



TO: Area Media Outlets

FROM: Joel Strasz
Public Health Services Manager
989-895-2018

DATE: June 9, 2008

RE: **HIV/AIDS Awareness**

RUN: Immediate Release

Recent communicable disease investigations in the Mid-Michigan area indicate a significant increase in the rate of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. This increase within the region includes areas where HIV infections are historically low.

Public Health officials are encouraging individuals to assess their risk for HIV infection, get tested, and to know their HIV status by learning their test results. Knowing ones status is essential, as early detection of HIV allows for early treatment, which can both prolong and improve the quality of life. Individuals should know what high risk behaviors are and take steps to protect themselves and partners from infection.

High risk behavior includes being sexually active with multiple partners, anonymous partners, sharing syringes, needles, or other drug-injecting materials. Persons who have engaged in these activities should be tested for HIV. In addition, anyone being treated for a sexually transmitted disease needs to be tested.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), infected persons will develop detectable antibodies within two to eight weeks (the average is 25 days) after exposure to HIV. Ninety-seven percent of people will test positive by three months. In very rare cases, it can take up to six months to develop antibodies to HIV. The CDC reports they have had only 2 cases since the early 90's that took six months to test positive. Our goal is to help stop the spread of HIV through testing and counseling, and for those that are infected, to receive appropriate medical care and information on how to prevent the spread to others.

HIV infection crosses into every color, age, nationality, race, etc. Based on data from the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Bureau of Epidemiology's Quarterly HIV/AIDS Analysis Report (January 2008), it is estimated that 18,000 people are

living with HIV/AIDS in Michigan and 3,330 have not yet been tested and are unaware of their infection. When a person is aware of their status, he/she will not be putting others at risk of infection, and as a community we can then decrease the number of new HIV infections throughout the world.

Each year, on June 27th, the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA), in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Prevention Information Network (NPIN), and other national and local entities across the country, organizes National HIV Testing Day. This year, Bay County Health Department (BCHD), Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center (BASIS), Saginaw County Department of Public Health (SCDPH), Midland County Department of Public Health (MCDPH), and Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) are partnering to promote HIV/AIDS awareness, testing, and prevention within our communities.

Please participate in HIV testing day and know your status. We can't do it alone. You may test confidentially or anonymously. Contact the following organizations for information on how to receive free confidential or anonymous testing:

Bay County Health Department
1200 Washington Avenue
Bay City, MI 48708
989-895-4003
www.baycounty-mi.gov

Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center (BASIS)
515 Adams Street
Bay City, MI 48708
989-894-2991
www.sacredheartcenter.com

Saginaw County Health Department of Public Health
1600 North Michigan Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48602
989-758-3880
www.saginawpublichealth.org

Midland County Department of Public Health
220 W. Ellsworth Street
Midland, MI 48640
989-892-6665
www.co.midland.mi.us

Central Michigan District Health Department
2012 E. Preston Avenue
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
989-773-5921 ext. 109
www.cmdhd.org

This media release has been brought to you by Bay County Health Department, Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center, Saginaw County Department of Public Health, Midland county department of Public Health, and Central Michigan District Health Department.

Visit the following websites for additional information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

Michigan Department of Community Health

www.michigan.gov/mdch

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