



# Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

## Dickinson County

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Health Department Offers Free HIV Testing During the Month of June**

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, June 1, 2010 - The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) started National HIV Testing Day (NHTD) in 1995. Every year, on June 27th, local organizations across the nation engage with communities to promote early diagnosis and HIV-testing. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 250,000 of the one million people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States are unaware of their status. NAPWA realizes that lack of access to treatment and care along with social stigma can make living with HIV difficult. With early diagnosis, uncertain individuals will know their HIV-status and should be placed in appropriate treatment and care. During NHTD, NAPWA works with their partners, which include thousands of community-based organizations, businesses, health departments, elected officials, media, and individuals to encourage routine HIV-testing and to promote culturally-appropriate messages for those affected by and living with HIV/AIDS.

“According to CDC data released two years ago, about 56,000 Americans become newly infected with HIV each year – significantly more than was previously known – and more than 14,000 people with AIDS die each year in the United States,” said Jeanelle Maki, Public Health Coordinator.

Every 9 ½ minutes another person in America becomes infected with HIV. This could be someone’s brother, sister, best friend, father or mother,” said Maki. “Yet, research shows that many of those becoming infected do not recognize their risk. This is a major concern, because lack of knowledge contributes to increased risk behaviors.”

Locally, the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department offers HIV testing and counseling services. In observance of National Free HIV Testing Day, the health department will offer a free testing day in each office in June. Clinics will be held June 21<sup>st</sup> in Dickinson County and June 14<sup>th</sup> in Iron County. Posters and news releases will announce the free testing day. Clients may call the health department to make an appointment. Testing is anonymous and confidential. Orasure testing is available which is non-invasive and involves no blood drawing.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease, providing health care, and protecting the environment. For additional information visit our website at [www.didhd.org](http://www.didhd.org) or call the offices at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

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