

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today recognized the important mission of National HIV Testing Day (June, 27, 2007) created by the National Association of People with AIDS in 1995 to encourage HIV screenings as an effective means of prevention.

“Far too many Americans continue to be infected with HIV every year,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “National HIV Testing Day is an important opportunity to remind our communities that HIV/AIDS is still a serious threat, particularly because so many people are unaware that they are infected in the first place. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now estimate that of the more than one million Americans that are living with HIV/AIDS, regrettably, one-quarter do not know they are infected. Routine testing, particularly for those who are most vulnerable, is critical to effectively preventing HIV transmission and providing timely treatment to HIV-infected individuals.”

The Washington Metropolitan area in particular is suffering disproportionately from this epidemic,” stated Hoyer, noting that Washington, DC has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the country, with a rate of new AIDS cases per year that is 10 times the national average.

Hoyer continued, “Resources for care and prevention must be increased, and we must redouble our efforts - both at the federal and local levels - to raise awareness, encourage testing, and to provide the necessary resources for individuals to protect themselves and others.”

Rep. Hoyer has consistently fought for increased funding for health care and support services through the Ryan White CARE Act Programs in the Labor-Health and Human Services (LHHS) Appropriations bill. This year, the LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee voted to increase funding for Ryan White programs by \$99.3 million over the 2007 level; the increase is \$79 million above the President’s request.

Locally, Hoyer has helped secure \$1.625 million total in federal funds for Whitman-Walker Clinic, a nationally-recognized non-profit health care provider of HIV care and social services serving the Greater Washington region. The funds were used for program support and upgrades to its technology infrastructure, including an electronic medical records system in order to better manage patient care, and upgrades to billing and financial accounting systems. Stated Hoyer, “These investments helped assist Whitman-Walker in its efforts to provide high-quality comprehensive and accessible health care and community services throughout the region.”

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