



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

National Office - Washington, DC: 202-835-8373

Administrative Office - Tampa, FL: 813-258-5929

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Media Contacts: Carl Schmid, (202) 835-8373 CSchmid@theaidsinstitute.org

The AIDS Institute Commemorates National HIV Testing Day

Washington, DC – The AIDS Institute commemorates the annual **National HIV Testing Day** on Wednesday, June 27, by urging people to take an HIV test in order to learn their status and take precautionary measures if they are, in fact, infected. National HIV Testing Day is coordinated each year by the **National Association of People with AIDS** (NAPWA).

There are 1.1 million people in the United States living with HIV and AIDS and more than 20 percent are unaware of their HIV status, carrying profound implications for HIV prevention, care and treatment. People who are aware of their HIV status are less likely to transmit the virus and are much more likely to access care, two key factors in the fight against the nation's HIV/AIDS epidemic. In many instances, people with HIV disease do not access care until they are sick and their immune systems are badly damaged, minimizing their treatment options and creating complications that shorten life and increase health care costs.

"Everyone should know their status. National HIV Testing Day reminds all of us to get tested and encourage others to get tested," said Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. "The first step to reducing the risk of infection is to know your status." Copello added.

NAPWA produces the annual testing day each year, using the event to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and the importance of HIV testing. NAPWA distributes testing and media kits throughout the country, making it possible for community groups and health departments to create HIV testing campaigns and events for their local communities.

"We now have effective treatments that can dramatically slow disease progression for many people with HIV and AIDS if they are able to access care soon enough. The first step in accessing care is an HIV test. National HIV Testing Day is one of the best opportunities we have to provide education about HIV and AIDS and to encourage people to voluntarily test for HIV", stated Marilyn Merida, Board President of The AIDS Institute.

More information is provided at www.napwa.org and to locate a test site you can go to www.hivtest.org and insert your zip code to find the nearest HIV test site. A service provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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*For more information and to become involved in AIDS advocacy work, please contact
The AIDS Institute at: (202) 835-8373, or by email at: Info@theaidsinstitute.org or www.TheAIDSInstitute.org*

*The AIDS Institute is a national nonprofit and nonpartisan agency that promotes action for social change
through public policy research, advocacy and education.*