

February 7, 2019

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN ST. LUCIE ENCOURAGES FLORIDIANS TO TEST YOUR WAY ON NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY



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St. Lucie County, FL - The Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County (DOH-St. Lucie), recognizes February 7 as National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD). NBHAAD is a national community engagement initiative designed to encourage HIV testing and treatment efforts among Blacks across the United States to *get educated, get tested, get treated, and get involved* with HIV. The State of Florida, as well as St Lucie County stands behind the mission of motivating Blacks to get educated about the transmission modes of HIV, to get tested and know their HIV status, get involved in their local community, and get treated if they are currently living with HIV or are newly diagnosed.

Our major focus is on the State of Florida four key components to eliminate HIV transmission and reduce HIV-related deaths:

1. Implement routine HIV and STI screening in health care settings and priority testing in non-health care settings
2. Provide rapid access to treatment and ensure retention in care (Test and Treat)
3. Improve access to antiretroviral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and non-occupational post-exposure prophylaxis (nPEP)
4. Increase HIV awareness and community response through outreach, engagement, and messaging

Through these priorities we are working hard to eliminate new HIV infections and ensure optimal care for those living with HIV/AIDS in St. Lucie County. "Locally we have seen great success with the implementation of Test and Treat as client's lab results show decreased viral load and viral suppression. We will continue to grow our partnerships with outside providers to ensure a continuum of care for new and existing patients," said Clint Sperber, County Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County.

In Florida through 2017, one in 39 (age 13 and older) black men are living with HIV compared to 1 in 168 white men and 1 in 963 Hispanic men. One in 64 (age 13 and older) black women are living with HIV compared to 1 in 1,048 white women and 1 in 432 Hispanic women. If you are at-risk or increased-risk of becoming infected with HIV, there is a pill called (**PrEP**) *Pre-exposure Prophylaxis* that reduces the risk of HIV infection by up to 96%. New tools, like PrEP, is a daily pill to prevent infection, it can help us end new infections; when taken consistently. **PrEP should be used in conjunction with other prevention methods like condoms to reduce the chance of infection.** According to CDC, taking PrEP daily reduces the chance of getting HIV by more than 90 percent. As part of our strategic efforts to eliminate HIV in Florida, the Department has

made Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) medication available at no cost at all 67 CHDs. There may be some associated cost for labs.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all individuals 13–64 years old be tested for HIV at least once during their lifetime, and persons at increased risk for HIV infection be tested at least annually.

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People who are HIV positive can reduce the chance of sexually transmitting HIV to others to effectively zero by taking daily HIV treatment, as prescribed, and maintaining an undetectable viral load (meaning their HIV medicines are working so well that there is an extremely low amount of virus in their blood). With early diagnosis, individuals can begin appropriate treatment and care resulting in better health outcomes.

In acknowledgement of NBHAAD
Join DOH-St. Lucie for “*Real Plays & Real Talk*”

Friday, February 8, 2019

Lincoln Park Community Center
1306 Ave M, Fort Pierce, FL 34950
6:00pm – 8:00 pm

A night of dominoes, games, and refreshments as we discuss the health of our community.
Confidential testing will also be available for HIV, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis.
This is a free event for the community.

Find a PrEP provider near you with the department’s [PrEP Providers List](#).

You can locate HIV counseling, testing and referral sites by visiting:
www.KnowYourHIVSTATUS.com or texting ‘FLHIV’ to 898211.

For more information, call the Florida HIV/AIDS Hotline at 1-800-FLA-AIDS or 1-800-352-2437; En Español, 1-800-545-SIDA; In Creole, 1-800-AIDS-101. To chat with a live counselor at the Florida HIV/AIDS Hotline, visit www.211bigbend.org/flhivaids hotline.

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 www.stluciecountyhealth.com.

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