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Rapid HIV Testing Services Available in West Philadelphia Community

Philadelphia, PA, November 27, 2006 ----- On September 1, 2006, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Minority Health provided funding to a local partnership to develop increased capacity in serving individuals at risk of HIV/AIDS. Funding has been awarded through the Minority Community Health Partnership HIV/AIDS Demonstration Grant Program. This program seeks to improve the health status targeting HIV/AIDS in, minority populations through health promotion, prevention and education activities. This program is intended to test community-based interventions on reducing HIV/AIDS disparities among racial and ethnic minority populations, and demonstrate the effectiveness of community-based partnerships involving non-traditional partners at the local level.

One of only two programs funded in the Philadelphia area, the West Philadelphia Minority Health Collaborative (WPMHC), an HIV/AIDS demonstration program, is a collaborative venture of the World Health Care Infrastructures (WHCI), formerly known as The Philadelphia AIDS Consortium, the AIDS Care Group (ACG) and Turning the TIDE. Launched in 2006, WPMHC was developed to meet a growing need for prevention education, outreach and educational services for African Americans and Latinos living with HIV/AIDS, particularly African American and Latina women living in West Philadelphia.

Rev. Jonathan Ford, Executive Director of Turning the TIDE, said, "this creative partnership funded by the Office of Minority Health gives Turning the TIDE the practical tools to expand our efforts in delivering HIV/AIDS education and care. Rev. Ford further stated, "The relationships Turning the TIDE has developed with its local partners, both of whom are demonstrated experts in building outreach and delivering HIV/AIDS services, will allow us to grow our own internal capacity and learn from and build on their experiences."

According to Mr. Larry Hochendoner, CEO of World Health Care Infrastructures "This collaboration enables both Turning the TIDE and WHCI to go beyond traditional testing venues and bring HIV education and testing into the communities where real people live, work and play. The OMPH grant is an outstanding opportunity to expand outreach and testing in our faith based communities, where it counts the most."

Dr. Arthur Williams, a prominent local HIV/AIDS specialist and WPMHC's Medical Director, reiterated this sentiment, stating, "developing this partnership with Turning the TIDE, through WPMHC, will allow practitioners to provide services to those most at risk for HIV/AIDS in their own neighborhoods. This outreach will build services in our most heavily impacted communities."

Through this new award, Turning the TIDE will provide counseling and testing services, using rapid testing technology, to hundreds of individuals at high risk for HIV/AIDS. Ultimately, WPMHC strives to increase the number of individuals who: 1) engage in high-risk behaviors; 2) increase testing for HIV serostatus using rapid testing technology; 3) receive their test results; and, 4) linking persons to appropriate care and/or risk reduction services.

WPMHC enhances the availability of and access to comprehensive community based HIV/AIDS services, particularly in non-traditional, non clinical settings, specifically among African American and Latina women living in the zip codes 19104, 19139, 19143, 19146 and 19151.

If you are interested in receiving services, becoming a community volunteer and/or supporting Turning the TIDE financially, please contact Rev. Jonathan Ford at Turning the TIDE (215-427-6268) or via their website, www.turningthetide.org.

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