



Charlie Crist
Governor

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State Surgeon General

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is March 10

Honoring Our Sisters: Women Living With AIDS

March 10 is National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day The purpose of this annual event is to raise awareness of the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls and encourage women and girls to take action. The theme for 2008 is "Honoring Our Sisters: Women Living with HIV/AIDS."



HIV and AIDS were originally thought to affect mostly gay men. However, women have always been affected, too. The good news is that many women and men with HIV are living longer and stronger lives. With proper care and treatment, many women can continue to take care of themselves and others.

Historically, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has affected more men than women, but women are being increasingly affected. Since 1985 the proportion of estimated AIDS cases diagnosed among women has more than tripled, from eight percent in 1985 to 27 percent in 2005. In 2005, women accounted for 26% of newly diagnosed AIDS cases, compared with 11% in 1990.

Black women have been especially affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2005, HIV was the third leading cause of death for black women aged 25 to 44 years and the fourth leading cause of death for Hispanic women aged 35 to 44 years.

And although each year more men than women become infected with HIV, this gap is slowly closing. In fact, if new HIV infections continue at their current rate worldwide, **women with HIV may soon outnumber men with HIV.**

While the impact of this epidemic on women has been devastating, many women with HIV/AIDS are living longer and stronger lives thanks to new treatments. While there is no cure yet, HIV treatment has come a long way since the first reported cases in the early 1980s. Today, there are a number of therapies and medications available. Women living with HIV/AIDS struggle each day to maintain a healthy, normal life.

There are many ways women and girls can take action in the fight against HIV/AIDS:

- Know your status – get tested for HIV
- Engage only in behaviors that avoid HIV risk.
- Discuss HIV prevention with family and friends.
- Provide support to women living with HIV/AIDS.
- Listen and learn from the stories of women living with HIV/AIDS.

**For more information call the Pinellas County Health Department or visit www.aids.gov ▪ www.cdc.gov
www.womenshealth.gov**

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