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NORTHWEST newsbriefs

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fun, intimacy and wellness, call 503-223-8822 or visit www.qland.org.

BAR TESTING REACHES HIGH-RISK MEN

The Multnomah County Health Department has issued a preliminary report about a series of 16 bar testing parties sponsored by Q-LAND (Queer Love Action Network for Discovery), a nonprofit queer men's wellness and STD prevention organization serving the Portland area.

Of 148 men tested in the first 12 events, four tested positive for HIV and one tested positive for syphilis. About three-quarters agreed to get a blood test for syphilis during the bar testing event. Seven men admitted IV drug use and tested for hepatitis C, which is spread primarily through IV drug use.

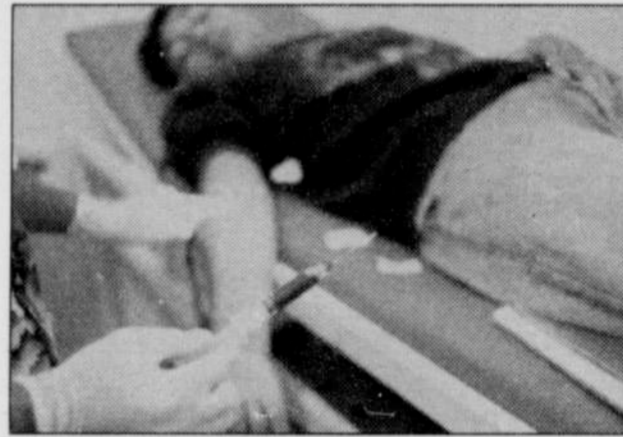
About 77 percent of the men who tested had not been tested in more than seven months, and almost half hadn't been tested in more than a year. Q-LAND volunteers distributed 7,000 safer-sex kits and about 40,000 invitations to bar testing parties in eight months.

"Clearly we are reaching high-risk men who are not getting tested regularly in other venues, and because we're offering free, regular, convenient testing in bars, men are able to follow the health department's recommendation for sexually active gay men to get tested every three months," said Bart Church, Q-LAND's program coordinator. "Because we're inviting hundreds of men every weekend to regularly get tested for HIV and STDs, and letting them know about the recent syphilis and gonorrhea epidemics among gay men in the Portland area, community norms about testing are beginning to change. Testing every three months is becoming the norm. It is good news that...for the first time in five years, syphilis will not double among gay men in the Portland area."

For more information about Q-LAND's efforts to educate queer men about these STDs, promote regular testing and provide more life-affirming ways for gay and bi men to meet their needs for

FREE BAR TESTING SITES

- **Pillow Talk Party:** 9 to 11:30 p.m. Jan. 14 at Boxxes, 1035 S.W. Stark St. \$2 donation.
- **Manhunt Party:** 9 to 11:30 p.m. Jan. 21 at Scandals, 1038 S.W. Stark St. Free.



A quick blood draw and oral testing are available for free at Q-LAND's bar parties

INTERFAITH GROUP CONSIDERS FORMING PORTLAND CHAPTER

Donna Red Wing, former director of the Lesbian Community Project, will return to Portland this month in her new role as field adviser to The Interfaith Alliance.

Founded in 1994 by an interfaith group of religious leaders, the group works to promote interfaith cooperation around shared religious values to strengthen the public's commitment to the American values of civic participation, freedom of religion, diversity

and civility in public discourse and to encourage the active involvement of people of faith in the nation's political life. Members include religious leaders and activists—some with years of political experience, some just starting out. They work in local communities, in state capitals, in Washington, D.C., and wherever else their voice is needed.

Red Wing is coming to town to engage a conversation about chartering a Portland chapter from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. Jan. 19 at Central Library, 801 S.W. 10th Ave. The meeting is open to any person of faith and goodwill who wishes to discuss the alliance's future in Portland. To RSVP e-mail dredwing@interfaithalliance.org.

The group has 150,000 members across the nation representing diverse religious and spiritual traditions: Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs—70 faith traditions in all—as well as many agnostics and atheists. The alliance's national office works on Capitol Hill and with the White House, in coalition with denominational bodies and other activist organizations, to make sure its unique message is communicated when and where it matters most. A total of 47 chapters carry this message to local decision-makers, media and the public at large.

NAITO AND ROJO SWORN IN

Multnomah County Commissioners Lisa Naito and Maria Rojo de Steffey were sworn in Jan. 5.



Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey and Joe D'Alessandro, president and CEO of the Portland Oregon Visitors Association