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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Shelby County Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WORLD AIDS DAY 2022

Observance Planned for December 1, 2022 at the FedEx Forum

SHELBY COUNTY, TN – December 1, 2022, marks the 34th annual World AIDS Day, and the Shelby County Health Department's Ryan White Program is hosting its annual World AIDS Day program to focus attention on the devastating impact that HIV/AIDS has had on our community. The theme of this year's observance is **"Putting Ourselves to the Test: Achieving Equity to End HIV."**

This theme reminds us that the burden of the HIV/AIDS epidemic does not affect all in our society equally. African Americans have been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic. African Americans represent about 12% of the U.S. population, but they account for about 43% of all new HIV diagnoses, and about 42% of people living with HIV. Unfortunately, African Americans also account for 44% of deaths among people with HIV, more than any other racial/ethnic group in the U.S. Poverty, stigma, discrimination, structural racism and other factors are thought to be the root of these disparities.

Overcoming health disparities is an integral part of Shelby County Health Department's Ryan White Program and its Planning Council. One third of the Planning Council is required to be made up of consumers of Ryan White services who reflect the demographics of the people living with HIV/AIDS in our community. The Planning Council sets the funding priorities for the Ryan White Program. It's that sort of representation that will make a real impact in overcoming the disparities at the heart of the HIV epidemic in our region.

The media and the public are invited to attend the Ryan White Program's World AIDS Day observance and balloon release to pay tribute to all who are living with HIV/AIDS and to remember those we have lost in the past year.

World AIDS Day Program and Balloon Release
Thursday, December 1, 2022, 5:30 p.m.
FedEx Forum
191 Beale Street

For more information about the Shelby County Health Department's Ryan White Program, please visit <https://hivmemphis.org/>.

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