



# Harris County Hospital District

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **HCHD Spearheads Multi-Hospital Effort to Deliver HIV-Free Babies**

HOUSTON (EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2007) – On National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day March 9, the Harris County Hospital District's Thomas Street Health Center will announce the launch of Texas' first countywide program to drastically reduce, if not eliminate, the tragedy of babies being born HIV-positive.

Thomas Street, a specialty facility that treats and cares for 25 percent of all HIV/AIDS patients in Harris County, received a \$140,000 grant from the Texas Department of State Health Services for this unique program. The goals of the Texas Rapid-testing Implementation At Delivery (TRIAD) are to train labor and delivery staffs on how to use rapid testing methods and drug treatments to prevent HIV-positive expectant mothers from passing on the virus to their unborn children.

In all, 10 area hospitals will participate in the project. These hospitals were targeted because they deliver the largest number of babies to women with no prenatal care and whose HIV status is usually unknown until after delivery.

“We have identified the hospitals that would most benefit from the rapid testing protocols we've established,” said Dr. Judy Levison, physician coordinator from Thomas Street. “Our participating hospitals are at various levels of preparedness – some have rapid tests and/or antiretroviral medication available, while others do not.”

Ben Taub and Lyndon B. Johnson general hospitals, part of the hospital district, are already participating in the program and have a higher than 99 percent success rate of delivering virus-free babies. The Houston Department of Health and Human Services is also collaborating with this initiative.

**WHAT:** Announcement of the Texas Rapid-testing Implementation At Delivery (TRIAD)

**WHEN:** 11 a.m. Friday, March 9, 2007

**WHERE:** Third floor conference room, Thomas Street Health Center, 2015 Thomas St., Houston, 77009.

*Photo opportunities and interviews with officials and some patients will be available.*

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