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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Cascade AIDS Project Expands HIV Prevention and Testing Services to Clark County, Washington**

*Award to Cascade AIDS Project helps reach those at highest risk for HIV in SW Washington*

VANCOUVER, WA. (January 25, 2010) –**Cascade AIDS Project (CAP)** brings its HIV prevention expertise to Clark County this month, taking the reins of HIV prevention and testing efforts at the **Harm Reduction Center** on East Fourth Plain Road in Vancouver, Washington. The Center is currently the only site in Clark County offering HIV testing specifically for *men who have sex men*, a population at highest risk for HIV infection in the region. Formerly run by **Clark County Public Health**, an award of \$96,250 from Clark County funds CAP to run the HIV testing at the center. Free, rapid HIV testing will continue on Thursday evenings from 4:00 to 8:00 PM. CAP will also work with community input on expanding testing and prevention efforts in the county, with the possibility of adding another testing site.

“CAP has been extremely successful in reaching those at highest risk for HIV with much needed prevention information and HIV testing at the Men’s Wellness Center (MWC) in Downtown Portland.” says Michael Anderson-Nathe, CAP’s Director of Prevention & Education. “We are excited to bring our expertise back to Clark County and continue reaching those at highest risk for HIV.”

In 2003, CAP was forced to close its Vancouver satellite office due to a lack of funding and this opportunity gives CAP and Clark County Public Health the opportunity to reengage and bring rapid HIV testing expertise to the SW Washington community. In addition to testing, CAP will also be conducting the Healthy Relationships intervention – an evidenced-based intervention (proven effective) for people living with HIV. This small group program uses popular movie clips and facilitated group discussion to teach participants stress coping and decision making skills on issues of HIV status disclosure to family, friends, and sexual partners.

“HIV does not recognize state and county lines, it knows no boundaries,” adds Anderson-Nathe. “We know, by the CDC’s statistics, that one in five people with HIV don’t even know they have the virus. And, when people get tested and then know they are HIV positive, they take steps to prevent new infections. A key part of preventing new infections is testing. So we want to offer folks in Clark County more opportunities to get tested.”

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### **About Cascade AIDS Project (CAP)**

Cascade AIDS Project is the oldest and largest community-based provider of HIV services, including housing, education, and advocacy in Oregon and Southwest Washington. CAP's mission is to *prevent HIV infections, support and empower people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS, and eliminate HIV/AIDS-related stigma*. Overall, last year CAP provided HIV/AIDS education and prevention services to 16,040 people and coordinated wrap-around support services for 2,502 people affected and infected with HIV/AIDS. In addition, 735 people gave 19,960 hours of their time to help CAP achieve its mission.

**For more information:** [www.cascadeaids.org](http://www.cascadeaids.org)

### **About Clark County Public Health Department**

Clark County Public Health has been serving the Clark County community for more than 75 years. Clark County Public Health works to: prevent disease and injury, promote healthier choices, protect food, water and air, and prepare for emergencies. Although Public Health often operates “behind the scenes,” the department’s services are vital to the safety and well-being of the community. For example, Public Health responds to outbreaks of diseases and controls their spread to prevent further illness, inspects restaurants to ensure the food is safe, monitors the quality of vaccines used to immunize individuals and their family and enforces regulations to make sure septic systems operate properly and pose no threat to human health. This kind of work often goes unnoticed – unless it isn’t being done. Public Health is working everyday for a safer and healthier community. Public Health’s long term vision is “Active, healthy families and people of all ages, abilities and cultures living, playing and working in thriving communities”. To achieve this vision they provide services that:

- Prevent and control the spread of diseases.
- Prepare for natural and man-made disasters.
- Ensure safe food, water and air.
- Promote wellness and good nutrition.
- Collect and assess data on the health of our community.
- Issue birth and death records.
- Reach out to at-risk and vulnerable populations to improve access to health services.
- Support the healthy development of first time moms and their children.

For more information: <http://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/index.asp>