

**GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***WESTCHESTER COUNTY OBSERVES WORLD AIDS DAY***

*Westchester County Health Department Employee to Receive  
State Health Commissioner's Special Recognition Award*

(White Plains, NY) – Linda Hakim, a dedicated advocate for those with and at risk for HIV for more than 17 years, will receive a Commissioner's Special Recognition Award at the statewide 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual World AIDS Day Event to take place virtually on Tuesday, December 1.

Hakim, who manages the Westchester County Health Department PrEP/PEP Program, is one of 19 awardees selected statewide. PrEP is a preventive treatment that when taken daily can prevent HIV in people who are most at risk and PEP or post-exposure prophylaxis, is medicine taken to prevent HIV after a possible exposure.

She also serves on the Ryan White Part A Tri County Steering Committee and NYSDOH AIDS Institute HIV Advisory Board. Hakim makes herself available to clients 24/7 to ensure they have their medications, access to prevention services, and supports to address issues related to social and economic factors that influence their health.

Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler said: "Linda Hakim is a passionate and tireless advocate who gives her all to the community she serves. I am thrilled she is being recognized for the wonderful work she does for Westchester residents."

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual World AIDS Day Event is free and open to the public. Register to participate at [https://whova.com/web/ending\\_202012/](https://whova.com/web/ending_202012/). The recognition ceremony will take place on World AIDS Day at 11:30 a.m. The New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute is sponsoring these events. This year's theme is "**The Story of Ending the Epidemic: Past, Present, and Future.**" The goal is to highlight personal stories of determination, courage, hope, and progress that New Yorkers demonstrate each day, despite the many challenges they have faced this year.

In recognition of more than 30 years of fighting the epidemic here in Westchester and around the world, the Westchester County Department of Health reminds residents to get tested for the disease.

Amler said: “An estimated 1.2 million Americans are living with HIV, and yet one in five don't know it. Everyone should know their HIV status and free testing is readily available.”

Free rapid and regular HIV testing and PrEP are offered by the Health Department at 20 South Broadway in Yonkers and at 134 Court Street in White Plains. Residents can call 995-5800 for dates and times or view the clinic schedule at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).

HIV remains a nationwide and worldwide epidemic. HIV.GOV estimates that 38 million people worldwide are living with HIV. Although there are effective treatments for HIV, there is still no cure for HIV and no vaccine to prevent it.

### **About Westchester County**

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting [www.westchestergov.com](http://www.westchestergov.com)

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