



NEWS

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In Lead Up To National HIV Testing Day Montgomery County Health Department, Walgreens, and Greater Than AIDS Team Up To Offer Free HIV Testing June 23-25, 2016 in Norristown

Norristown, PA (June 20, 2016) – In the lead up to National HIV Testing Day on June 27th, Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) is teaming up with Walgreens and Greater Than AIDS, a leading national public information response to the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic, to encourage community members to know their HIV status and take advantage of free HIV testing and counseling about new prevention strategies, including Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), at the Walgreens located at 1100 W. Main Street in Norristown, PA during a three-day period:

- Thursday, June 23, 2016 from 3:00pm to 7:00pm
- Friday, June 24, 2016 from 3:00pm to 7:00pm
- Saturday, June 25, 2016 from 10:00am to 2:00pm

Montgomery County Health Department will provide trained counselors to conduct the testing and will provide results on-site within minutes. Alere North America, bioLytical Laboratories, and OraSure have donated test kits.

Testing will take place at select Walgreens stores in 150 participating cities from June 23-25, 2016. For a complete list of participating Walgreens locations and supporting partners, as well as more information about HIV testing, including year-round testing sites, please visit:

www.greaterthan.org/walgreens.

Why get tested?

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises that all Americans be screened for HIV as a part of routine health care¹, many Americans have never been tested or are not being tested as often as recommended. According to national surveys by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 43 percent of Americans report never having been tested, and another 37 percent say they have not been tested in a year or longer. With early diagnosis and treatment, someone with HIV can live a healthy, normal lifespan.

“This month marks 35 years since the first case of HIV. We’ve come a long way, but getting tested is a critical first step in staying healthy regardless of status,” said Tina Hoff, senior vice president and director of health communication and media partnerships at the Kaiser Family Foundation, which leads Greater Than AIDS.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health estimated that there were 35,000 people diagnosed and living with HIV/AIDS in Pennsylvania in 2015; an estimated 65% of those presumed to be alive and living with HIV/AIDS, live in Philadelphia and the four surrounding counties, including Montgomery County. Also last year, it was estimated that over 700 individuals were newly diagnosed with HIV and residing in this five-county region. Currently, Men who have Sex with Men (53%) and African Americans (38%) have the highest percentage of people diagnosed and living with HIV/AIDS in Philadelphia and the surrounding counties.

“Knowing your HIV status and getting tested is extremely important,” said Dr. Val Arkoosh, Vice Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners and Interim Medical Director of the Montgomery County Health Department. “We are excited to provide free HIV testing in an environment that is well-recognized by the residents of our local community. Working with the Norristown Walgreens and Greater Than AIDS is a significant partnership that allows us to provide this important service.”

Richard Ashworth, president of pharmacy and retail operations for Walgreens, said, “We are fortunate to have a strong presence in – and close relationship with – communities across America, making us uniquely suited to serve those living with HIV or at risk of being exposed to HIV. It’s one of the best ways I know to champion everyone’s right to be happy and healthy.”

“HIV is still a real and serious disease. But with the right treatment and care, people living with HIV can expect to live as long as the average person,” said Glen Pietrandoni, pharmacist and senior director of virology, specialty products and services at Walgreens. “So it’s important to take control of

¹ Branson BM, Handsfield HH, Lampe MA, et al. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Revised recommendations for HIV testing of adults, adolescents, and pregnant women in health-care settings. MMWR. 2006; 55(RR14):1-17.

your health by getting a test and learning your status. If negative, there are now prevention options like PrEP, which can help prevent you from getting HIV if you are exposed to the virus. If positive, getting into care early makes a big difference in the long run.”

I Got Tested: What's Next?, an informational guide available in both English and Spanish from Greater Than AIDS and Walgreens, will be distributed at hundreds of HIV-specialized pharmacies and through local partners in June. The guide includes information about the benefits of early treatment and PrEP.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is available by prescription to help people who are HIV negative stay negative. PrEP is a way for people who do not have HIV, but who are at substantial risk of getting it, to prevent HIV infection by taking a pill every day. When taken consistently as prescribed, PrEP has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV infection in people who are at high risk by up to 92%. Condoms should be used for added protection and to protect against other sexually transmitted diseases. More information about PrEP is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html>.

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About Montgomery County Health Department

Montgomery County Health Department’s mission is to provide public health services and foster collaborative actions that empower our community to improve its health and safety. Our vision is to optimize the health and wellness of individuals and families through innovative practices. There are four core values that guide Montgomery County Health Department: Proactive – We are committed to anticipating the needs of those served by being prepared and acting on the plans we establish to meet those needs; Collaborative – We work together as an organization, with community partners and with our customers; Compassionate – We are committed to serving our community and each other with respect, kindness, fairness, and equity; and Excellence – We are committed to continuous improvement, the use of best practices, and changing our approach when necessary to improve outcomes. This is reflected in the services provided by MCHD’s five operation 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.

About Walgreens

Walgreens (www.walgreens.com), one of the nation's largest drugstore chains, is included in the Retail Pharmacy USA Division of Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. (NASDAQ: WBA), the first global pharmacy-led, health and wellbeing enterprise. More than eight million customers interact with Walgreens each day in communities across America, using the most convenient, multichannel access to consumer goods and services and trusted, cost-effective pharmacy, health and wellness services and advice. Walgreens operates 8,173 drugstores with a presence in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Walgreens digital business includes Walgreens.com, drugstore.com, Beauty.com, and VisionDirect.com. More than 400 Walgreens stores offer Healthcare Clinic or other provider retail clinic services.

About Greater Than AIDS

Greater Than AIDS is a leading national public information response focused on the U.S. domestic epidemic. Launched in 2009 by the Kaiser Family Foundation together with the Black AIDS Institute, it is supported today 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.