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26 SITES TO TEST FOR HIV JUNE 27

PALM BEACH COUNTY—HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases are the focus of this year's HIV Test Day June 27. 26 sites coordinated by the Palm Beach County Substance Abuse Coalition and Palm Beach County Health Department will be offering free testing throughout the day.

Each year about 2% of the people tested find out that they are HIV positive. This number along with those who have a clinical diagnosis results in almost 400 new cases reported annually. Currently, over 2700 people are living with HIV and another 4000 have AIDS. Persons involved in the research and tracking of this disease estimate there are another 1700 people in the county unaware they are HIV positive or have AIDS.

“We have found that offering free and routine testing helps to reduce the stigma associated with HIV testing. We hope that more will take advantage of this simple preventive measure. If a person knows their status it can lead to a longer life with treatment.” Said Health Department Director Jean M. Malecki, MD, MPH,

This year a number of sights are also offering STD testing for Hepatitis A, B, C, and Syphilis? Although treatable it is very important to get tested for these and other STD's like gonorrhea and Chlamydia as it can stop the 1,000 new infections annually.

“I would like to see everyone tested as an annual routine,” said Dr. Malecki. “But especially those who have participated in unprotected sexual activity, shared injection needles during drug use, tattooing, or piercing or had a blood transfusion prior to 1985.”

A complete list of sites is available by calling 211 or through the following websites, www.pbchd.com, www.hivtest.org, or www.PBCSAC.org.

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