PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA
Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"
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To: Local Newspapers

From: Jason Johnson, Health Promotion Supervisor

RE: National HIV Testing Day

Release Date: June 2018

National HIV Testing Day

National HIV Testing Day is an annual event meant to raise awareness of the importance of knowing one's HIV status and encourage at-risk individuals to receive an HIV test. Too many people do not know they have HIV**. In the United States, nearly 1.1 million people are living with HIV; about 15 percent of people, ages 13 and older with HIV don't know they have it**. Getting tested is the first step to finding out if you have HIV. If you have HIV, getting medical care and taking medicines regularly helps you live a longer, healthier life and lowers the chances of passing HIV on to others. The Central Michigan District Health Department is offering free HIV and STD testing on Wednesday, June 27th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at our Isabella County Branch Office in honor of National HIV Testing Day. Please participate in HIV testing day and know your status. We cannot do it alone. You may test confidentially or anonymously. To schedule your appointment, call our Isabella County office at (989) 773-5921 ext. 1409.

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. This virus causes AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). HIV is different from most other viruses because it attacks the immune system. The immune system gives our bodies the ability to fight infections. HIV finds and destroys a type of white blood cell (T cells or CD4 cells) that the immune system must have to fight diseases.

HIV is spread through any sexual contact with an infected individual, through sharing needles with someone who has the virus, or through an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, during the birth process, or while breastfeeding.

It is estimated that 17,970 persons are infected with HIV in Michigan. After an exposure to the virus, it may take up to 14 days for the virus to be detected on an HIV rapid test. In 2016, an estimated 1 million people died worldwide from AIDS related illnesses. Our goal is to help stop the spread of HIV through testing and counseling, and to help those who are infected to receive

appropriate medical care and information on how to prevent the spread to others. When a person knows their status he/she will not be putting others at risk of infection, and we can then decrease the number of new HIV infections throughout the world.

The ways a person can protect him or herself from becoming infected is:

- To know their own HIV status. Around 40% of new HIV infections come from people who do not know they have HIV.
- Be sure to use appropriate methods of prevention when engaging in activities that may expose them (correct condom use for example).
- Help educate others and encourage them to be tested.

Please come out and get free testing and encourage others to be tested as well. The way to stop the spread of infection is to know your status.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org, LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @CMiDHD.

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To request an interview, please visit our website (cmdhd.org) and fill out the Media Interview Request Form.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

UNAIDS
http://www.unaids.org