



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

## Statement from Senator José M. Serrano Re: World AIDS Day

JOSÉ M. SERRANO December 1, 2010

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"Each year, World AIDS Day recognizes the progress that has been made over the years, commemorates those we have lost, and reminds us that there is still a great deal of work to be done in the battle against this devastating illness.

"One in five of an estimated 1.1 million Americans living with HIV do not know they have contracted the virus. In New York's communities of color, the statistics are particularly sobering. According to the Department of Health, from 2008 to 2009 more than 37,000 people lived with HIV, while over 60,000 people were diagnosed with AIDS. In both cases, about 45 percent of those affected were African American and 31 percent were Hispanic.

"Overcoming these challenges, and promoting the health of all New Yorkers, remains one of our State's foremost challenges. We can help combat the disproportionate rate of AIDS deaths among minorities by raising awareness of health services so that persons infected with HIV are alerted to their condition before progressing to AIDS. We are making tremendous strides in the struggle against HIV/AIDS in New York, but we must continue to fight for an ultimate cure.

"This preventable disease is being largely fueled by ignorance and prejudice. Stigmatizing

AIDS will only discourage our youth from educating themselves regarding prevention and treatment services. Talking openly about HIV and encouraging your family, friends and colleagues to get tested is one of the most powerful ways of ending injustice and preventing the spread of HIV.

“We know that anyone – regardless of age, race, ethnic group, religion, or sexual orientation– can get HIV, and I encourage you to arm yourself with knowledge by learning your HIV status.”

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To talk with someone about HIV or ask questions, contact the toll-free CDC National AIDS hotline, available 24 hours a day, at 1-800-232-4636 or the NYS HIV/AIDS hotline at 1-800-541-2437 (English) or 1-800-233-7432 (Spanish).

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*Contact:*

*Damaris Olivo | (212) 828-5829*