

AIDS is still an epidemic: Those 18-24 most at risk

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When Timothy Daniels was diagnosed with HIV the day before his 20th birthday, he was devastated.

"I thought it was the end of my life," he said.

But Daniels, 22, learned to live with it and became an outreach worker at the Center for Comprehensive Care at the Jersey City Medical Center, helping ensure others get proper treatment for HIV and AIDS.

"I thank God for being in this position," Daniels said yesterday. "I never thought I would be doing this, going around, telling people my story."

Jersey City held its 22nd annual World AIDS Day event yesterday.

Marvin Krieger, director of the Hudson County HIV/AIDS Services Planning Council, said there are more than 6,665 people in Hudson County living with HIV.

He said the numbers continue to grow, especially among people between 18 and 24 years old. The disease is also disproportionately impacting African-Americans.

"There are also individuals out there who do not even know they are HIV positive, and that is the most frightening thing to encounter," Krieger said.

Krieger and others at City Hall spoke of the importance of HIV testing and education. "We as individuals must continue to share that the epidemic is not over, that it continues to exist," he said.

According to the state Department of Health and Senior Services, as of June 30, there were 34,712 people in the state living with HIV or AIDS.

Hudson County has had



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10,373 people diagnosed with HIV or AIDS. Of those 5,775 have died.

Jersey City has the second highest case load, with 6,570 reported cases of HIV or AIDS and 3,706 deaths. Newark has the most in the state, with 13,744 reported cases and 7,907 deaths.

Hudson Pride Connections hosted events last night, including the Living Quilt, during which those affected by AIDS and HIV share stories. And the Pan American Concerned Citizens Action League in Jersey City held a workshop for Asians with AIDS.

Today, the Center for Comprehensive Care, at 355 Grand St. in Jersey City, is featuring Dr. Anat Feingold, a specialist in pediatric AIDS from Cooper Hospital in Camden. A choir from Bayonne will perform at the event and there will be a candlelight ceremony. The event runs from 2 to 4 p.m.

DENEEN GOODSON-SIMS, above left, with the Jersey City Department of Health and Human Services, lights the candle of April Chestang, right, with Faith Services in Hoboken, during the observance of World AIDS Day at Jersey City City Hall. Linda Ivory-Green, below right, health education coordinator for the Department of Health and Human Services, gathers with others in a circle of candles to commemorate World AIDS Day.



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