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IN RECOGNITION OF WORLD AIDS DAY LET'S TALK COMMUNITY HEALTH BY TAKING CONTROL

Join us for HIV testing other health screenings, community resources, and much more



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St. Lucie County, FL – As the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie unites with partners worldwide in observance of World AIDS Day on December 1, the department reaffirms its commitment to fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS in Florida and helping connect individuals who are positive with lifesaving treatment and services. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the observance of World AIDS Day, and the national theme is “Saving Lives through Leadership and Partnerships.”

“Substantial progress has been made in the AIDS response since the mid 80’s, and today three in four people living with HIV know their status. However, there is so much more we need to do, and that includes reaching people living with HIV who do not know their status and ensuring that they are linked to quality care and prevention services. Those persons living with HIV who are unaware of their status can account for more than 49% of new infections each year,” said Clint Sperber, County Health Officer of the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County.

This year’s local theme is “Let’s Talk Community Health”. Our goal is to provide access and education to individuals to have a healthier lifestyle physically and mentally whether you are HIV-positive or not. DOH-St. Lucie in collaboration with United Against Poverty (UP) Center of St. Lucie County continues raising awareness about HIV, as well as celebrating the medical advancements and those living a healthy life with HIV. We commemorate the lives that have been lost to the AIDS epidemic, and we invite the community to participate in our efforts to fight the spread of HIV in Florida and connect individuals to health services and resources available in our community here in St. Lucie County.

Join us for the annual World AIDS DAY event:

Saturday, December 1, 2018 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The UP Center of St. Lucie County

2520 Orange Avenue – Fort Pierce, FL 34947

FEATURING FREE:

Gift Cards & Drawings

Dental Resources

Community Health Providers (on-site)

Hepatitis A & B vaccines
Cholesterol Screening
Pregnancy Testing
Career Resources
Local Colleges (let's talk)
PrEP Services (pill that protects against HIV- learn more)
Health Screenings (blood pressure, glucose, STD & HIV testing, and more)

Over 1.1 million people in the US are living with HIV, but one in seven HIV-positive people do not know they are living with the disease. Those persons living with HIV who are unaware of their status can account for more than 49% of new infections each year. Therefore, DOH-St. Lucie remains fully focused and committed to promoting HIV prevention, increasing education and providing lifesaving treatment.

Florida is a national leader in HIV testing. We have made great strides in prevention, early identification and treatment, however there is still much work to be done. In an effort to reach the goal of zero new HIV transmissions and reduced HIV-related deaths, the department is focusing on four key strategies:

- Implementing routine screening for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections especially among high-risk populations.
- Providing immediate access to treatment for the newly diagnosed as well as retaining HIV-positive persons in the care system, with the ultimate goal of getting HIV-positive persons to an undetectable viral load.
- Improving and promoting the use of PrEP and Npep as prevention strategies to reduce the risk of contracting HIV.
- Increasing community outreach and awareness about HIV, high-risk behaviors and the importance of knowing one's status.

There are currently 45 Test and Treat sites operating in Florida. With early diagnosis, individuals can begin appropriate treatment and care resulting in better health outcomes. Receiving antiretroviral therapy as quickly as possible after diagnosis improves the health of persons living with HIV and can eventually lead to undetectable viral loads, which reduces the chance of transmission to others. DOH St. Lucie is a designated test and treat site providing individuals who are diagnosed with HIV the opportunity to receive HIV care the same day. Our HIV case management team, will assist with providing financial and community resources to patients for medical care and services.

As part of our strategic efforts to eliminate HIV in Florida, the department is currently working to make Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) medication available at no cost at all of the 67 county health departments (CHDs). Currently, 43 CHDs offer PrEP services with the objective to implement PrEP services in STD or Family Planning clinics for all CHDs by the end of 2018. PrEP is a once-daily pill that can reduce HIV-negative individuals' risk of acquiring HIV. **PrEP should be used in conjunction with other prevention methods, like condoms, to reduce the risk of**

transmission. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, taking PrEP daily reduces the risk of contracting HIV by more than 90 percent.

The PrEP services provided by DOH-St. Lucie includes meeting with a medical provider to discuss PrEP medication, an initial examination along with scheduled follow-up appointments, laboratory testing, free 30-day supply of PrEP medication Truvada, and assistance with Patient Assistance Programs if patients are under or uninsured.

Patients can obtain up to a 90-day supply of PrEP through their local CHD STD and Family Planning Clinic. Some CHDs may offer PrEP through specialty clinics. View the department's [PrEP Locator](#) to find a PrEP provider in your area.

Every CHD offers high-quality HIV testing services, but you can also locate HIV counseling, testing and referral sites by visiting KnowYourHIVStatus.com or texting your zip code to 477493.

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.

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 Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie please visit www.stluciecountyhealth.com.

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