

## NEW JERSEY AIDS/HIV/STD HOTLINE

### **PRESS RELEASE**

June 2018

## **Knowing Your Status Saves Lives**

### **National HIV Testing Day, June 27<sup>th</sup>**

**(Newark, NJ)** – Over the last decade, HIV has moved from a fatal disease to a manageable, chronic illness in large part because of readily available rapid HIV testing and highly effective preventative and treatment options. On June 27<sup>th</sup> we celebrate National HIV Testing Day, a day which highlights the importance of understanding one's HIV status.

Of the more than 1 million people living with HIV in this country, 1 out of every 7 do not know they have HIV.<sup>1</sup> We can reduce new infections by encouraging early detection (testing), linking newly diagnosed individuals to care in a timely manner and keeping people living with HIV in treatment so they can remain virally suppressed. By making HIV testing easy, accessible and routine, many will have access to the information and tools they need to reduce their risk, make healthy decisions, and get treatment and care if needed. Testing can also serve as a gateway to prevention services for those who are HIV-negative; PrEP ([pre-exposure prophylaxis](#)) and PEP ([post-exposure prophylaxis](#)).

While the national landscape for HIV infection is improving, progress is reported to be uneven.<sup>2</sup> Although anyone who participates in high risk activities with someone who is HIV-positive is at risk for getting HIV, some groups (populations) are more affected by HIV than others. "In 2016, youth aged 13 to 24 made up 21% of all new HIV diagnoses in the United States. Most (81%) of those new diagnoses occurred among young gay and bisexual men. Young black/African American and Hispanic/Latino gay and bisexual men were especially affected."<sup>3</sup>

You cannot rely on symptoms to tell whether someone is living with HIV; testing is the only way to be sure of one's HIV status. It is not only important to know your own HIV status, but the status of your sexual partner(s) as well. Treatment does work, but in order to remain healthy and avoid spreading the virus to others, one must make a long term commitment to a treatment routine.

Many local health departments, federally qualified health centers and community-based organizations will be hosting events to commemorate National HIV Testing Day in New Jersey. We encourage everyone who is sexually active, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, to visit a local event to get informed, get tested and if positive, begin treatment immediately after diagnosis. The sooner you begin treatment, the sooner you can start living a healthier you. For a full list of New Jersey events, visit <http://web.doh.state.nj.us/apps2/aids/events.aspx>

New Jersey offers free HIV and other STI services (sexually transmitted infections) to all state residents via the NJ AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline. Knowing who to call for resources and information is the first step in

<sup>1</sup> CDC. [Key Facts](#)

<sup>2</sup> CDC. [Info Sheet: Diagnoses of HIV Infection in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2016](#)

<sup>3</sup> CDC. [HIV Among Youth](#)



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fighting the HIV epidemic in New Jersey. The hotline is staffed by health professionals (doctors, nurses, and pharmacists) available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide free, confidential help via phone at 1-800-624-2377, text/email at [8006242377@njpies.org](mailto:8006242377@njpies.org), or chat [www.njhivstdline.org](http://www.njhivstdline.org)

- Referrals for testing sites and other related services
- HIV, STD and hepatitis prevention and treatment information
- Referrals to PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) services
- Counseling and treatment locations
- Partner notification
- ADDP

Connect with us on Twitter @njhivstdline and Facebook /njhivstdline

Observance Day hashtags: #NHTD, #DoingItMyWay (#HaciéndoloAMiManera), #HIVTestingDay

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#### **New Jersey AIDS/HIV/STD Hotline**

Healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and pharmacists) provide telephone consultation for people seeking information about HIV/AIDS, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and other sexually transmitted diseases including hepatitis. Callers receive information tailored to their needs; discussion about prevention, referrals for testing sites and other related services, counseling and testing locations, and information on treatment and adverse reactions to medications. The hotline is administered by the New Jersey Poison Control Center and funded by the New Jersey Department of Health, Division of HIV, STD, and TB services.

#### **About Rutgers**

Established in 1766, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is America's eighth oldest institution of higher learning and one of the nation's premier public research universities. Serving more than 65,000 students on campuses, centers, institutes and other locations throughout the state, Rutgers is the only public university in New Jersey that is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities.

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) is the health care education, research, and clinical division of Rutgers University, comprising nine schools and their attendant faculty practices, centers, institutes and clinics; New Jersey's leading comprehensive cancer care center; and New Jersey's largest behavioral health care network.