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## **Division of Public and Behavioral Health**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

# **National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, March 10, 2015**

*Carson City* – March 10<sup>th</sup> marks the annual National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is a nationwide observance that encourages women to take control in the fight against HIV/AIDS and raise awareness by offering support, encouraging discussion, and teaching women and girls about prevention, testing for and the management of HIV/AIDS.

It is estimated that 1 in 32 African American women will be diagnosed with HIV infection at some point in their lifetime. Women accounted for almost 25 percent of people living with HIV infection in the United States in 2010. Only about half of women who are diagnosed with HIV are in care, and even fewer (4 in 10) have the virus under control. Generally, women are at a greater risk of heterosexual transmission of HIV. Biologically, women are two times more likely to become infected with HIV through unprotected heterosexual intercourse than men. In the United States, heterosexual transmission accounts for approximately 84 percent of new HIV infections in females.

In Nevada in 2013, a total of 9,155 persons were known to be living with HIV/AIDS, 19% of whom were women. During the same time period, there were 437 new HIV infections in Nevada. Recent trends suggest an overall decrease in the number of new HIV infections among women in Nevada; however, women still accounted for 12% of the new HIV infections (51 cases) and AIDS diagnoses (37 cases) in 2013. The greatest proportion of new HIV infections in Nevada were among African Americans (46%), followed by Whites (30%) and Hispanics (18%). Heterosexual contact continues to be the leading risk factor for HIV transmission among women, accounting for 57% of risk for new HIV infections among women in Nevada. A disproportionate amount of epidemic among this population resides in Clark County; 91% of the new HIV infections resided in Clark County (5.1 diagnoses per 100,000 population) in 2013.

HIV and AIDS continue to be one of the top causes of death among all groups in Nevada. In recent years, younger women of color have seen an increase in mortality rates associated with HIV/AIDS. Get yourself tested, talk about it and be aware! Knowing your HIV status and that of your partner's is one vital step in helping to stop the spread of HIV. Research shows that starting HIV treatment and care earlier increases your chances of a healthier and longer life. Individuals at risk for acquiring or transmitting HIV infection are critical in the prevention of new cases and increased attention to early testing among women and other at-risk populations is needed.

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For more information about National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and general HIV and AIDS facts, please visit <http://health.nv.gov/HIVCarePrevention.htm>, <http://www.womenshealth.gov/nwghaad>, [www.hivtest.org](http://www.hivtest.org) or [www.cdc.gov/hiv](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv). Data for this press release were obtained from the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health's *Fast Facts (2013)* and *HIV/AIDS Epidemiological Profile Update (2012)*, available at [http://health.nv.gov/HIV\\_AIDS\\_SurveillancePgm.htm](http://health.nv.gov/HIV_AIDS_SurveillancePgm.htm).



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Whitley".

Richard Whitley, Administrator

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