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Administration

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## **National HIV Testing Day – June 27**

### ***City of Milwaukee Health Department Joins Community Partners to Increase HIV Testing***

The City of Milwaukee Health Department in partnership with several community partners will provide free and confidential HIV and sexually transmitted disease (STD) testing to recognize National HIV Testing Day.

The 4th Annual “Take the Test, Take Control” event will be held Saturday, June 27, from 10 am – 2 pm, at the LaVarnway Boys and Girls Club, located at 2739 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street. Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker will provide opening remarks.

The event, which is sponsored by Cream City Medical Society, will also feature interactive panel discussions and workshops, and access to a variety of community resources. Other partners include the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin, Delta Psi Chi, The Center for Urban Population Health, United Migrant Opportunity Services, and Comprehensive Health Education, Inc.

“HIV/AIDS continues to disproportionately impact residents in our city,” Commissioner Baker said. “It is important that everyone get tested so that they know their HIV status.”

National HIV Testing Day serves as an opportunity to encourage individuals to learn their HIV status, and to gain knowledge to take control of their health and their lives. The goal of this day is to identify people who are HIV-positive and don’t know it so they can access treatment and live longer, healthier lives. It also prevents new HIV infections by increasing education, awareness, and access to voluntary counseling and testing.

Since 1983, more than 10,400 people in Wisconsin have been diagnosed with HIV infection, and more than 50% of the reported cases of HIV/AIDS in the state are in Milwaukee. More than 6,700 Wisconsin residents are currently living with HIV disease, and the epidemic continues to grow, especially among men who have sex with men and members of the African American and Hispanic communities.

Further, like other health problems, the significant racial disparities in HIV/AIDS are magnified in Southeastern Wisconsin, where the majority of new cases are identified in African-Americans. However, HIV/AIDS can affect people of any race or ethnicity.

“All Milwaukeeans should know their HIV status,” Commissioner Baker said. “This is especially important for African-Americans and Hispanics, two groups that are disproportionately impacted by HIV and AIDS in Milwaukee.”

There is still no vaccine and still no cure for HIV/AIDS. Thus, it is crucial that people know their HIV status. People who know they are HIV positive reduce risky behavior, which reduces transmission to others. In addition, the sooner that patients are diagnosed, the sooner they can receive treatment, which in turn reduces hospitalizations, and improves both longevity and quality of life.

In addition to HIV testing, the City of Milwaukee Health Department offers screening for sexually transmitted infections (STDs), HIV counseling, medical case management for women living with HIV, presentations to community groups, and participation in health fairs.

All services are available on a walk-in basis at Keenan Central Health Center at 3200 North 36th Street. For more information on HIV or STD testing call 286-3631.