



**BOULDER COUNTY
AIDS PROJECT**

For Immediate Release:

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Boulder pilots National HIV/AIDS anti-stigma event- "IF I WERE HIV+"

Boulder, CO Thursday March 10, 2011 –On National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NWGHAAD) a national campaign to challenge stigma and discrimination will launch the "IF I WERE HIV+" action to initiate community wide discussions. Nearly thirty years into the HIV epidemic, stigma and discrimination against HIV+ people continues as the largest barrier to testing and treatment for the nearly 1.1 million people infected with HIV in the United States.

Women represent a larger share of new HIV infections compared to earlier in the epidemic. 27% of those infected are women, which mean that in 2011 close to 280,000 women are living with HIV and AIDS in the US. The CDC estimates that 21% of those infected don't know their status.ⁱ

As HIV infection continues to affect approximately 1 out of every 300 Americans, misconceptions about HIV and stigma persist. While personal connections with HIV+ people increase (43% say they know someone who has AIDS, is HIV+ or has died of AIDS) challenges remain. 51% of those surveyed by the Kaiser Family Foundation would be uncomfortable having their food prepared by someone who is HIV+ and 27% do not know that HIV cannot be transmitted by sharing a drinking glass.ⁱⁱ

To increase awareness, the Boulder County AIDS Project (BCAP) joins with the US Positive Women's Network to launch the "IF I WAS HIV+..." community discussion campaign. 45 activists and allies will sport bright pink tee shirts on Thursday, March 10 as they go about their regular day, using the slogan on the front of the tee shirts "IF I WERE HIV+" to start conversations. Using this to educate other community members about HIV risks, stigma and the challenges if being HIV+, volunteers will share their stories.

"We hope that the community will see that HIV+ people are your neighbors, your friends, and the woman working out at the gym. For one day at least, HIV+ people won't be invisible. We will stand with them for community awareness," says Jenna Borys, BCAP's Community Outreach Coordinator.

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ⁱ Kaiser Family Foundation, Women and HIV in the United States, Fact Sheet 11/2010

ⁱⁱ Kaiser Family Foundation, 2009 Survey of American on HIV/AIDS: Findings on the Domestic Epidemic.