

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DeFrank Center Launches HIV/STD Counseling and Testing Program on February 1st, 2006

(San Jose, CA - January 27, 2006) Beginning February 1st, 2006, the Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center will be offering onsite HIV counseling and testing services to serve persons at greatest risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Thanks to an ongoing partnership with the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, the new program will provide free confidential HIV counseling and testing services every Wednesday evening from 5-9pm.

“With gay and bisexual men continuing to make up the vast majority of new cases of HIV and AIDS, this onsite counseling and testing is long overdue,” said Clark Williams, the DeFrank Center’s interim executive director. “As one in three Santa Clara County residents are completely unaware of their HIV infection, we expect that this testing initiative will dramatically improve our local public health response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.”

As encouraged by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the pilot HIV counseling and testing program will utilize rapid HIV testing technology. Rapid testing technology delivers a preliminary test result within twenty minutes and provides confirmatory HIV test results in one week. Certified HIV test counselors from the Crane Center – Santa Clara County’s designated site for HIV testing – will be used to help launch the pilot program.

“There are multiple gaps in our county’s public HIV counseling and testing programs,” Williams stated. “Though we desperately need a fulltime HIV counseling and testing site at the DeFrank Center, this pilot program is a step closer towards serving all of our residents in need.”

In addition to offering HIV counseling and testing services, the pilot program will also be providing greater onsite access to syphilis screening and other prevention services. For more information, please contact Clark Williams at 408.293.3040, ext. 103 or visit www.defrank.org.

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About The Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center:

Founded in 1981, the Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center addresses the needs and rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people of all ages and backgrounds in Silicon Valley. The DeFrank Center provides a broad range of wellness, social and recreational activities, and emotional support services to approximately 400 visitors each week. The DeFrank Center is a 501(c)3, federally registered, tax-exempt organization, and receives over 21,000 contacts and requests for service a year (either in-person, via phone or on-line). To learn more, visit www.defrank.org.

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