



Georgia Doty Health Education Fund

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attention: Assignment Editors, Health Editors, and City Editors

For More Information

Don Doty: 773-221-1426 or 312-282-1375

STATE OFFICIALS TO ATTEND "PRISON RE-ENTRY PROJECT" GRADUATION

Georgia Doty Health Education Fund Program Brings The Hazards and Risks of Hepatitis A, B and C and HIV/AIDS Front and Center to Males at Transitional Facilities Prior to Their Return to Society

March 7, 2006 (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS) — On March 14, 2006, Georgia Doty Health Education Fund will graduate several individuals who have completed one of more than twenty-four 20-hour intensive education and awareness programs conducted by them and partnering agencies **Men and Women Prison Ministries, Exodus Renewal Society and Trinity United Church of Christ**, regarding hepatitis A, B, and C and HIV/AIDS. The graduation will take place at the North Lawndale Adult Transition, 2839 W. Fillmore, Chicago, IL.



Ms. Louanner Peters

Slated to attend the eighth graduation on March 14 representing the Governor's office, Ms. Louanner Peters, Deputy Chief of Staff Social Service Programs; Cook County Commissioner, Roberto Malanado; State Representatives Lou Jones and Timothy Walker.

Funded by the Illinois Department of Public Health, this program is designed to educate inmates about hepatitis A, B, and C and HIV/AIDS and provide vaccinations for hepatitis A and B. The training is conducted at three adult transitional facilities, which is the first stop for inmates coming out of the prison system before they are fully released back to society. To aid in this transition, the program provides a comprehensive component on the role of the male in the family and society as well as a spirituality component.

Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS are two significant public health problems in Illinois. Both of these diseases have disproportionately affected communities of color. Since 1981, 50 percent (15,904) of all reported AIDS cases in Illinois have been among African-Americans and 13 percent (4,090) have been among Hispanics while African-Americans and Hispanics account for only 15 and 12 percent of the population, respectively. *"Because of these statistics the Governor and state health department officials realized there was a need to educate and*

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vaccinate individuals who have been incarcerated and who likely have little to no knowledge about the diseases and health risks”, states Doty Fund president, Don Doty. “This program has been an eye-opening experience for these men. They have come to our sessions not really knowing what they will receive but once we’ve raised their awareness about the hazards of these diseases, they eagerly agree to take the hepatitis A & B vaccinations which are made available to them as part of the program” states Chris Moore of Exodus Renewal Society who trains the men on the role of men in society.

There are four more graduations scheduled before the program ends in June. Graduates will also receive supportive after release services.

About Georgia Doty Health Education Fund

For more information about the Georgia Doty Health Education Fund, its programs and events, call 773-221-1426 or visit www.georgiadotyfund.org.

For the past twelve years, the **Georgia Doty Health Education Fund** a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization’s mission has been to raise awareness within communities of color regarding Hepatitis A, B and C infection and other health problems and educate them on the risks, treatments and measures of avoidance in an effort to retard the continuing spread of these infections.



Ms. Louanner Peters

State of Illinois Deputy Chief of Staff for Social Services Louanner Peters

Biography

Ms. Peters has a Masters in Social Work and is a long standing advocate in the area of breast cancer research, and reduction in health disparities. She worked on Capitol Hill for 12 years, 10 of which she served as Chief of Staff for Congressman Gus Savage. Ms. Peters has been a tenacious advocate on issues that focus on senior citizens, families, children, economic inequities and civil rights injustices.

Currently serving as Deputy Chief of Staff for Social Services in the Office of Governor Rod Blagojevich, Ms. Peters' responsibilities include oversight for state government's social services areas, including the Departments of Human Services, Public Aid, Children and Family Services, Public Health, Veterans Affairs, Human Rights, Aging, and the Housing Development Authority.