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## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AREA 2 HIV PROGRAM ENCOURAGES FLORIDIANS TO TEST YOUR WAY ON NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY



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**Panama City, Fla.**—The Florida Department of Health (Department) in Bay recognizes June 27 as National HIV Testing Day. This year’s theme is “Test Your Way. Do It Today,” which serves as a reminder that HIV testing has never been more convenient because there are more ways than ever to get tested.

“We provide rapid testing every Tuesday in our offices from 7:30 am – 7 pm. We also offer the 20-minute test through our mobile unit at many places throughout the community.”, said Douglas Kent, MPH, DOH-Administrator. “Testing is convenient, confidential, and quick. Everyone should know their status.”

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.

Florida remains a national leader in HIV testing, with over 1,400 registered HIV test sites (including each county health department and community-based organizations) which provide high-quality, confidential testing services at low or no cost. Last year, more than 340,000 HIV tests were conducted through Florida’s registered HIV test sites. Testing is also available through doctor’s offices and other health care facilities.

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.

The Area 2 special testing schedule for National HIV Testing Day is listed below. There will be 6 test sites in 6 counties over the period of one-week. In addition, DOH-Bay offers rapid testing every Tuesday at our offices from 7:30 am – 7 pm. Results are available in 20 minutes and as always are completely confidential.

Friday, June 22  
10 am – 2 pm  
Ramsey's Cash Saver  
20118 W. Central Ave.  
Blountstown, FL 32424

Wednesday, June 25  
10 am – 2pm  
Downtown Parking Lot  
112 N. Waukesha Ave.  
Bonifay, FL 32425

Tuesday, June 26  
10 am – 2 pm  
Life Management Center  
525 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Panama City, FL 32405

Wednesday, June 27  
10 am – 2pm  
Winn Dixie Supermarket  
4478 Market Street  
Marianna, FL 32446

Thursday, June 28  
10 am – 2 pm  
Dollar General Market  
550 Highway 98  
Port St. Joe, FL 32456

Friday, June 29  
10 am – 2 pm  
Piggly Wiggly  
1264 Church Ave.  
Chipley, FL 32428

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 is working to make Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) medication available at no cost at all 67 CHDs by the end of this year. 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.

PrEP will be made available through CHD Sexually Transmitted Disease and Family Planning Clinics and patients can be provided with up to a 90-day supply of medications. Some CHDs

may offer PrEP through a specialty clinic. 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](http://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/flhivaidshotline](http://www.211bigbend.org/flhivaidshotline).

### **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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