

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Parents Failing to Talk to Kids About Safer Sex**

*HIV Alliance hosts educational forum to help parents start the discussion*

Eugene, OR – According to study findings released by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) this month, “many young persons in the United States engage in sexual risk behavior and experience negative reproductive health outcomes.” Alarming, the CDC reports that HIV infections among boys ages 15-19 have nearly doubled in the past 10 years. Just last year the CDC also reported that 25% of teenage girls have a sexually transmitted disease (STD), a statistic that is mirrored here in Lane County.

The recent CDC findings show that while about two-thirds of 18- and 19-year-olds report being sexually active, half of girls and two-thirds of boys at this age have not talked with a parent about birth control or sexual protection. The CDC says their study findings “underscore the importance of sustaining efforts to promote adolescent reproductive health.” Even though many teens receive sex education in school, they are largely not receiving education from their parents – a troubling fact particularly in the face of declining school budgets and increasingly larger class sizes.

“It is so important for parents to start an open dialogue with their kids at an early age,” says Jim Robinson, a former parent educator and elementary/middle school founder. “Building a trusting relationship early on is even more important in our modern society as we lead busier and busier lives and have fewer extended family networks. Kids are making more decisions on their own or with the influence of their peers and the media. The earlier parents start talking about sex with their kids, the more likely these kids will be to make smart decisions down the road to prevent pregnancy, HIV and STDs.”

HIV Alliance wants to help parents to become stronger partners in keeping their children healthy and safe. On Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at PeaceHealth RiverBend Hospital, HIV Alliance will host a panel discussion of education specialists to talk about how parents can keep their children safe and informed during these challenging times. Joining the panel will be Mary Gossart, Vice President of Education & Training at Planned Parenthood; Juvata Rusch, Trainer & Consultant at Birth to Three and a private practice Marriage and Family Therapist; Diane Lang, Executive Director at HIV Alliance; and Jim Robinson, Educational Coordinator at HIV Alliance and retired San Francisco School Director and Parent Educator. These experts will speak to the importance of creating an open dialogue with children starting from an early age, throughout their development, and during the often difficult teen years.

HIV Alliance has prevented new HIV infections and supported individuals living with HIV/AIDS for the past 15 years. HIV Alliance assists and supports people of all cultures by offering health care and advocacy to those living with and affected by HIV. HIV Alliance also provides community education, outreach information and services to empower individuals to make healthy choices. For more information, visit [www.hivalliance.org](http://www.hivalliance.org).

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