



**For Immediate Release: July 18, 2017**

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**The Long Island Association for AIDS Care Observes National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day.**

Every October 15<sup>th</sup>, on the last day of Hispanic Heritage Month, National Latinx AIDS Awareness is observed in the United States. The Latino Commission on AIDS (LCOA) and the Hispanic Federation organizes the day to mobilize community based organizations, community leaders, and health departments to promote HIV testing, HIV prevention, and access to care within our Hispanic/Latinx communities. This year's theme is "To Defeat HIV You're a Superhero. Use Your Superpowers."

According to 2017's New York State HIV/AIDS Surveillance Annual Report: For Cases Diagnosed Through December 2015, there were 1,593 Hispanic/Latinx individuals living with HIV/AIDS in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The Hispanic/Latinx population also has the second highest number of newly diagnosed HIV cases on Long Island, making up 30% of new diagnoses. Even more concerning, these alarming numbers do not include the hundreds of people living with HIV/AIDS who are undiagnosed. People living with undiagnosed infections pose a major public health risk, as it has been well established that people who are unaware of their positive HIV/AIDS status contributed disproportionately toward transmission. Governor Cuomo lists "Identifying persons with HIV who remain undiagnosed and link them to health care" as one of the points of his three-point plan in the 2014 Ending the Epidemic initiative.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) list a few obstacles Hispanic/Latinx people may face in regards to HIV testing and prevention including:

- **Culture:** HIV/AIDS and homosexuality goes against traditional gender roles and the idea of "machismo" (masculine toughness) and "marianismo" (feminine purity).
- **Society:** Poverty, lower education levels, limited access to care, and language barriers may limit awareness and opportunities for testing and care.
- **Immigration Status:** Undocumented immigrants may be afraid of disclosing their status, making it less likely for them to seek services.

LIAAC recognizes that Hispanic/Latinx Long Islanders are an integral part of our community, and we take care to break down these barriers by educating and providing free HIV testing and linkage to care. This National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day, we will be promoting a social media campaign about HIV testing, prevention, and care targeted toward our Hispanic/Latinx community members.

**SINCE 1986**  
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