

June 27, 2016

ON NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY DOH ENCOURAGES FLORIDIANS TO KNOW THEIR STATUS



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Tallahassee, Fla.—Today, the Florida Department of Health joins communities across the nation in recognizing National HIV Testing Day, a yearly event promoting awareness for HIV testing and encouraging people to know their status. Florida participates in this observation by coordinating events throughout the state and by highlighting services provided by the department.

“Preventing the potentially devastating effects of a disease like HIV begins with getting tested,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. Celeste Philip. “We know that timely and effective treatment is prevention; and greatly lowers the risk for that individual to transmit the virus to others. The sooner treatment is initiated in early stages of HIV, the greater the likelihood a person has to lead a long, healthful and fulfilling life. I encourage anyone unsure of their status to use the department’s resources to get tested and seek support.”

Florida is a national leader in HIV testing with a wide-range of statewide services. The department provides high-quality HIV testing services using the latest testing technology at each of the 67 county health departments. Last year, over 378,000 tests were conducted. Testing is also performed through private doctor’s offices and other non-DOH testing sites.

Studies have shown that providing antiretroviral therapy as early as possible after diagnosis improves a patient’s health, reduces transmission and can eventually lead to undetectable viral loads of HIV. This model has been implemented in other cities, and is being piloted in Miami-Dade County.

More than an estimated 1.2 million people are currently living with HIV in the U.S., and almost 1 in 8 are unaware they are infected. With early diagnosis, individuals can be placed in appropriate treatment and care resulting in better health outcomes. New treatments, medications and support mean longer, healthier lives for people with HIV.

For more information, call the Florida AIDS Hotline at: 1-800-FLA-AIDS or 1-800-352-2437; En Español, 1-800-545-SIDA; In Creole, 1-800-AIDS-101.

For more information and to find a local HIV testing site near you, visit www.AIDS.gov.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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