

SCGOVNEWS

Sarasota County Communications
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NEWSROOM

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

E-NEWSLETTER

EVENT CALENDAR

June 13, 2013

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Free HIV testing offered for National HIV Testing Day campaign

Free HIV testing will be available to the public at locations in Sarasota and Charlotte counties as part of the 19th annual National HIV Testing Day observance during the week of June 22-28.

While the focus is on providing HIV testing to those who may not know their HIV status, some locations also will offer testing for other sexually transmitted infections such as syphilis and gonorrhea, as well as blood pressure and glucose (blood sugar) screenings.

Health officials note that this marks the 32nd year since the start of the AIDS pandemic. Despite advances in testing and treatment, many people who are HIV positive still 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 United States 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 persons have never been tested, or had unprotected sex or shared a needle since their last test, now is the time to get an HIV test. Knowing their HIV status can help them get medical treatment earlier, take steps to stay healthy, and keep from spreading the virus to others.

HIV testing is fast and easy. The Clearview® HIV Test, done with a finger prick, provides preliminary test results in only five minutes. Test results are always kept private and are not shared with anyone, including family members, significant others, employers or landlords.

The HIV/AIDS Network of Southwest Florida, which works to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS at the grass-roots community level, offers the following recommendations to reduce risk for HIV infection:

- **Be safe:** The best way to prevent HIV is to abstain from having sex. If you do 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 your partners. Find out when they were last tested for HIV and what their status was. HIV is primarily spread through four fluids -- semen, vaginal fluids, blood and breast milk.
- **Talk to your doctor:** If you are sexually active, you should get tested for HIV at least once. Do not assume your doctor will ask you to be tested for HIV. Women who test positive should get treatment during all pregnancies and not breastfeed their babies.

The HIV/AIDS Network of Southwest Florida 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.

The free, locally sponsored HIV testing and educational opportunities for late June are:

SARASOTA

HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose screening

Thursday, June 27, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Salvation Army – Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit
1400 Tenth St.

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and HIV testing

Mondays, 1-4 p.m.

Wednesdays, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

Thursdays, 1-5 p.m.

William L. Little Health and Human Services Center

2200 Ringling Blvd., Room 1127

Contact: 941-861-2873

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

HIV and sexually transmitted diseases testing, incentives and food giveaway

Friday, June 28, 2-5 p.m.

Genesis Health Services

3333 N. Washington Blvd.

Contact: Bill Carter, 941-256-6620

Sponsoring organization: Genesis Health Services

VENICE

HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose screening

Tuesday, June 25, 9:30 a.m.-noon

Goodwill Center -- The Rialto (Look for Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)

650 S. Tamiami Trail

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose screening

Habitat for Humanity Re-Store

Tuesday, June 25, 1-3 p.m.

1400 Ogden Road

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose screening

Wednesday, June 26, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Salvation Army Family Store (Look for Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)

1160 U.S. 41 Bypass South

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

NORTH PORT

HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose screening

Monday, June 24, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Goodwill Manasota Center of North Port (Look for Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit)

14809 Tamiami Trail

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

PORT CHARLOTTE

HIV and STD testing, and education for men who have sex with men

Saturday, June 22, 9 p.m.-2 a.m.

Masquerades Cabaret Bar

3492 Tamiami Trail

Sponsoring organizations: Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County and

CARES Outreach Services, Inc. -- Mobile health screening and testing unit

For more information on HIV testing opportunities throughout the year, call 941-861-5000 or visit the HANS website at www.hivsarasota.org.

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