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New Study Indicates Treating HIV patients with Medications earlier lowers their chances of spreading it- Implications are great if you know your status

May 12, 2011 – Portland, OR – Results from a major study released today show that early access to treatment for HIV-positive individuals can dramatically lower their chance of spreading the virus to sexual partners. According to a National Institutes of Health (NIH) news release, early treatment of HIV can reduce HIV transmission to sexual partners by 96%. The NIH-funded study was originally slated to end in 2015, but because of the significance of the findings, results are being released early.

<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/news/newsreleases/2011/Pages/HPTN052.aspx>

“This is huge,” said Michael Kaplan, Executive Director at Cascade AIDS Project. “Basically, what this means is that, if we could get everyone to know their HIV-status and get access to early treatment, we could radically change the course of this epidemic.” HIV-related treatments are covered by most private insurance programs, and thanks to federal and state funds that support the state's CAREAssist program, HIV-positive Oregonians living at 300% of poverty or less are guaranteed access to treatment.

“Though there is no cure for HIV, we know that access to early treatment can both substantially improve health outcomes for those infected and dramatically reduce transmission of the virus resulting in new infections.” Of course, the first step in early treatment is to know your status.

While federal funds often support HIV-testing to highest-risk populations, few programs are targeted at the general public, despite the CDC’s 2006 HIV-testing recommendations suggesting all health care systems should routinely screen everyone between the ages 13 and 64 for HIV infection.

Funding from the CDC and local counties allows Cascade AIDS Project to provide targeted testing for men who have sex with men at Pivot (209 SW Fourth Ave., www.pivotpdx.org). In addition, using its general fund, CAP offers HIV-screening services to anyone wanting to know their HIV status in a new “Testing for All” program. Testing for All is open Monday through Friday from 10 to 4pm and provides rapid screening with results delivered within 30 minutes. While each test cost roughly \$80 to complete, CAP does not charge for the test but asks for a donation. No one who is unable to donate is turned away. To arrange for an HIV test, call 503.278.3879 or 503.223.5907.

CAP staff are available to show how the testing process works and for interview.

(continued on page 2)

About Cascade AIDS Project

Incorporated in 1985, Cascade AIDS Project (CAP) is the oldest and largest AIDS Service Organization in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Our mission is ***to prevent HIV infections, support and empower people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS, and eliminate HIV/AIDS-related stigma.***

With a staff of 50, and a volunteer corps that includes over 700 individuals providing more than 21,000 hours of service each year, CAP manages a diverse array of programs and an annual budget of \$4.6 million. Fifteen percent of CAP's staff are individuals living with HIV, 25% identify from communities of color, and 30% are bilingual. Our programs serve the broad and diverse set of communities impacted by HIV, from community-specific programs focused on teens, Latinos, the gay community, individuals and families living with HIV, to the thousands of individuals throughout the state who seek education through our AIDS/STD hotline each year. A committed 18-member volunteer Board of Directors provides strategic guidance and oversight to ensure CAP accomplishes its mission and continues to operate with integrity and transparency. www.cascadeaids.org.

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