



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Get Tested for Free on National HIV Testing Day

Kingsford, Michigan, May 30, 2017 - June 27, 2017 is National HIV Testing Day, a time to promote one of our best tools for HIV prevention. An estimated 1.2 million people in the United States are living with HIV, and that number grows by almost 50,000 every year. Too many people—one in eight—who are living with HIV are not aware of it. That means they aren't getting the medical care they need to stay healthy and avoid passing HIV to others.

HIV can be spread when someone with HIV has sex or shares injection drug equipment with someone who does not have HIV. If the partner with HIV is on medicine to treat HIV (antiretroviral therapy, or ART), or the partner who is HIV-negative is on medicine to prevent HIV infection, the risk can be much lower.

CDC recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care, and that people with certain risk factors get tested more often. People with more than one sex partner, people with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and people who inject drugs are likely to be at high risk and should get tested at least once a year. Sexually active gay and bisexual men may benefit from even more frequent testing, depending on their risk. To protect your own health, you should also get tested if you have been sexually assaulted.

If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, CDC recommends HIV testing with each pregnancy, both for your own benefit and to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to your baby.

When you know your HIV status, you can take care of yourself and your partner(s). If you find out that you are infected with HIV (if you test positive), you can seek medical care and get treatment. Besides allowing you to live a longer, healthier life, being on ART can protect the health of your partners because it can greatly reduce the risk that you can pass HIV to others.

If you don't have HIV (if you test negative), you can take steps to stay negative, such as using condoms consistently. Remember that if you have risky sex or share needles for drug use after you've tested negative for HIV, you need to get tested again to make sure you are still HIV-negative. Your HIV test result "expires" every time you have risky sex or share needles or related works.

Getting tested for HIV is easier than ever. You can ask your doctor for a test, call 1-800-CDC-INFO, or text your ZIP code to "KNOWIT" (566948), and you will receive a text back with a testing site near you.

**-More-**

**Locally, the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department offers HIV testing and counseling services. In observance of National HIV Testing Day, the Health Department will offer free HIV testing in each of its offices on Monday, June 12<sup>th</sup> at the Iron County office and on Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at the Dickinson County office. Testing is anonymous and confidential.** For additional information on HIV testing please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HIVtesting/>.

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