

THE FIFTH ANNUAL NATIONAL LATINO AIDS AWARENESS DAY

It is being reported that in America, today marks the fifth annual National Latino AIDS Awareness Day.

It was started by the Latino Commission on AIDS in 2003, to bring an increased sense of awareness to the 4th leading cause of death of Hispanic Latino men and women ages 35 to 44 in America.

According to Marcy Lopez, director of policy and advocacy for the Latino Commission on AIDS, Hispanics rank second behind blacks for AIDS diagnoses among minorities.

Statistics are very telling, as despite the fact that Latinos only account for roughly 14% of the US population, they account for 19% of the country's HIV cases.

"HIV testing plays a critical role in stemming the spread of AIDS," says Washington State Health Officer Dr. Maxine Hayes. "Knowing HIV status means you can make decisions to take care of your health and the health of those you care about."

"Prevention is the key to working with HIV," said Marlana Rodriguez, director of education and outreach for the Valley AIDS Council. "Although there are effective treatments available, there's no cure, so preventing transmission is the key."

According to Anthony Fauci, director of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases: "Racial and ethnic minorities continue to be disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic."