Central Michigan District Health Department

Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

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To: Local Newspapers
From: CMDHD Health Promotion Department
RE: National HIV Testing Day
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National HIV Testing Day

National HIV Testing Day is an annual event meant to raise awareness of the importance of knowing one's HIV status and encourage at-risk individuals to receive an HIV test. **In the United States, nearly 1.1 million people are living with HIV; about 15% of them (1 in 7) are unaware of their infection.** Getting tested is the first step to finding out your status. And if you have HIV, getting medical care and taking medication as prescribed helps you live a longer, healthier life and lowers the chances of passing it on to others.

The Central Michigan District Health Department is offering **FREE HIV and STD testing** (Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis and Hepatitis C) on Thursday, June 27, 2019 in honor of **National HIV Testing Day** at the following locations.

Clare County: 815 N. Clare Ave., Suite B Harrison
9 am – 12 noon; 1 pm – 3 pm
Gladwin County: 103 N. Bowery Gladwin
1 pm – 4 pm
Isabella County: 2012 E. Preston Ave., Mt. Pleasant
9 am – 12 noon; 1 pm – 3 pm

Osceola County: 22054 Professional Dr., Suite D Reed City
9 am – 12 noon; 1 pm – 3 pm
Roscommon County: 200 Grand Ave., Suite A Prudenville
8:30 am – 11:30 am

Please participate in HIV testing day and know your status. We cannot do it alone. You may test confidentially or anonymously. If you have questions, or would like to schedule an appointment, please call our Isabella County office at (989) 773-5921 ext. 1409. Walk-ins are also welcome during designated testing times and locations.

HIV stands for *human immunodeficiency virus*. This virus can cause AIDS, *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*, if not managed with proper treatment. The immune system gives our bodies the ability to fight infections. HIV attacks the body's immune system, specifically a type of white blood cell (T cells or CD4 cells), which helps the body fight off infection. Untreated, HIV reduces the number of these cells in the body, making the person more likely to get other infections or infection-related cancers. Over time, HIV can destroy so many of these cells that the body cannot fight off infections and disease.

HIV is spread mainly by sexual contact with an infected individual, sharing needles with someone who has the virus, or through an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, during the birth process, or while breastfeeding.

According to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, 16,218 persons were newly infected with HIV in Michigan in 2017. After an exposure to the virus, it may take up to 14 days for the virus to be detected on an HIV rapid test. Our goal is to help stop the spread of HIV through testing and counseling. This will help those who are infected to receive appropriate medical care and information on how to prevent the spread to others. When a person knows their status, he/she will learn how to reduce the risk of infecting others which will then decrease the number of new HIV infections throughout the world.

The ways a person can protect him or herself from becoming infected is:

- To know their own HIV status. Around 40% of new HIV infections come from people who do not know they have HIV.
- Be sure to use appropriate methods of prevention when engaging in activities that may expose them (correct condom use for example).
- Help educate others and encourage them to be tested.

Please think about getting tested and encourage others to be tested as well. The way to stop the spread of infection is to know your status.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org, LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @CMiDHD.

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To request an interview, please visit our website (cmdhd.org) and fill out the Media Interview Request Form.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs
UNAID http://www.unaids.org