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PRESS RELEASE

Belize to Observe World AIDS Day 2022

Belmopan. November 30, 2022.

On December 1, 2022, Belize will join the global community to commemorate World AIDS Day in solidarity with the families of those who have died and are living with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus).

This year, World AIDS Day will be celebrated under the theme ‘#Equalize’, focusing on addressing the inequalities and challenges that block the progress in ending AIDS. At the end of 2021, statistics show that 2,893 persons are living with HIV in Belize. At that time, 44% of that total were receiving antiretroviral therapy, with only 22% at virological suppression level. While the ideal situation by the year 2020 was a call for 90-90-90, the new set of ambitious targets calls for 95% of all people living with HIV to know their HIV status, 95% of those diagnosed with HIV infection receive sustained antiretroviral therapy, and 95% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy to have viral suppression by 2025.

Research has shown that many barriers prevent persons from getting an HIV test and seeking early care. These include stigma and discrimination, actual and perceived fear, negative attitudes, and rigid belief systems, among others.

The National HIV Program of the Ministry of Health & Wellness (MOHW) continues to support all the efforts and activities across the country from district and regional teams. The MOHW has once again partnered with the National AIDS Commission (NAC) in celebrating the ministry’s campaign and implementing specific themes related to HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. These are:

- Differentiated testing approaches catering to the diverse needs of individuals
- Awareness-raising activities on HIV spread

- Strengthening community engagement and supporting activities

These activities started on November 28, 2022, and will continue until the third week of December 2022.

December 1st is hallmarked as National Testing Day, with point of care rapid testing done countrywide for HIV, syphilis, and Hepatitis B and C. These tests support early detection, treatment, and prevention of infectious diseases. Most infections are preventable with interventions such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), condom use, behavioural change, proper referral to care and treatment, and continuous health monitoring.

The MOHW encourages the public to come out, participate and support its activities countrywide in December.

Know your status by getting tested. Help us end AIDS!

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