



# Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

## Dickinson County

818 Pyle Drive, Kingsford, MI 49802  
Ph: (906) 774-1868 Fax: (906) 774-9910  
BRANCH OFFICE

[www.didhd.org](http://www.didhd.org)

## Iron County

601 Washington Avenue, Iron River, MI 49935  
Ph: (906) 265-9913 Fax: (906) 265-2950  
MAIN OFFICE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Contact Information:

Kelly Rumpf, 779-7234



## **Obama Administration Announces New Campaign to Refocus National Attention on the HIV Crisis in the United States**

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, June 1, 2009 - Every 9 ½ minutes another person in America becomes infected with HIV. Officials from the White House, Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced a new five-year national communication campaign, *Act Against AIDS*, which highlights this alarming statistic and aims to combat complacency about the HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States.

“According to CDC data released last year, about 56,000 Americans become newly infected with HIV each year – significantly more than was previously known – and more than 14,000 people with AIDS die each year in the United States,” said Jeanelle Maki, Public Health Coordinator.

“*Act Against AIDS* seeks to put the HIV crisis back on the national radar screen,” said Melody Barnes, Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council. “Our goal is to remind Americans that HIV/AIDS continues to pose a serious health threat in the United States and encourage them to get the facts they need to take action for themselves and their communities.”

The campaign will feature public service announcements (PSAs) and online communications, as well as targeted messages and outreach to the populations most severely affected by HIV/AIDS, beginning with African-Americans, with subsequent phases focusing on Latinos and other communities disproportionately impacted.

To promote broad use of the campaign messages, CDC is also collaborating with the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation to focus on outreach and technical assistance to the media and the entertainment industry.

The *Act Against AIDS* campaign will be supported by a CDC budget of roughly \$45 million over the next five years, as well as the efforts of community, media and public health partners across the country to promote and utilize campaign materials and messages.

The first phase of the *Act Against AIDS* campaign, called “9 ½ Minutes,” uses a series of video, audio, print and online materials to increase knowledge about the severity of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States. The campaign highlights the simple fact that every 9 ½ minutes someone in the United States becomes infected with HIV.

-More-

The materials released today direct Americans to “get the facts” by going to the Web site [www.NineAndHalfMinutes.org](http://www.NineAndHalfMinutes.org) as a first step toward learning how they can help protect themselves and others. The site provides basic education about HIV/AIDS as well as referrals to HIV prevention and testing services and organizations throughout the nation.

“In the United States, every 9 ½ minutes someone’s brother, sister, best friend, father or mother becomes infected with HIV,” said Maki. “Yet, research shows that many of those becoming infected do not recognize their risk. This is a major concern, because lack of knowledge contributes to increased risk behaviors.”

The next phase to launch will focus on African-Americans, who, by far, bear the greatest burden of HIV in the United States. While accounting for just 12 percent of the U.S. population, blacks represent roughly half of new HIV infections and AIDS deaths every year. Targeted communications to encourage increased HIV testing among the two groups of African-Americans most severely affected, gay or bisexual men and women, will begin shortly.

Future phases of the *Act Against AIDS* campaign will focus on reaching specific populations at greatest risk with HIV prevention messages tailored to meet their unique needs including Latinos and other high risk groups.

Locally, the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department offers HIV testing and counseling services. In observance of National Free HIV Testing Day, the health department will offer a free testing day in each office in July. Clinics will be held July 6, 2009 in Dickinson County and July 13 in Iron County. Posters and news releases will announce the free testing day. Clients may call the health department to make an appointment. Testing is anonymous and confidential. Orasure testing is available which is non-evasive and involves no blood drawing.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease, providing health care, and protecting the environment. For additional information visit our website at [www.didhd.org](http://www.didhd.org) or call the offices at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

###