



NEWS

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**Montgomery County Health Department, Walgreens, and Greater Than AIDS Team
To Offer Free HIV Testing In Support of National HIV Testing Day**

***MCHD Will be Participating and Providing Free HIV Testing
At the Walgreens Located at 1100 W. Main Street, Norristown, PA 19401
As Part of a National Initiative in More Than 100 Cities, June 26-28, 2014***

Norristown, PA (June 18, 2014) – Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) is teaming with Walgreens, the nation's largest drugstore chain, and Greater Than AIDS, a leading national public information response to the U.S. domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic, to offer free HIV testing at the Walgreens store located at 1100 W. Main Street, Norristown, PA 19401. The testing events are taking place June 26-28, 2014 in support of National HIV Testing Day (June 27). MCHD staff will be on site June 26-27, 2014 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and June 28, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

MCHD is among state and local health departments and AIDS service organizations across the country that are coordinating testing and providing results on-site at participating Walgreens locations, as well as supporting community outreach.

“Working with Walgreens and Greater than AIDS is a significant partnership,” said Josh Shapiro, Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. “We are excited to provide free HIV testing in an environment that is well-recognized by the residents of our local community. There is a relationship between people and their local pharmacy. It is a place they already access for their personal care and health needs.”

This marks the fourth consecutive year Walgreens has teamed with Greater Than AIDS and local organizations to help offer free HIV testing to communities. This year's effort doubles the number of participating markets from last year.

Early detection of HIV infection continues to be vital in Pennsylvania as the most recent data from the PA Department of Health reports that 55,754 diagnoses of HIV disease have been identified across the Commonwealth from 1980 to 2012. Specifically in Montgomery County, there have been 1,709 cumulative cases of HIV disease identified. This serves a reminder that HIV continues to be a public health issue even though optimistic developments have been made. With advances in the clinical and epidemiologic experiences with HIV infection, HIV disease is now viewed as a spectrum condition which is progressive but manageable.

“Since the beginning of the epidemic, Walgreens has served as a trusted resource to help people know their status and manage their condition,” said Glen Pietrandoni, Senior Director, Virology, Specialty Products and Services, Walgreens. “We are proud to collaborate with Greater Than AIDS and community partners to increase access to testing and education which we know is critical to being a part of the solution to end AIDS.”

Of the more than 1.1 million people living with HIV in the U.S., an estimated one in six do not know that they are infected and only one in four has their virus under control with treatment.¹ Early diagnosis and treatment saves lives and is known to reduce the spread of HIV. Those with HIV who are receiving treatment can reduce the risk of spreading the virus to others by as much as 96 percent. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages everyone to know their status.

“Greater Than AIDS is about communities working together to achieve a greater goal. These testing events are powerful examples of what can be achieved when the public and private sector come together in response to HIV/AIDS,” said Tina Hoff, Senior Vice President and Director of Health Communication and Media Partnerships, Kaiser Family Foundation, a founding partner of Greater Than AIDS. “Not only will thousands have access to free testing in a familiar and trusted location in their neighborhoods, but the very act of offering the tests in Walgreens helps to normalize HIV testing as a part of routine health care.”

Free HIV testing is available at select Walgreens locations across the country. For more information, including a complete list of participating Walgreens locations, visit www.greaterthan.org/walgreens.

¹ CDC. HIV Surveillance Supplemental Report, Vol. 18, No. 5; October 2013. Data are estimates and do not include U.S. dependent area.

About Walgreens

As the nation's largest drugstore chain with fiscal 2013 sales of \$72 billion, Walgreens (www.walgreens.com) vision is to be the first choice in health and daily living for everyone in America, and beyond. Each day, Walgreens provides more than 6 million customers the most convenient, multichannel access to consumer goods and services and trusted, cost-effective pharmacy, health and wellness services and advice in communities across America. Walgreens scope of pharmacy services includes retail, specialty, infusion, medical facility and mail service, along with respiratory services. These services improve health outcomes and lower costs for payers including employers, managed care organizations, health systems, pharmacy benefit managers and the public sector. The company operates 8,216 drugstores in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Take Care Health Systems is a Walgreens subsidiary that is the largest and most comprehensive manager of worksite health and wellness centers and in-store convenient care clinics, with more than 750 locations throughout the country.

About Greater Than AIDS

Greater Than AIDS is a leading national public information response focused on the U.S. domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic. Launched in 2009, it is supported by a broad coalition of public and private sector partners, including: major media and other business leaders; federal, state and local health agencies and departments; national leadership groups; AIDS service and other community organizations; and foundations, among others. Through targeted media messages and community outreach, Greater Than AIDS works to increase knowledge, reduce stigma and promote actions to stem the spread of the disease. While national in scope, Greater Than AIDS focuses on communities most affected.

The Kaiser Family Foundation provides strategic direction and day-to-day management, as well as oversees the production of the campaigns. The Black AIDS Institute – a think tank exclusively focused on AIDS in Black America – provides leadership and expert guidance and supports community engagement. Additional financial and substantive support is provided by the Elton John AIDS Foundation and Ford Foundation, among others.

About Montgomery County Health Department

Montgomery County Health Department's current mission is to assure the provision of services that promote, protect and preserve the public's health. There are four foundation health measures that are used to monitor progress toward promoting health, preventing disease and disability, eliminating disparities, and improving quality of life. These measures include: 1) general health status, 2) health-related quality of life and well-being, 3) determinants of health, and 4) disparities. MCHD presently focuses its efforts on the essentials of public health. This is reflected in the services provided by its five operational divisions: Clinical Services and Public Health Nursing, Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, Health Promotion, Environmental Field Services and Water Quality Management. For more information, please visit www.health.montcopa.org

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