

June 11, 2010

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**MEDIA NOTE:** A listing of all HIV and AIDS testing opportunities in Sarasota County is provided at the end of this release.

## Make plans to get tested on June 27 National HIV Testing Day

Free HIV testing will be available to the public at numerous locations from June 23-30 as part of the 16<sup>th</sup> annual National HIV Testing Day observance. HIV testing as well as syphilis, gonorrhea, blood pressure, glucose (blood sugar) and cholesterol screenings will be available in the Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit, which will be parked at Siesta Beach on Friday, June 25, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sponsoring organizations of this event include the Sarasota County Health Department, Community AIDS Network and ALSO Out Youth.

Many people who are HIV positive do not even know it. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one out of five people living with HIV in the U.S. are unaware of their HIV status.

“Early diagnosis is the key. When I learned that I was HIV positive 20 years ago, I made positive lifestyle changes,” said Valerie Wojciechowicz, a Sarasota resident who educates and advocates for women living with HIV. “Today, my quality of life is good even with HIV in part because of the early diagnosis and treatment.”

The risk factors for HIV infection are having unprotected sex and sharing needles or syringes. If a person has never been tested, or has had unprotected sex or shared a needle since the last test, now is the time to get an HIV test. Knowing their HIV status can help persons get into medical treatment earlier, take steps to stay healthy and keep from spreading the virus to others.

HIV testing is fast and easy. People have a choice of getting the OraSure® HIV test or a traditional blood test. OraSure® testing consists of placing a treated cotton pad resembling a toothbrush between a person's cheek and gums for two minutes. It is easier than brushing your teeth. Several HIV testing sites provide the Rapid Ora Quick HIV Test, a finger stick, which provides preliminary test results in only 20 minutes. Test results are always kept private and are not shared with anyone, including family members, significant others, employers or landlords.

Local health department officials offer additional recommendations to reduce risk for HIV infection:

- **Be safe:** The best way to prevent HIV is to abstain from having sex. If a person does have sex, use a new condom every time. Do not share needles or syringes for any reason, whether to inject drugs (recreational or medical) or for tattoos and body piercing.
- **Talk about it:** Talk about sex and HIV with partners. Find out when they were last tested for HIV and their status. HIV is primarily spread through four fluids, semen, vaginal fluids, blood and breast milk.

- **Talk to a doctor:** If someone is sexually active, he or she should get tested for HIV at least once. Do not assume a doctor will suggest testing for HIV. Women who test positive should get treatment during all pregnancies and not breastfeed their babies.

Locally, the HIV/AIDS Network of Southwest Florida (HANS) works to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS at the grass-roots community level. The group meets monthly to coordinate HIV/AIDS prevention and outreach services throughout the region. For more information on HIV testing opportunities, call 941-861-5000 or visit the HANS Web site at [www.hiv Sarasota.org](http://www.hiv Sarasota.org).

Free, locally sponsored HIV testing and education opportunities are listed below:

## **Sarasota**

### **Free HIV and syphilis testing – Walk-In/no appointments**

Wednesday, June 23, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Sarasota County Health Department

2200 Ringling Blvd.

Contact: Gary Ervin, 941-861-2919

Sponsoring organization: Sarasota County Health Department

### **Free HIV testing and education**

Wednesday June 23, 9 a.m.-noon

Genesis Health Clinic

3333 N Washington Blvd.

Contact: William Carter, 941-256-6620

Sponsoring organization: Genesis Health Services

### **Free rapid HIV testing (preliminary test results available in 20 minutes)**

Thursday, June 24, 9:30 a.m.-noon

Salvation Army – Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit

1400 Tenth St.

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring organization: Sarasota County Health Department

### **Free rapid HIV testing (preliminary results available in 20 minutes), syphilis, gonorrhea, blood pressure, glucose (blood sugar) and cholesterol screenings and educational information**

Friday, June 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Siesta Beach Parking Lot (Look for Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)

5118 Ocean Blvd.

Contact: Serena Miller, 941-366-0461

Sponsoring Organizations: Sarasota County Health Department, Community AIDS Network and ALSO Out Youth

### **Free rapid HIV testing (preliminary test results available in 20 minutes)**

Monday, June 28, 9:30-noon

McCowan Center for Seniors – Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit

1800 Boulevard of the Arts

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring organization: Sarasota County Health Department

**Free rapid HIV testing (preliminary test results available in 20 minutes)**

Monday, June 28, 1-3 p.m.

Arizona Multi-Services Center - Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit

3900 N. Washington Blvd.

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring organization: Sarasota County Health Department

**Free HIV testing and Education**

Friday June 25, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Resurrection House

507 Kumquat Ct.

Contact: Carroll Hunter, 941-320-6030

Sponsoring organization: Multicultural Health Institute

**HIV education forum and free testing**

Saturday, June 26, 1-4 p.m.

Greater Hurst Chapel

2730 N. Links Ave.

Contact: Carroll Hunter, 941-320-6030

Sponsoring organization: Multicultural Health Institute

**Free HIV testing and educational information**

Tuesday, June 29, noon-3 p.m.

ALSO Out Youth

1470 Boulevard of the Arts

Contact: Sue Westcott, 941-951-2576

Sponsoring organization: ALSO Out Youth

**Free rapid HIV testing (preliminary results available in 20 minutes)**

Wednesday, June 30, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Community AIDS Network

1231 N. Tuttle Ave.

Contact: Serena Miller, 941-366-0461

Sponsoring organization: Community AIDS Network

**Venice**

**Free HIV testing and educational information**

Thursday, June 24, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

South County Family Health Center

7820 S. Tamiami Trail, Building B

Contact: Joni DeMerse, 941-861-3301

Sponsoring organization: Sarasota County Health Department

**Free rapid HIV testing (preliminary test results available in 20 minutes)**

Tuesday, June 30, 9:30 a.m.-noon

Goodwill Center – The Rialto

650 S. Tamiami Trail

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring organization: Sarasota County Health Department

**Free rapid HIV testing (preliminary test results available in 20 minutes)**

Tuesday, June 29, 1-3 p.m.

Habitat for Humanity Retail Store

1400 Ogden Road

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring organization: Sarasota County Health Department

**North Port**

**Free rapid HIV testing – (preliminary test results available in 20 minutes)**

Wednesday, June 23, 9:30 a.m.- 3 p.m.

Walmart Super Center

17000 Tamiami Trail

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring organization: Sarasota County Health Department

**Free Rapid HIV testing – (preliminary test results available in 20 minutes)**

Wednesday, June 23, 1-3 p.m.

Grande Court Apartments

5203 Greenwood Ave.

Contact: Sarasota County Call Center, 941-861-5000

Sponsoring organization: Sarasota County Health Department

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