode Island were able to secure some form of health insurance due to the Patient Protection and Affordability Act (ACA). 2014 unfolded as a year that was filled with excitement and opportunity for those in the state living with HIV. It was a year when Medicaid expansion efforts were a triumph for so many people living with HIV. Prior to ACA these individuals had no health insurance, and



now are able to access care as they need it. Of course, the Ryan White program is still going strong, and for those that do not qualify for Medicaid and/or can't afford health insurance, Ryan White is maintained as the safety net to keep people healthy and alive.

As you look forward to the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, I ask that you simply reserve some time on 1 December to think about all of the successes we have had regarding HIV care and treatment. Perhaps you may find some time to participate in one of the below World AIDS Day events in the state.

Please, please remember that HIV has not gone away: In Rhode Island we estimate approximately 2500 people are living with HIV. About 450 of these Rhode Islanders do not know they are infected. **Getting tested for HIV is the best strategy for successfully fighting this virus.** Nationally, the CDC reports that about 50,000 people get infected with HIV each year. In 2010, there were around 47,500 new HIV infections in the United States. About 1.1 million people in the United States were living with HIV at the end of 2010, the most recent year this information was available. Of those people, about 16% do not know they are infected.

Encourage your friends and family to honor those whom have passed from HIV, those living with HIV and for a future where we can "Get to Zero."

The following Rhode Island events are free and open to the public:

RISD Recognizes World AIDS Day 2014

November 17, 2014 through December 5, 2014

Fleet Library, Mandle Building, 15 Westminster St., Providence

4 panels from the National AIDS Quilts

For more information: Visit: events.risd.edu or contact: Intercultural Student Engagement (ise@risd.edu or 401.277.4957)

Rhode Island World AIDS Day Statehouse Event

Monday, December 1, 2013, 12:00 noon

Rhode Island Statehouse

Featured Speakers: Governor Lincoln Chafee, Representative Christopher Blazewski, Dr. Amy Nunn, Josh Kilby, Brandon Fernandes

Sponsored by Rhode Island Coalition for HIV Prevention

Contact Person: Kristen Pfeiffer, MSW; kpfeiffer@lifespan.org

A Night of Sonnet and Song

Monday, December 1, 2014, Doors open at 5:30pm

St. Anne's Art and Cultural Center

84 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Sponsored by The Agape Center of Community Care Alliance and Thundermist Health Center, Contact: lcohen@famresri.org

Alternate Endings: The Ongoing HIV/AIDS Epidemic

Featuring videos by 7 artists/collaborates

Monday, December 1, 2014, 8pm

Free (suggested \$5 donation)

AS220 Black Box Theatre

95 Empire Street, Providence

Sponsored by: Visual AIDS and Headmaster Magazine

Focus, Partner, Achieve: An AIDS-free Generation

Wednesday, December 3, 2014, 7-8:30pm

URI Alumni Center

73 Upper College Road, Kingston, RI

Parking off Fortin Road at rear of center

Sponsored by: AIDS Quilt RI, Anna's Workshop, URI Public Relations Strategies Class

With warmest regards,

Paul

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