



NEWS



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Health Department Encourages Participation in Getting to Zero Town Hall

State leaders seeking community guidance on ending new HIV infections in Illinois

BLOOMINGTON – There's a movement underway and everyone is invited to take part. Thursday, January 18th from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. at the Normal Public Library, 206 West College Avenue. State leaders from the *Illinois Getting to Zero* project want to hear from area residents about ways to bring an end to new HIV infections in our communities and strategies to assure that all those currently living with HIV are connected to health care and treatment by 2027. Expected to share his insights that evening is Eduardo Alvarado, HIV/AIDS Director, Illinois Department of Public Health.

The McLean County Health Department is one of several community partners helping to bring this town hall event to Normal. Says Melissa Graven, the health department's communicable disease supervisor, "We have partnered with the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Positive Health Solutions, and Central Illinois Friends to provide this opportunity for a community conversation where residents can share their ideas, needs, and hopes about ways in which we can get to zero new cases of HIV infection and zero people living with HIV who are not on treatment. We want to see an end to HIV in Illinois and realize we need to partner with our entire community – healthcare providers and individual residents alike – to reach that goal."

The January 18th event in Normal will be the third town hall in Illinois and the first outside of the Chicago/Cook County area. Illinois' Getting to Zero project has been in development since July 2016, when a small group of people living with HIV, advocates, service providers, and government officials met to explore what it would take to dramatically impact the course of the HIV epidemic in Illinois. The group was inspired by efforts in other areas, such as New York, San Francisco, and Washington state. Their report, the Getting to Zero Framework, describes the science and approaches that a plan for ending HIV in Illinois would require and can be found on the health department website: <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov/>.

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Childcare, transportation assistance, and food will be available on January 18th, courtesy of AIDS Foundation of Chicago. For more information contact Melissa Graven at 309-888-5435. To register for the event go to: <http://bit.ly/2miwOWg>.

The McLean County Health Department works to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS in McLean County through counseling, testing, community education, outreach and surveillance. The health department also offers testing, treatment and follow-up care for gonorrhea, syphilis, and Chlamydia: along with hepatitis prevention measures and pregnancy testing. For more information on HIV or STI services available at the McLean County Health Department, call (309) 888-5435 or visit: <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov/100/STI-Testing>.

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