



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

National Policy Office - Washington, DC: 202-835-8373
Program and Administrative Office - Tampa, FL: 813-258-5929

For Immediate Release: 06.27.17

Media Contact: Carl Schmid: (202) 669-8267 cschmid@theaidsinstitute.org

THE AIDS INSTITUTE RECOGNIZES HIV TESTING DAY *Proposed CDC Budget Cuts & ACA Repeal Threaten Future HIV Testing Programs*

Washington, DC – In recognition of National HIV Testing Day on June 27th, The AIDS Institute encourages people to get tested to learn their HIV status and make informed and empowered medical decisions.

Learning one's status through HIV testing is a necessary first step toward connecting with care and treatment. "We know that if a person tests positive for HIV through a simple test and is then linked to HIV treatment, they can live a relatively healthy and long life", said Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. "Additionally, effective treatment will likely lead to viral suppression, which make its almost impossible to transmit the virus to others, therefore, helping prevent future infections."

Between 2008 and 2014, the number of new HIV infections decreased by 18 percent in the United States due to effective prevention and treatment programs, including routine HIV testing. However, 1 in 7 (or over 170,000) people living with HIV are still unaware of their status. People who are living with HIV and undiagnosed can unknowingly lead to additional infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 30 percent of new HIV infections are the result of transmission from a person who is unaware of their status. Therefore, HIV testing is an important tool in fighting and ultimately ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

However, the future of HIV testing programs is in jeopardy due to recent budget cuts proposed by President Trump for CDC's HIV Prevention programs and efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

President Trump's FY2018 Budget proposes to cut HIV prevention at the CDC by \$147 million, or 19 percent. The CDC provides funds to state and local health departments, along with community based organizations, to conduct on-the-ground testing. In 2014, the CDC estimated that they funded 3.2 million HIV testing events.

“On a day when we recognize the importance of HIV testing, we cannot overlook the fact that the Administration is proposing to severely cut the budget of CDC, which not only funds millions of HIV tests a year, but also sets testing standards and guidelines for health care providers and public health professionals. In order to prevent HIV, we need to make sure that federal programs that support testing are fully funded,” said Carl Schmid, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute.

Thanks to the ACA and its coverage of preventive services, HIV testing is free for most people who have health care. Routine HIV testing is covered by private insurers, Medicaid and Medicare since it has received an “A” grade by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). But if someone does not have health coverage, they will not be able to access preventive services like HIV testing. Congress is currently considering legislation that would result in up to 23 million people losing their health coverage.

“Today we are recognizing the importance of HIV testing, while at the same time, Congress and the Administration are working to repeal many aspects of the ACA that will result in millions of people losing coverage and limit a person's ability to get tested, find treatment, and ultimately live a long and healthy life. Thus, providing another reason why Congress should reject their current efforts to repeal the ACA,” concluded Schmid.

For more resources on HIV testing and treatment, visit the newly revamped <https://www.hiv.gov/>. The site allows users to access information on HIV, locate their nearest testing facility, and learn about the important work being done to end the epidemic in the United States.

###

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

For more information or to become involved, visit www.TheAIDSInstitute.org, email us at Info@theaidsinstitute.org, follow The AIDS Institute on [Twitter](#), and like us on [Facebook](#).