

## NEW JERSEY AIDS/HIV/STD HOTLINE

*PRESS RELEASE*  
November 2018

### **Changing the Landscape of HIV 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World AIDS Day**

**(Newark, NJ)** – This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World AIDS Day; a global event uniting all in support of those living with HIV as well as remembering those who have lost their battle with AIDS-related illnesses. Although we have endured endless struggle in this thirty-year fight, we have finally achieved a historic milestone. Today, medical and scientific advancements have undeniably changed the landscape of this dreadful epidemic.

Even though there's still no cure for HIV, the advancement of treatment options has increased the quality of life for those living with HIV infection. Having HIV is no longer a death sentence; we now consider this infection to be a manageable, chronic condition. Taking daily HIV medicine, also known as antiretroviral therapy (ART), helps people living with HIV control the virus in their bodies so they can live long, healthy lives in addition to lowering their risk of spreading HIV to others.

The observance of World AIDS Day reminds us to stay focused and continue striving towards ending HIV infection both in the United States and globally. We still have a significant battle ahead; many living with HIV are unaware of their own infection, putting their health and the health of others at risk. Testing is the only way to be sure of one's HIV status; you cannot rely on symptoms to tell whether you or someone else has HIV. Ignoring one's infection will not make it go away. HIV treatment works, but it is a lifelong commitment requiring regular medical care.

Although anyone having sex, especially unprotected sex, is at risk for HIV infection, some [groups](#) (populations) have a much higher chance of getting HIV. "In the United States, HIV is mainly spread by having sex or sharing syringes and other injection equipment with someone who is infected with HIV."<sup>1</sup> We can decrease new infections by encouraging HIV testing for all, linking newly diagnosed individuals to medical care in a timely manner, keeping people living with HIV engaged in continued medical treatment (viral suppression), promoting partner communication about safer sex and HIV prevention, and encouraging health care providers to discuss PrEP ([pre-exposure prophylaxis](#)) and PEP ([post-exposure prophylaxis](#)) as options for patients at high risk for HIV infection.

Many New Jersey health departments, federally qualified health centers, hospitals and medical centers, community-based organizations, etc. will be hosting events to commemorate World AIDS Day in New Jersey on Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. Visit the New Jersey Department of Health, HIV, STD and TB Services' website for a full list of local events. <https://web.doh.state.nj.us/apps2/aids/events.aspx>

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

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<sup>1</sup> CDC. [HIV Risk and Prevention](#).

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.njihivstdline.org](http://www.njihivstdline.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

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Observance Day hashtags: #WorldAIDSDay, #WAD2018, #ROCKTHERIBBON

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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.

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