



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**State Health Department Director to Highlight HIV/AIDS
Initiatives Targeting African Americans in Champaign**

**Champaign-Urbana Public Health Administrator to Participate
Public Health Will Offer HIV Counseling & Testing After Dr. Whitaker's Speech**

On Thursday, February 2, 2006, from noon-1 p.m., Dr. Eric Whitaker, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, will speak at a lunch and learn program at the **African American Cultural Center, 708 S. Mathews, Urbana, on the campus of the University of Illinois.**

Dr. Whitaker's presentation will center on Brothers and Sisters United Against HIV/AIDS (BASUAH), a statewide initiative targeting African Americans for HIV information & testing. (www.basuah.org)

Wellness on Wheels, the mobile outreach program that originated at Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, is a key component of BASUAH. A recent press release from Governor Rod Blagojevich's office noted that: "Wellness on Wheels, a mobile health unit, will bring a variety of health screenings, including HIV testing, to underserved areas in eight counties that lack medical resources. This is an expansion of the highly successful Wellness on Wheels van currently serving the Champaign and Decatur areas, bringing HIV and STD testing to residents of public housing complexes, shelters, and the homeless."

As Public Health developed one of the components that is being replicated across the state, Dr. Whitaker has asked Public Health Administrator Vito Palazzolo to speak at the event as well.

The Public Health Division of Infectious Disease Prevention & Management will be available on a Wellness on Wheels mobile unit to provide HIV risk reduction counseling and FREE 20-minute HIV Rapid testing after the presentation (1-3 p.m.).

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