

## We Make the Change

- *We Make The Change (WMTC)* - a statewide campaign designed to increase the awareness of HIV/AIDS and its impact on minority communities throughout Florida.
- Launched in 1999, *We Make the Change* informs and educates Florida's African-American, Hispanic, Haitian, and Caribbean communities about prevention programs and services that can help fight the spread of HIV.
- *We Make the Change* comprises the following initiatives:
  - Stop the Spread
  - Sistas Organizing to Survive (SOS)
  - Faith-Based Initiative
  - L.U.C.E.S. – Latinas Unidas Contra el SIDA (Hispanic women)
  - Man Up – Mobilizing Florida's Men
- The Florida Department of Health (DOH) wants people to get tested, know their HIV status, and visit [www.wemakethechange.com](http://www.wemakethechange.com) for more information and testing locations. You can also text your zip code to 477493 for the testing site nearest you.

## Stop the Spread

- *Stop the Spread* was introduced in 2007 as part of Florida's African-American Testing Initiative (AATI) to reach HIV-infected persons, primarily non-Hispanic blacks, who are unaware of their infection.
- Objectives of *Stop the Spread*:
  - promote HIV testing as a routine part of overall healthcare.
  - encourage HIV testing in healthcare settings.
  - help local testing centers increase HIV testing.
- The Florida Department of Health has identified 11 of Florida's 67 counties for the initiative based on the racial/ethnic disparities in the state.

## Sistas Organizing to Survive (SOS)

- *Sistas Organizing to Survive (SOS)* is the grassroots mobilization of black women in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- Launched on June 20, 2008, SOS encourages black women to get tested where they live, work, play, and worship.
- The goal of SOS is to test 100,000 black women each year by 2010.

- Since its launch, eight local SOS conferences have been conducted, over 4,100 people have taken the online pledge, and over 88,000 black women were tested in 2008.
- Objectives of SOS include:
  - To educate black women about HIV/AIDS and how other STDs, hepatitis and substance abuse increase their risk.
  - To empower black women to take charge of and control their sexual health.
  - To connect black women to HIV/AIDS resources.

### **Faith-Based Initiative**

- Florida is the first and only state to establish a formal, faith-based HIV prevention network.
- The Department of Health has partnered with the Eleventh Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church to establish AME churches as HIV testing sites across Florida.
- *We Make the Change* uses community faith-based events such as church conferences and concerts as avenues for HIV education.
  - The National Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS is a key faith activity aimed at raising awareness of HIV/AIDS.

### **Latinas Unidas Contra el SIDA (L.U.C.E.S.)**

- *L.U.C.E.S.* is dedicated to empowering Hispanic communities to develop healthy lifestyles through information, education and advocacy.
- The initiative connects Latina women to HIV/AIDS resources and strengthens their ability to take charge of their sexual health.
- Additional goals of *L.U.C.E.S.*:
  - To raise awareness about the magnitude of HIV/AIDS among Latina women in Florida.
  - To offer tools to enable Latina women to educate others about HIV/AIDS and HIV prevention where they live, work, play, learn, and worship.
  - To increase the capacity of Latina women to build effective responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in local communities.

### **Man Up – Mobilizing Florida’s Men**

- Released in September 2009, *Man Up: The Crisis of HIV/AIDS Among Florida’s Men* seeks to mobilize men to eliminate their risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV/AIDS.
- The goal of the report is to stimulate implementation of community action plans aimed at preventing the further spread of HIV/AIDS among Florida’s men and their partners.

- Objectives of *Man Up*:
  - To encourage men to “*Man Up*” and take responsibility for the consequences of their sexual actions and other HIV risk behaviors.
  - To create an enabling environment to support awareness of men’s health issues.
  - To engage in a dialog about men’s health, including awareness of HIV and the need for testing.

## Trends in HIV Testing

- In 2008, 373,102 HIV tests were conducted in Florida’s registered testing sites, representing a 13% increase over the previous year.
- 2008 marks the eighth consecutive year that the number of HIV tests performed in Florida exceeded 250,000.
- Increases in testing were recorded among all racial/ethnic groups, but especially in blacks.
- By ethnicity, 21.3% of HIV tests were blacks, 24.7% were Hispanics, and 50.7% were whites.
- At least 80% of the estimated 125,000 persons with HIV in Florida know they’re infected.

## HIV/AIDS in Florida

- Blacks comprise 15% of the adult population; yet represent over half (53%) of AIDS cases and 45% of HIV cases.
- In 2007, HIV was the 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death among Hispanic men and the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death among Hispanic women, ages 25-44.
- For the last 15 years, HIV/AIDS has been the leading cause of death of black women aged 25-44.
- In Florida, 1 in 472 Hispanic/Latina women are living with HIV/AIDS, compared to 1 in 1,281 white women.
- In Florida, 1 in 123 adult men was living with HIV/AIDS through 2008. Furthermore, 72% of new infections are among men.