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**MAINE CDC DIRECTOR NIRAV SHAH TO JOIN FRANNIE PEABODY CENTER
FOR WORLD AIDS DAY**

On Wednesday, December 1st, friends, supporters, and community leaders will gather to commemorate World AIDS Day at a candlelight vigil hosted by Frannie Peabody Center, taking place outside Coffee By Design's headquarters at 1 Diamond Street in Portland.

Frannie Peabody Center will be joined by Dr. Nirav Shah, Maine's CDC Director, as the event's keynote speaker. **"World AIDS Day allows us to reflect upon and honor the work that people in Maine and globally have done to reduce the risk of HIV infection," said Shah, "It also gives us the opportunity to show our support for those currently living with HIV. We have made remarkable progress in the 40 years since the first cases of the disease were reported. Yet, as we mourn the loved ones we've lost to AIDS, it's clear we still have work to do."**

The event will be the first in-person World AIDS Day vigil since 2019, just prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. "These past two years have been particularly difficult for the community impacted by HIV/AIDS, as it has layered pandemics and intensified challenges," said Katie Rutherford, Executive Director of Frannie Peabody Center, "We look forward to safely coming together again to renew our commitment to important issues including equitable access to care and affordable housing."

The World AIDS Day vigil will be free and open to the public. Guests are invited to arrive at 5pm for a special viewing of the World AIDS Day mural created in 2020 by local artists Bee Daniel and Ryan Adams. Remarks from Dr. Shah will begin at 5:30. Masks will be mandatory at all times. Frannie Peabody Center is also partnering with Pride Portland and the Equality Community Center throughout the week of World AIDS Day to exhibit a portion of the National AIDS Memorial Quilt, which will include the panel of Cameron Duncan, one of Maine's most prominent AIDS activists.

Full event details, including up to date COVID-19 protocols will be posted at peabodycenter.org/worldAIDSday.

Frannie Peabody Center is Maine's oldest and largest HIV/AIDS services organization, whose mission is to empower and support people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS in Maine through integrative care, education, and prevention services.

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