

June 22, 2018

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



Contact:

Patti Roberts

Patricia.roberts@flhealth.gov

(850) 401-6353

DeFuniak Springs, Fla.—The Florida Department of Health (Department) in Walton 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.

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.

DOH-Walton will provide free HIV testing for the week of June 25 – 29. Please call (850) 892-8015 to schedule an appointment. A walk-in STD clinic is available every afternoon from 3-4:00 p.m. at the DeFuniak Springs location, 362 State Highway 83, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433.

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 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.

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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