

County of Santa Clara

Office of the Board of Supervisors

County Government Center, East Wing
70 West Hedding Street, 10th Floor
San Jose, California 95110

(408) 299-5040

Fax: (408) 299-2038 TDD 993-8272

www.jimbeall.org



James T. Beall, Jr.
Supervisor Fourth District

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Contact: Sunshine Borelli
Chief of Staff, 408/299-5040

County Supervisor calls for more HIV testing in Santa Clara County

SAN JOSE, CA – Santa Clara County residents urgently need better access to HIV tests and modern rapid-test technology, according to County Supervisor Jim Beall. “HIV infections are up throughout our diverse county population,” Beall told a crowd commemorating World AIDS Day last week.

The County Supervisor surprised the room full of AIDS activists, community leaders and elected officials with his concerns about insufficient HIV testing. The crowd assembled in the new San Jose City Hall rotunda had only expected him to present a Resolution from the Board of Supervisors.

“We need a strong public-private partnership expanding the new rapid testing technology to more accessible testing sites,” Beall stated. He called on his colleagues and the Public Health Department to take immediate action.

“We have lost over 2,000 precious lives to AIDS in Santa Clara County,” Beall said. “I, too, have lost good friends to this terrible disease.”

Beall called for full-time testing and counseling at the Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center and committed to help find the funding for this essential new program. He also expressed “alarm” about the rise in the infection rate among young Latino men.

The Center for Disease Control reports that HIV infection rates are up by eight percent nationally. In Santa Clara County, Supervisor Beall estimates that “a few thousand” residents who have HIV are currently unaware they have contracted the virus.

“We must demand much more,” Beall said. “HIV and AIDS have been spreading in our community and throughout the world for over two decades.”

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