



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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## **Alabama joins nationwide response to AIDS crisis among African Americans**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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On Feb. 7, 2006, community leaders and organizations of Montgomery will respond to the impact of HIV and AIDS in the city's African American communities in the sixth annual observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. Alabama State University will sponsor an educational update and testing event at the Student Union Building from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. to encourage citizens to get educated, get tested, get treated and get involved with HIV/AIDS.

"HIV/AIDS continues to devastate black communities. Nationally, 72 African Americans are infected with HIV every day. African Americans make up approximately 13 percent of the population of the United States, yet almost half of the total AIDS cases reported in this country are among members of the black community. African Americans represent 26 percent of the state's population. However, 63 percent of all reported persons living with HIV/AIDS in Alabama are African American, said Jane Cheeks, J.D., M.P.H., State AIDS Director.

Montgomery is one of more than 100 cities across the U.S. that will sponsor programs on Feb. 7 to call attention to the problem and seek solutions to halt the epidemic. Local service organizations and county health departments are available throughout the state for HIV testing, treatment services and referrals. For further information regarding locations and telephone numbers for service providers please contact the Alabama Department of Public Health, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, at 1-800-228-0469.

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