

TESTING FOR TICKETS OFFERS SEATS FOR THE COLOR PURPLE ON BROADWAY

In an effort to raise awareness and encourage people in communities of color to understand the importance of knowing their HIV status – Open Door Family Medical Centers, through its WOW Coalition (Women Organized Around Wellness) has partnered with the Westchester Health Department and Project WAVE New York to create Testing for Tickets, an all day HIV screening event on Saturday, April 29. Testing for Tickets, a free day of HIV screening and education will take place at Open Door Family Medical Centers, 165 Main Street, Ossining from 10am-4pm. **The first 100 people who are tested will receive free tickets to Oprah Winfrey’s smash Broadway musical – The Color Purple.**

“Heterosexual transmission of HIV is a pervasive problem among women of color throughout Westchester County. Testing for Tickets and similar initiatives that address these at risk communities are vitally important. We want to be sure that people not only know their HIV status, but it is equally important for them to know that along with testing services, HIV counseling and partner notification services are also widely available and accessible,” said Desta Lakew, Director of Marketing for Open Door and a founding member of the WOW Coalition.

Testing for Tickets testing and counseling will be provided throughout the day by Open Door and other Project WAVE partners.

Project WAVE, Inc. is a non-profit organization working in partnership with public and private sectors to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in communities of color. Project WAVE efforts are focused on HIV prevention and the importance of knowing one's HIV status. Founded in 1999 by career radio station veteran Ernest Jackson, Jr., Project WAVE was initiated and is based in Houston, Texas. Since that time, Project WAVE has expanded to Los Angeles, Cleveland, Atlanta, Memphis, Nashville, Oakland and Boston. In June, 2001, Project WAVE New York was founded as a partnership between local radio stations, HIV/AIDS services providers, the New York State Department of Health, the New York City Health Department and other local departments of health. Project WAVE New York is currently operational in the five boroughs of New York City, Long Island, Westchester County and will soon expand into the Buffalo/Western New York Region, in addition to other New York State communities.

For more information regarding Testing for Tickets contact: Desta Lakew at (914) 502-1416.

Statistics

- The fastest growing segment of Westchester's population with HIV is African American Women. The percentage of female AIDS cases grew from 21.9% of all AIDS cases in 1987 to 46% of all AIDS cases in 2002. With respect to HIV, 59% of the female cases of HIV diagnosed through December 31, 2002, were among Blacks.
- As the rates of HIV transmission drop among risk groups defined as men having sex with men and injecting drug users; HIV transmission through heterosexual contact is rising.
- Heterosexual transmission of HIV in Westchester County is up 15% from 13.9% in 1996 to 28.2% in 2001.
- Women of color have shorter life expectancies and higher death rates from diseases that can be often be prevented, treated or controlled if identified at an early stage such as: Cancer, Heart Disease and Diabetes
- Despite considerable improvements in health care delivery in the last 20 years, significant concerns still exist regarding health disparities among African American, Hispanic and Asian women in comparison with their white counterparts