



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

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340-774-0001

WORLD AIDS DAY 2014

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

A PROCLAMATION

The Joint United Nations Program (UNAIDS) observes December 1 of each year as *World AIDS Day*, a day to expand and strengthen worldwide efforts to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The 2014 theme for World AIDS Day is "Focus, Partner, Achieve: An AIDS-free Generation.

World AIDS Day is a day to remember those who have been lost to this deadly disease and give compassion and hope to those who live courageously with HIV/AIDS every day. It is important that we continue to promote HIV/AIDS **awareness and prevention** in order to help prevent further spread of this disease.

World AIDS Day provides an opportunity to focus local, national and international attention on HIV infection and AIDS and to disseminate information on how to prevent the spread of HIV. The global epidemic of HIV infection and AIDS requires a worldwide effort to increase communication, education and a united action to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Part of an effective response is to help collaborative partners work together nationally and internationally to prevent the spread of HIV. The goal of the Virgin Islands Department of Health and community based agencies funded by the federal government is to increase awareness about how HIV is spread. The Government of the Virgin Islands as well as key policymakers should make every effort to meet the targets they have agreed to in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

HIV disease continues to be a serious health issue for parts of the world. The HIV epidemic not only affects the health of individuals. It impacts households and communities. In

the Virgin Islands, there were 134 new diagnoses of HIV infection reported between 2008 and 2012. At the end of 2012, 576 people are living with HIV in the Virgin Islands. HIV has claimed the lives of 446 Virgin Islands residents since the epidemic began. Because there is no cure for HIV at this time, treatment is a lifelong process. Only 30% of the HIV positive population in the Virgin Islands were receiving care in 2012. Lowering the amount of HIV virus in the body with medicines promotes the life span of a person living with HIV infection and greatly reduces the chance of passing the virus on to others. Only 19% of the Virgin Islands HIV population achieved viral suppression. While the statistics are alarming, new medications, scientific advancements, and treatment and prevention efforts give us reason for hope.

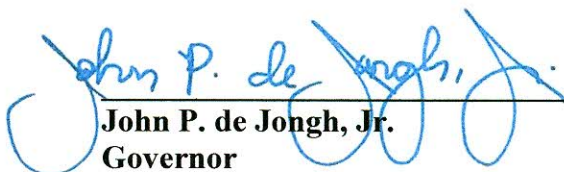
Poverty, instability, infidelity, intravenous drug use, co-infection with other STD's, violence, lack of access to adequate health care and ignorance all contribute to the epidemic. Fear, shame, anger, ignorance and injustice worldwide are currently causing people living with HIV/AIDS unnecessary pain due to the stigma associated with the disease.

The American Association for World Health is encouraging a better understanding of the challenge of HIV/AIDS nationally as it recognizes that the number of people diagnosed with HIV and AIDS in the United States continues to increase every year; and among women, minorities – particularly African-Americans – having the vast majority of AIDS cases.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John P. de Jongh, Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, do hereby proclaim Monday, December 1, 2014 as *World AIDS Day* in the United States Virgin Islands. I urge all citizens to take part in activities and observances designed to increase awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS in our community and as a global challenge, to take part in HIV/AIDS prevention activities and programs throughout the Territory, and to join the global effort to prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to be affixed at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, this 1st day of December, A.D., 2014.




John P. de Jongh, Jr.
Governor

Attest:


Gregory R. Francis
Lieutenant Governor