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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pacific Pride Foundation Addresses Hep C; Critical Issue for Baby Boomer Generation

Santa Barbara, Calif., July 16, 2018 – Pacific Pride Foundation (PPF), providing programs and services to more than 10,000 people in Santa Barbara County, is the largest LGBTQ+ center between Los Angeles and San Francisco. July 28th is World Hepatitis Day, and to increase awareness, PPF is holding walk-in hours for free and anonymous Hepatitis C (Hep C) testing on July 30 from 12:00-6:00 p.m.

According to the Center for Disease Control, Hepatitis C is particularly problematic for the Baby Boomer generation, or those born between the years of 1945 and 1965. This demographic is five times more likely to have Hep C than other adults, and many can live for decades without any symptoms or feeling sick. Three out of four people with Hep C were born between 1945 and 1965, and most who have the disease do not know they are infected. The CDC recommends that all Baby Boomers get tested for Hep C because of these unique risk factors.

Hepatitis C can cause liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer. Current or former injection drug users (including those who injected only once many years ago) are another high risk group. PPF reaches current injection drug users with the syringe exchange program done from their Health Utility Vehicle across the County each week, where free Hep C and HIV testing is offered as well. However, Baby Boomers are a population PPF hopes to reach, because awareness among that generation of Hep C is lower.

“New advances in medicine means Hepatitis C can be cured. We encourage everyone, especially those born between 1945-1965, to be tested for Hep C,” said Colette Schabram, Executive Director at PPF. “This is a critical point in overall health for the individual and for our community.”

Free and anonymous Hep C testing will be offered at PPF’s Santa Barbara office at 608 Anacapa Street, Suite A on July 30 from 12:00-6:00 p.m. For more

information on PPF's Health and Prevention Programs, visit pacificpridefoundation.org/health-prevention.

PPF is the largest LGBTQ+ center between Los Angeles and San Francisco, serving all of Santa Barbara County, and partnering with 35 other educational and nonprofit agencies to create a thriving and visible LGBTQ+ community and prevent the transmission of HIV and HEP-C. PPF provides services and programs to more than 10,000 clients in the inclusive and diverse LGBTQ+ community including youth programs, elder programs, counseling services, sensitivity trainings, community events, and advocacy on LGBTQ+ issues.

PPF directly prevents the transmission of disease through its HIV/AIDS and HEP-C testing and prevention outreach and education, delivering 1300 free tests in the past year. PPF is the leader in programs for LGBTQ+ youth, serving 200 kids with mental health, suicide prevention, and anti-bullying programs, while providing them with a safe place and leadership opportunities. PPF is addressing the opioid crisis through the only clean needle exchange program in the county, which collects about 100,000 used needles every year, and distributing Narcan kits, which have saved 90 people from potentially fatal overdoses in the past year.

For more information or to make a donation please visit <https://pacificpridefoundation.org>