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Getting to Zero Partners with Local Organizations to Commemorate World AIDS Day 2018

**Candlelight Vigil, Flag Raising, City Hall Lighting Up Red, and Other Events Encourage Public to
Get Tested**

SAN JOSE, CA – On November 26th, sections of The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display at the Santa Clara County Government Center in recognition of World AIDS Day December 1. The display will hang the week of November 26-30th kicking off a week of red ribbon events promoting AIDS awareness which include the lighting of City Hall and candlelight vigil to remember those lost to the epidemic. This year's theme is "Looking Back, Moving Forward." The events are organized by The Santa-Clara-County-funded Getting to Zero Initiative (GTZ), in partnership with The Health Trust, SV Pride, Project MORE Foundation, City of San Jose Councilmember Raul Peralez, and the County of Santa Clara HIV Commission, and with support from local non-profit organizations.

Honored each December since 1988, World AIDS Day unites people worldwide in the fight against HIV and commemorates those who have died from AIDS-related illness.

"Thanks to Santa Clara County's early commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS, we really do have the potential to get to zero," said Bob Reed of the County HIV Commission. "We need those at risk to get tested for HIV, those living with HIV to take their medication, and those at high risk of infection to consider taking a preventive medication like PrEP."

The HIV epidemic has stabilized in the County since the mid-2000s, with 3,361 people known to be diagnosed and living with HIV/AIDS as of 2017. African American and Latinx residents are disproportionately impacted by the disease, with rates among African-Americans more than four times higher than rates among non-Hispanic Whites. In 2017 there were 156 new cases of HIV diagnosed in the County, increasing slightly from 135 cases in 2016 in the context of extensive efforts to increase screening, and decreasing from 158 and 165 in the two years prior. The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone ages 13-64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care.

"The Public Health Department is committed to making sure people diagnosed with HIV have access to early, highly effective HIV treatment., said Dr. Sara Cody, County of Santa Clara Health Officer and Director of the Public Health Department. "Someone diagnosed with HIV can live a

long and healthy life if they receive modern HIV antiretroviral therapy. This is monumental progress and we aim to make sure it's available to everyone with HIV.”

The lifespan of people living with HIV in County of Santa Clara has increased drastically since the introduction of antiretroviral therapy (ART) in 1996, the medications that a physician prescribes to treat HIV. ART coupled with comprehensive healthcare turns HIV into a manageable chronic disease rather than a fatal diagnosis. In the past two years, more than 90 percent of people newly diagnosed with HIV in County of Santa Clara were linked to care within three months of their diagnosis.

The County of Santa Clara Public Health Department began providing PrEP services in 2016. PrEP is a daily pill to help prevent the transmission of HIV. The Public Health Department aims to make PrEP accessible to those who need it most in the county. In 2018 alone, 123 new patients began receiving treatment after receiving PrEP navigation assistance from the Public Health Department.

The County’s HIV/AIDS prevention and care services and collaborations support the County’s Getting to Zero (GTZ) Initiative (zero new HIV infections, zero HIV-related deaths, and zero HIV-related stigma). Services are designed to reduce new HIV infections, identify those infected, connect infected individuals to quality HIV health care, and provide supportive services to facilitate retention in care and reduce complications of HIV and AIDS.

Everyone can make a difference:

- The Public Health Department offers free HIV testing at GetTestedSCC.org.
- Wear a red ribbon, the symbol of HIV awareness and support, and tell people why you are wearing it.
- Participate in any of the scheduled events commemorating World AIDS Day 2018.

Date:	Time:	Event:	Location:	Open to the News Media?
Tuesday, November 26-30th	8:00AM-5:00 PM	AIDS Memorial Quilt Display	Santa Clara County Government Center 70 W. Hedding, San Jose Lobby Breezway	Yes
Tuesday, November 27th	1:30PM	City Proclamation	San Jose City Council Chambers 200 E Santa Clara St. San Jose, CA 95113	Yes

Thursday, November 29th	12:00PM	Red Ribbon Flag Raising at City Hall	San Jose City Hall 200 E Santa Clara St. San Jose, CA 95113	Yes
	6:00PM	Candlelight Vigil at City Hall		
Friday, November 30th	5:00PM	Getting to Zero Celebration	Santa Clara County Government Center 70 W. Hedding, San Jose James P. McEntee Plaza	Yes

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About Getting to Zero

Getting to Zero HIV (GTZ) Santa Clara County-Silicon Valley is a four-year initiative that will strive for Zero New HIV Infections, Zero Deaths related to HIV/AIDS, and Zero HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination in Santa Clara County. It is a collaborative effort between the County of Santa Clara and community partners, including The Health Trust, with funding provided by Santa Clara County. To learn more visit www.gettingtozeroscc.org.

About the Santa Clara County Public Health Department

The County of Santa Clara Public Health Department focuses on protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, disease and injury prevention, and the promotion of sound health policy. To learn more about how the Public Health Department serves the people who live, work, study, and play in Santa Clara County, please visit our website, sccphd.org, and follow us on Facebook, facebook.com/sccpublichealth.