December 1 Marks World AIDS Day: Denver Public Health Supports PrEP as Tool to Reduce HIV Transmission Rates

MEDIA NOTE: Mark Thrun, Dale Britt and Brian LeMaire are available for interviews Monday, December 1. Please call 303-520-9591 to schedule a time.

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DENVER, CO (November 28, 2014) – Dale Britt and Brian LeMaire have been together for 26 years. For all but one of those months, Brian has been living with HIV. And, in all of their years together, Dale has never tested positive for the virus.

The first day of December is World AIDS Day, providing an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, support people living with HIV, and remember people who have died. It also provides an opportunity to increase awareness of and support for prevention tools, including the use of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) for HIV.

A person who does not have HIV uses PrEP to prevent themselves from becoming infected if they are exposed to the virus. The medication (Truvada®) is taken once a day, and it works by limiting HIV’s ability to enter into and grow within a person’s body. When used correctly, PrEP has been shown to be more than 90 percent effective in preventing HIV. PrEP is just one tool that will reduce transmission rates of HIV. Other forms of prevention include testing, counseling, adherence to treatment among people living with HIV, and education.

“PrEP is not prescribed lightly, and we require the person using it to commit to counseling, correct use, and routine HIV and medical testing,” says Mark Thrun, MD, director, HIV/STD Prevention and Control, Denver Public Health. “But when we have this commitment, we know that PrEP is incredibly effective in keeping those at increased risk for HIV free from infection.”
Denver Public Health recommends PrEP for people who do not have HIV infection and are at increased risk for HIV, including:

- Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men who engage in unprotected sex.
- HIV-negative individuals (men and women) who have an HIV-positive sexual partner.
- Injection drug users.

Dale and Brian lived through the advent of HIV care as we know it today – antiretroviral therapy (ART). The road was not always easy. And though the couple lost many friends to HIV along the journey, they always remained optimistic and never gave up the fight against HIV. Earlier this year Dale began taking PrEP, a step that both he and Brian felt was not only important for their future, but also for a future for Denver in which there no new cases of HIV or AIDS.

About Denver Public Health

Denver Public Health provides a wide range of services that evaluate, promote and protect the health and well-being of the residents of Denver and beyond. Denver Public Health monitors the health of Denver and responds to disease outbreaks and other emergencies, as well as works with many partners to prevent health problems by decreasing injury, preventing tobacco-related illnesses and promoting health eating and active living. Clinical services include: STD screening and treatment, family planning, immunizations, tuberculosis screening and care, birth and death records, and HIV/AIDS care.

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