



## MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

February 5, 2008

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### **Multnomah County Health Department campaign to focus on sexual health in the African American community**

*Social marketing campaign will launch February 7*

#### **WHAT**

Multnomah County Health Department will launch its first social marketing effort to educate African American youth, young adults and community members about sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) and the importance of testing and treatment. The education campaign features a variety of culturally-specific media including a website ([knowsexpdx.com](http://knowsexpdx.com)), brochures profiling local sexual health services for youth, as well as posters and postcards.

#### **WHEN & WHERE**

Campaign Launch

Thursday, February 7, 2008

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Multnomah County Board Room

501 SE Hawthorne

Portland, OR 97214

#### **WHY**

The campaign will support efforts to prevent the spread of STD's and HIV/AIDS in the African American Community. The February 7 launch date coincides with National African American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2008. This national mobilization effort is designed to encourage African Americans across the United States and Territories to **get educated, get tested, get involved and get treated** for HIV/AIDS, as it continues to impact black communities.

According to the Multnomah County Health Department, African Americans in Multnomah County experience five times the rates of Chlamydia and gonorrhea, compared to non-Hispanic whites. STD rates can be affected by lack of insurance, limited access to testing and treatment, and fear of testing and treatment. "An additional factor," according to Tricia Tillman, Multnomah County Health Department program manager, "is pervasive media marketing that portrays hyper-sexual imagery of African Americans."

The campaign emphasizes the importance of having information about the risks of sexual activity and the benefits of testing and treatment, as well as delaying sexual initiation, so that youth and young adults can make informed choices about their sexual health. The campaign also encourages the people youth most want to hear from – parents, teachers, health care providers, and faith leaders – to learn how to support youth in making healthy choices about sex.

Posters and postcards will disseminate messages about delaying sexual involvement, risky behavior, condom use, talking about sex, as well as testing and treatment. This social marketing effort was developed by department staff with cultural ties to the African American community along with youth and community members. A larger community mobilization of businesses, bars, church groups and a consortium of STD/HIV service providers is planned to aggressively promote safer sex among youth and young adults.

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