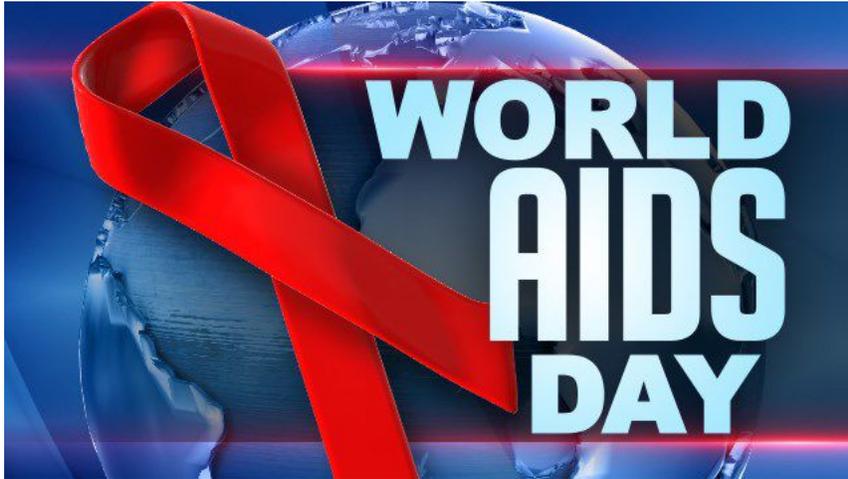


http://www.wtxl.com/news/fsu-college-of-medicine-hosts-hiv-aids-awareness-candlelight-vigil/article_ee5e4732-b767-11e6-963a-3fa3b9b10e6d.html

FSU College of Medicine Hosts HIV/AIDS Awareness Candlelight Vigil

Nov 30, 2016



MGN Online

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (WTXL) -

Once upon a time, HIV or AIDS was a death sentence. Now, while an estimated 1.2 million people in the U.S. are infected with HIV, many live relatively normal lives.

“The average life expectancy in the United States for someone is around 79,” said Florida State University’s Dr. Jonathan Appelbaum, who has researched the disease throughout his career. “If you’re infected with HIV at age 20, and you get care and follow up with medical appointments and take your medications, your average life expectancy now is 71. That’s certainly much better than the old days when if you got infected at 20, you were lucky to live to 30 to 35. It was about a 10 to 15-year lifespan.”

But despite better medicines and treatments, new infections remain high. According to the CDC, part of that can be explained by the 1 in 8 of 1.2 million people living with the virus in the U.S. that don’t know they’re infected.

While the medicines may be getting better, Appelbaum believed that the discovery of a cure is still years away and will not be developed in the next five to 10 years.

“This is a really difficult virus to eradicate,” Appelbaum said. “It has some unique properties as opposed to other viruses like those causing colds or flu. This is a unique, innovative virus. It does a lot of unique things to the body.”

All hope is not lost, however, as prevention strategies are also getting better.

“PrEP’s benefits are really exciting,” Walsh said, “because it’s not only preventing HIV, but it gets men in to see a primary care provider every three months for testing. For young men, that’s not common.”

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is a special pill for someone who is not infected with HIV, but is at risk for contracting the virus. The PrEP pill, a combination of two medications, is taken daily and it helps protect a person from contracting HIV.

FSU’s campus is also hosting a HIV/AIDS Awareness Candlelight Vigil will be at 6 p.m., on Dec. 2, in the atrium of Florida State’s College of Medicine.

The event will include the latest information about HIV/AIDS prevention, student performances and remarks.

Before the vigil, free HIV and syphilis testing will be offered from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.