National Latino AIDS Awareness Day 2014

October 15, 2014

Wednesday, October 15, marks National Latino AIDS Awareness Day 2014 (NLAAD), which falls on the last day of Hispanic Heritage Month. This year's theme is "Commit to Act," and as such, the campaign offers different ways people can commit to act to end AIDS.

Several HIV-related organizations and researchers use the awareness day as a springboard to launch campaigns and release data related to the Latino community. The AIDS Foundation of Chicago recently started a citywide campaign titled "Salud y Orgullo Mexicano" (SOM), which means "Mexican health and pride" and encourages Mexican men to get tested and connected to care at the Erie Family Health Center in Humboldt Park.

And the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched a "One Conversation at a Time" campaign to encourage Latinos to talk openly about the virus with their family, friends and communities.

Raising HIV awareness is important among Latinos. They make up 17 percent of the U.S. population but account for 21 percent of new HIV cases. And according to new CDC data, only 44 percent of Latinos who are diagnosed with HIV are taking antiretroviral medication. What's more, only 36.9 percent have an undetectable viral load.

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