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DOGS ARE TALKING IN SAN FRANCISCO

Press Event Planned to Launch New Syphilis Awareness Targeting Gay and Bisexual Men

SAN FRANCISCO, CA— The San Francisco Department of Public Health's Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention and Control Services unit continues to lead the country in designing innovative, edgy campaigns that influence behavior change.

The latest iteration of creative campaigning against the spread of STD's will kick off on **Wednesday, July 18th at noon in Civic Center Plaza, San Francisco**. The park setting will provide a perfect backdrop for a number of dogs and their owners, the STD unit, along with Promotions West, a local Bay Area public relations firm, to unleash *Dogs Are Talking*—a provocative campaign designed to create awareness of Syphilis for gay and bisexual men 35- 45 years of age in San Francisco. Syphilis continues to remain a problem in the gay community.

Dogs were selected because most people find dogs, especially puppies, irresistible. In most gay communities around the world, dogs and puppies are humorously referred to as date magnets. This campaign hopes to take advantage of the way gay men feel about their pets while getting a very important message across.

The campaign has wide community support. John L. Lipp, Executive Director for the 20 year-old Pets are Wonderful Support (PAWS) organization, observed that, "The healing power of the human-animal bond is well documented, and the *Dogs Are Talking* campaign reminds people that their four-legged best friends are watching out for them with unconditional love and honesty. When it comes to changing the world—or in this case stopping the spread of a sexually transmitted disease—never underestimate the love between a gay man and his dog."

The campaign uses dogs, who see everything that occurs in the life of its owner, as the focal point to communicating about situations they know are happening in their daily lives. "Our goal is to get people to imagine that dogs have become very concerned about the health of their owners and are simply talking to each other about creative ways to convince their owners to get tested for Syphilis every three to six months as part of a responsible healthcare routine," said Jeffrey Klausner, MD, Director of STD Prevention and Control.

For more information about the campaign, *Dogs Are Talking*, please visit the website at www.dogsaretalking.com.

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