



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Health Department Offers Free Walk-in Testing Opportunities in
Recognition of National HIV Testing Day**

GRAND RAPIDS, MI. - More than one million people in the United States are living with HIV according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In recognition of National HIV Testing Day June 27, 2016, the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) will be offering free testing on June 27,28,29 and July 1. The simple finger poke test can yield preliminary results in about 20 minutes. During that time our Personal Health Services certified counselors provide advice on protecting yourself and others from HIV.

KCHD is offering the testing at two locations, KCHD's Fuller Clinic at 700 Fuller NE, Grand Rapids and South Clinic in Kentwood at 4700 Kalamazoo Ave. SE. Testing will be performed without an appointment between the hours of 8:15 and 4:30 at both locations. In addition to free and confidential testing, KCHD is offering education about HIV prevention and steps you can take to protect those you love from HIV.

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Kent County Health Department recommend that everyone know their HIV status," says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. "This knowledge is essential for getting helpful therapy and for protecting others from the virus."

Routine testing for individuals at risk can lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment of HIV. Treatment of HIV reduces HIV-related illness and reduces the spread of the virus. The CDC estimates that there are 50,000 new HIV infections in the United States every year. One out of every eight people infected with HIV does not know their infection status according to the agency.

HIV, Human Immunodeficiency Virus, attacks the cells that make up the body's immune system. HIV can make it difficult for an infected individual to fight off colds and other diseases. There are many medications available today that can strengthen the immune system. Left untreated HIV can develop into Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome - AIDS – which can be fatal.

People who are unable to visit one of the testing events, can make an appointment by calling 616-632-7171. More Information on HIV and AIDS can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/>.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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