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Date: 11/22/2017

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

World AIDS Day

Lincoln County Looks toward an End to HIV/AIDS

NEWPORT, Ore. – Every year, December 1st marks World AIDS Day. This day serves to commemorate the lives that have been lost to HIV/AIDS and as a reminder of how far we have come. It also provides motivation to keep working toward finally seeing an end to new HIV/AIDS diagnoses.

HIV was first identified in 1984 and during these early years, there was little treatment. Since then over 36 million people have died from HIV/AIDS worldwide. Because of these losses, we have made great strides in treatment and prevention. We now understand that HIV transmission occurs through contact with an infected person's blood and other bodily fluids and that there are effective prevention methods like using condoms and not sharing needles among people who engage in IV drug use. With our better understanding of transmission and better treatment options, we are seeing lower rates of new infections and those with HIV/AIDS are living longer, healthier lives.

We still have work to do. The theme of this year's World AIDS Day is, "Increasing Impact through Transparency, Accountability, and Partnership." To move this work forward locally, Lincoln County Public Health will be partnering with Linn County Public Health, Benton County Public Health, and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians on a new HIV prevention grant. This federal grant will align HIV prevention services within Lincoln, Linn and Benton counties. Ruby Moon, Community Health Director, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians says "The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians is excited to partner with Lincoln County Public Health Department to ensure those who test positive for HIV in our community receive services and treatment and to reduce the spread through outreach and education efforts."

This grant will focus on three main components; to reach out to high risk groups to get tested, to educate the community about prevention and to assure infected individuals receive care and treatment. With this grant, we will strive to provide person-centered, confidential resources to those who test positive for HIV infection through HIV Alliance, a Lane County-based community organization which partners with 11 counties in Oregon, including Lincoln, to provide these support services to people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, the HIV Alliance professionals will train our team to implement education and prevention resources and create a pathway to treatment

to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. “We are excited to help the State of Oregon reduce HIV positive cases to zero. Sometimes rural areas are forgotten in these prevention efforts, and we feel very fortunate to partner with the Siletz Tribe and HIV Alliance to prevent HIV/AIDS in our community.” says Rebecca Austen, Lincoln County Public Health Director.

In addition to this expansion of HIV prevention and testing services, our public health clinic and federally qualified health center, Lincoln Community Health Center, continue to provide testing of sexually transmitted infections and other reproductive health services to the community, regardless of insurance status. To inquire about services or to make an appointment, you can contact the Lincoln County Public Health clinic at (541) 265-4112 and the Lincoln Community Health Center at (541) 265-4947.

Lincoln County Public Health, in collaboration with our community partners, provides leadership to assure the conditions for healthy communities.

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