

AIDS Foundation

OF CHICAGO

411 South Wells Street
Suite 300
Chicago, IL 60607
www.aidschicago.org

Tel (312) 922-2322
Fax (312) 922-2916
TDD (312) 922-2917

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MEDIA CONTACT

Maude Carroll 312-334-0913

New Community Site Connects Users to HIV/AIDS Resources

CHICAGO – The AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) has launched a new online community website, AIDS Connect (www.aidsconnect.net), to link those affected by HIV/AIDS to vital resources in the Chicago area.

Hosted by AFC’s Service Providers Council (SPC), a coalition of more than 150 local AIDS service organizations, AIDS Connect serves as a launching pad for all things HIV/AIDS related in Chicago. Aimed at local service providers, educators, advocates, and those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, AIDS Connect will serve as the new and improved community site for the Chicago HIV/AIDS community.

Estimates show that over 27,000 people were living with HIV/AIDS in Chicago at the end of 2006. This includes the estimated 5,680 people—1 in 5 people living with HIV—who are infected with the virus, but do not know it.

“We wanted to create a one-stop shop, where those committed to the fight against AIDS in Chicago could get connected to the resources they need,” says AFC President/CEO Mark Ishaug. “Navigating the system when you are affected by HIV/AIDS can be difficult. AIDS Connect was created to make that process easier.”

On AIDS Connect, registered users can post HIV/AIDS related events; post HIV-related job, internship, and volunteer opportunities; and find information on housing, case management, legal advice, and other services.

AIDS Connect also provides easy access to two searchable directories: The Test Positive Aware Network directory which contains comprehensive information on HIV-related services; and Direct2Housing (direct2housing.org) which allows users to find the contact information, application process and eligibility criteria for supportive housing options in the metropolitan Chicago area.

AIDS Connect is also home to PEERSpeak, an interactive educational tool that provides HIV/AIDS education through the voices of people living with HIV. PEERSpeak utilizes colorful graphics and character-based audio to guide users through five self-care modules, developed primarily by HIV-positive people who are successfully navigating their own HIV diagnosis and treatment. PEERSpeak and its official home, AIDS

Connect, were both made possible through a grant from the National Library of Medicine.

Founded by community activists and physicians in 1985, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago is a catalyst for local, national, and international action on HIV/AIDS.

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