

June 24, 2019

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN ST. LUCIE ENCOURAGES FLORIDIANS TO TEST YOUR WAY ON NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY



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St. Lucie County, FL - The Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie recognizes June 27 as National HIV Testing Day. This year's theme is "Doing It My Way," which serves as a reminder that HIV testing has never been more convenient because there are more ways than ever to get tested. Testing options include: physically going to a Florida Department of Health testing location, a health care provider's office, a community testing site, or even in the privacy of your home.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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. About 1.1 million people in the United States have HIV, and 1 in 7 of them don't know they have it. According to a recent report, nearly 40% of new HIV transmissions in 2016 came from people who didn't know they had HIV.

"It's your health, and the only way to know if you have HIV, is to get tested and know your status. Join us at a community outreach event, get tested, get educated and get connected to resources to help you and possibly others, to live long, healthy lives" said Clint Sperber, Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County.

In recognition of *National HIV Testing Day*, the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County will offer several free HIV and STD testing events in the community.

Free HIV and STD testing outreach available in St. Lucie County:

Thursday, June 27, 2019

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County

TWO LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

714 Ave C, Fort Pierce, FL 34950

5150 Milner Dr, Port St. Lucie, FL 34983

Friday, June 28, 2019

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Sportsman's Park

201 NW Prima Vista Blvd, Port St. Lucie, FL 34983

With early diagnosis, individuals can begin appropriate treatment and care resulting in better health outcomes. 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 HIV viral loads.

HIV-negative individuals are encouraged to reduce the chance of contracting HIV by using prevention strategies. 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. PrEP is a once-daily pill that can reduce the chance of acquiring HIV in HIV-negative individuals. **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. 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.

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