



# Health and Human Services MEDIA RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 5, 2015

## Free HIV testing offered during June *National HIV Testing Campaign*

SARASOTA COUNTY — Free HIV testing will be available to the public at several locations in Sarasota County as part of the 19th **annual National HIV Testing Day** observance during the next several weeks.

This year marks the 34th 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), nearly one in seven people living with HIV in the United States is unaware of their HIV status.

“HIV is preventable and treatable. The key to staying HIV negative is knowledge and applying this to our everyday life choices. Testing is the only way to know your HIV status. Treatment works best when started early before too much immune damage has occurred. Living with HIV longer than 25 years and AIDS since 1993 has changed my life in more ways than I could have imagined,” says Community AIDS Network (CAN) HIV/AIDS Peer Counselor, Debbie Sergi-Laws. “I have lived this long in spite of the many obstacles I've faced. I contribute that to being diagnosed early, the wonderful love and support I have received and a healthy lifestyle. It really is all about our choices...can we live with them?”



The risk factors for HIV infection are having unprotected sex and sharing needles or syringes. If individuals 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 into a 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 (rapid test), done with a finger prick, provides preliminary test results in only 15-minutes. Test results are always kept private and are not shared with anyone, including family members, significant others, employers or landlords.

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### **MEDIA NOTES:**

#### **DOH-Sarasota Media Contact:**

Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058; DOHSarasotaNews@flhealth.gov

Website: [www.sarasotahealth.org](http://www.sarasotahealth.org)



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The HIV/AIDS Network of Southwest Florida (HANS), 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 not to have 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 had their last HIV test and their HIV status. 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.

HANS member organizations are offering free HIV testing and education opportunities during June:

## **SARASOTA**

### **Walk-in HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose (blood sugar) screening (HANS)**

Monday, June 22, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Walmart Neighborhood Market

3500 N. Tamiami Trail

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

### **Walk-in HIV (rapid test), and Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) testing**

Monday, June 22, 1-4 p.m. and Wednesday, June 24, 1-5 p.m. and

Thursday, June 25, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

William L. Little Health and Human Services Center (Health Department)

2200 Ringling Blvd., Room 1127

Contact: 941-861-2873 (Ask for a Disease Intervention Specialist)

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

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**Walk-in HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose (blood sugar) screening (HANS)**

Tuesday, June 23, Noon-4 p.m.

Janie's Garden Apartments

2350 Central Ave.

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

**Walk-in HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose (blood sugar) screening (HANS)**

Thursday, June 25, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Salvation Army – Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit

1400 Tenth St.

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

**Walk-in HIV testing (rapid test) (HANS)**

Friday, June 26, 3-7 p.m.

Comprehensive Care Clinic Mobile Unit at Walgreens

3550 Fruitville Road (Corner of U.S. Highway 301 – Washington Blvd. and Fruitville Road)

Contact: Jessley Santiago, 941-366-0461

Sponsoring organization: Community AIDS Network/Mary Ann Robinson Wellness Center

**Walk-in HIV testing and Open House Event (HANS)**

Saturday, June 27, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Genesis Health Services (GHS)

1517 State St.

Contact: Bill Carter- 941-256-6620

Sponsoring organization: Genesis Health Services

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## **LAUREL**

### **Walk-in HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose (blood sugar) screening (HANS)**

Wednesday, June 17, 1-4 p.m.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Distribution

Sandra Sims Terry Community Center

509 Collins Road

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

## **VENICE**

### **Walk-in HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose (blood sugar) screening (HANS)**

Wednesday, June 17, 9:30 a.m.-Noon

Habitat for Humanity Re-Store Venice

1400 Ogden Road

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

### **Walk-in HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose (blood sugar) screening (HANS)**

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

Salvation Army Family Store

1160 U.S. 41 Bypass South

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

## **NORTH PORT**

### **Walk-in HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose (blood sugar) screening (HANS)**

Friday, June 19, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Goodwill Manasota Center of North Port

14809 Tamiami Trail

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

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**Walk-in HIV testing, blood pressure and glucose (blood sugar) screening (HANS)**

Monday, June 29; 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Publix Super Market at Heron Creek Towne Center

1291 S. Sumter Blvd.

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

Sponsoring organization: Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County

For more information on HIV testing opportunities throughout the year, call 941-861-5000 or visit the HANS website at [www.hiv Sarasota.org](http://www.hiv Sarasota.org).

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Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities.  
View the complete policy at [www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx)

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DOH-Sarasota website: [www.sarasotahealth.org](http://www.sarasotahealth.org)

HIV/AIDS Network of Southwest Florida website: [www.hiv Sarasota.org](http://www.hiv Sarasota.org)



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