



A health fair with free HIV/AIDS and syphilis screenings will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at 1402 S. Central Ave., Phoenix (Central and Buckeye). AIDS Awareness Day promotes HIV testing and education among Latinos and mobilizes Latino communities in the fight against AIDS. This year's theme - Knowledge is Power. Get the Facts. Get Tested for HIV - is calling on Latinos to confront the stigmas associated with the disease and help stem the spread of AIDS.

"Hispanic Heritage Month is the perfect time of year to empower people to get tested and help address this health issue that is disproportionately affecting the Latino community," Pastor said. "I congratulate the national and local organizations that have joined forces to hold this health fair Saturday."

Latinos continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV, comprising nearly 20 percent of HIV/AIDS cases nationwide but only 14 percent of the national population. Limited access to prevention and care, cultural barriers, language barriers and immigration status have contributed to this disparity.

The National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD) was created by the Latino Commission on AIDS and the Hispanic Federation in partnership with community-based organizations, people living with HIV/AIDS, health departments and others to educate, empower and enable the Latino community to confront AIDS.

Organizers of the Phoenix health fair include Concilio Latino de Salud, the Mexican Consulate,

and Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc. Screening will be conducted by The Maricopa County Department of Public Health, Ebony House, Terros and Native Health. More than 350 institutions in 250 cities across the continental United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are participating in NLAAD, which takes place annually on Oct. 15, the last day of Hispanic Heritage Month.