

June 27, 2020

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SIGNS ON TO THE U=U CAMPAIGN



Contact:

Communications Office

NewsMedia@flhealth.gov

(850) 245-4111

Tallahassee, Fla. — June 27 marks the annual observance of National HIV Testing Day, and this year, the Florida Department of Health is pleased to announce its endorsement of the Prevention Access Campaign's Undetectable=Untransmittable campaign, or U=U. In becoming a U=U partner, the Department joins nearly 1,000 organizations around the world supporting the science-backed message that people living with HIV who use antiretroviral therapy and have an undetectable viral load in their blood have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting HIV.

This year's National HIV Testing Day theme, "**Knowing**," gets to the heart of why U=U is important. Information about what it means to be virally suppressed and how that impacts both personal and public health can be difficult to disseminate. There are many factors contributing to this challenge, including health literacy and stigma. U=U seeks to overcome these barriers by providing straightforward messaging that makes it abundantly clear that a person living with HIV who is virally suppressed *cannot* transmit HIV to their sexual partners.

At the end of 2018, 119,661 Floridians were confirmed to be living with HIV, 36% of whom were not virally suppressed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that an additional 17,700 Floridians were living with HIV but unaware of it.

"This campaign and ones like it throughout the world are essential to ending HIV," said State Surgeon General Scott Rivkees. "Every Floridian needs to know their HIV status and receive the care that is appropriate for them. For those living with HIV, treatment with antiretroviral medication typically leads to long, healthy lives, but it is also an important prevention strategy."

In February 2019, President Trump announced his administration's goal to end the HIV epidemic in the United States. The resulting initiative, called "Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America" is already well under way. The goal of the initiative is to reduce new HIV infections by 75 percent in the next five years and by 90 percent by 2030. One of the pillars of this initiative is to "Treat people with HIV rapidly and effectively to reach sustained viral suppression."

Getting tested and knowing your status is the first step toward effective HIV prevention. Everyone ages 13–64 should get tested for HIV at least once, and some people should get tested more often. Visit KnowYourHIVStatus.com to learn about testing options in your area or to order a free at-home HIV testing kit mailed directly to the address of your choice (while supplies last).

Earlier diagnosis and treatment lead to more positive health and prevention outcomes, but it's never too late to engage in care. There are many resources available to help people living with

HIV. Visit our [patient care site](#) to learn about programs that can provide treatment, medication, and housing assistance.

There are also many prevention options for those who test negative. A health care provider can help determine appropriate next steps, which might include talking to your HIV-positive partner about U=U or taking PrEP and using condoms to reduce your risk of acquiring HIV. You can use our [PrEP locator](#) to find out where to get PrEP in your area.

We have the power to both prevent and treat HIV. For more information, call 1-800-FLA-AIDS, or 1-800-352-2437; en Espanol, 1-800-545-SIDA; in Creole, 1-800-AIDS-101. To learn where to get tested, visit [KnowYourHIVStatus.com](#).

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.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [FloridaHealth.gov](#).