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### **Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program Celebrates World AIDS Day**

PENSACOLA –The Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program, which includes Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton Counties, celebrates World AIDS Day on Dec. 1, 2011.

As of 2009, there were more than 33 million people in the world living with HIV/AIDS. In Escambia County, there are currently more than 1,600 people living with the disease. Accessing treatment is an ongoing issue for these individuals. In Florida alone, more than 3,200 uninsured and underinsured people are on a waiting list to receive HIV medications to treat the disease from the federal AIDS Drug Assistance program, and more than 50 of these people are residents of Escambia County.

“Currently, these individuals are able to obtain some of their medications from sources such as Pharmaceutical Patient Assistance programs due to the work and dedication of local HIV service providers,” said Jennifer Findley, Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator. “It is unclear how long this assistance will continue to be available before they will have to seek help from other sources.”

The Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program participates in two community-wide World AIDS Day events. On Nov. 30, the program partners with the University of West Florida Wellness Center to offer free HIV testing from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the UWF Commons. On Dec. 1, the Area 1 HIV/AIDS Program will provide information on HIV prevention and patient care at The Courtyard at North Hill, 25 West Avery St., from 7 to 9 p.m.

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