



Contact: Yvette Bello  
Tel: (860) 296-6400 ext. 238  
Cell: (860) 416-7923  
Email: ybello@lcs-ct.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## THE HOOKUP HITTING THE STREETS OF HARTFORD Expanding HIV Testing to Reach People Who Do Not Know Their HIV Status

Hartford - June 20, 2012 at 3:00pm at Hartford's City Hall a long-held dream of Latino Community Services will come true. That day, our mobile testing unit "**The Hook Up**" will be officially introduced to the Hartford Community. With the help of Mayor Pedro Segarra and Chris Andresen, Section Chief of Infectious Diseases of the Department of Public Health, the mobile testing unit will roll out into different neighborhoods, expanding testing, providing educational sessions and information to community members throughout the City of Hartford. The mobile unit will be staffed by certified HIV/testers and counselors who can provide HIV other sexually transmitted disease information, HIV testing, orient persons to community resources, refer people to HIV care and support services.

It is time to face the sobering fact that HIV/AIDS has not gone away. Every day new cases of HIV are reported and not just in Connecticut. According to the Centers for Disease Control, every year 50,000 people are newly infected with HIV in the United States and one in five people are unaware that they are HIV positive. In Connecticut, the Department of Public Health estimates that 2,811 people are unaware that they are HIV-positive. "Even though protecting ourselves from HIV can mean different things from person to person, it must begin with knowing our own HIV status" says Yvette Bello, Executive Director.

Things are changing rapidly in our world and so must the way we fight diseases like HIV. Long gone are the days when we only wait in our offices for people to access services. We have to do more and one way to do that is providing testing services to different locations throughout the City of Hartford.

Latino Community Services, Inc. (formerly Latinos Contra SIDA), is a non-profit organization based in the City of Hartford with twenty-six years of experience providing services to people living with HIV/ AIDS and people at risk for HIV infection. Latino Community Services (LCS) is the only Latino-led organization in the City of Hartford dedicated exclusively to providing comprehensive and coordinated prevention, education, and care services to populations at risk.

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