



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pedro Espada Jr.

## Statement by NYS Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada, Jr. on World AIDS Day 2010

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“Unfortunately in recent years, HIV has taken a back seat to super-infections, food-borne illness and other health issues, but this dreaded disease is far from being under control. In fact, Hispanic and African-American teenage women are among the highest HIV-infected populations in New York City’s five boroughs,” Sen. Espada said.

“We must do more to protect our children against AIDS. As someone who has been providing community based health care in the Bronx for over three decades, I know the importance of AIDS education and prevention programs,” explained Sen. Espada, whose four community based health care facilities, which are part of the Soundview Healthcare Network, are City Department of Health-designated HIV testing centers – whereby individuals can walk in and receive rapid HIV testing, even if they are uninsured, no questions asked.

“More federal funding is needed for prevention and education programs aimed at adolescents and young teenagers. We must give community-based health providers the ability to send medical professionals and social workers to local schools and youth organizations, as well as conduct site-based AIDS education sessions for children, teenagers and young mothers that will help them make the right choices, place them at less of a risk and, where necessary, make sure they receive the latest available treatments,” Sen. Espada

continued.

“Anything short of this, and HIV will consume another generation,” he added.

Sen. Espada said that nearly 400,000 children are born annually with HIV – and that, without treatment, approximately half die before their second birthday.

“AIDS is treatable and preventable, and medicines are available to prevent mother-to-infant transmission of HIV. It’s a message we need to deliver to young people 365 days a year, and not just on World AIDS Day,” Sen. Espada said.