

Facebook/Live Town Hall for World AIDS Day

"What Can I Do to Make a Difference?"

World AIDS Day in New York State featured a new event in 2011 that was focused on young people and designed to encourage the use of social media against HIV and sexually transmitted diseases and to highlight the strong connection between adolescent alcohol/drug use and sexual risk behavior.

On November 29 in Albany, the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute held a Facebook/Live Town Hall featuring three distinguished panelists who answered questions by live audience members and those posted on Facebook and on the DOH site.

Among the questions:

"How can you tell if someone has HIV?"

"If both partners test negative, do they still have to use a condom?"

"With an undetectable viral load, can someone still pass on the virus?"

"How did your family and community treat you when they found out you were positive?"

"Why are so many young black women becoming infected?"

"Why should you take the test if there is no cure?"

"How can you drink and still keep yourself safe?"

The three panelists, introduced by AIDS Institute moderator Dora Swan, an expert in her own right on adolescent HIV/STD prevention programs, were:

Dr. Donna Futterman, Director of the Adolescent AIDS Program at Montefiore Medical Center and Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx (Learn more about Montefiore's Adolescent AIDS Program at <http://www.adolescentaids.org/>);

Marvelyn Brown, spokesperson for the "We are Greater Than AIDS" national campaign sponsored by the Kaiser Family Foundation and co-author of The Naked Truth: Young, Beautiful, and (HIV) Positive (See Marvelyn's "Deciding Moment" video at <http://www.greaterthan.org/decidingmoments/>);

Dr. Jeffrey Reynolds, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Vice Chair of the NY State AIDS Advisory Council, and creator of "Too Good for Drugs," a substance abuse prevention program for students in grades K through 12 (Information about the "Too Good for Drugs" program can be found at <http://www.licadd.com/services/education/>).

Young people were also offered the chance to record a short video answering the question "What Can I Do to Make a Difference?"