

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Observes World AIDS Day

North Dakota Department of Health Urges all North Dakotans to Know Their HIV Status

BISMARCK, N.D. – In observance of World AIDS Day on December 1, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is urging all North Dakotans to know their HIV status. North Dakota has seen a 73 percent increase in newly diagnosed cases of HIV/AIDS over the past five years.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 be tested at least once as part of routine health care. One in seven individuals infected with HIV are unaware of their infection. Free HIV testing is available at [test sites](#) throughout the state and results are available in 15 minutes.

“World AIDS Day is a great opportunity to raise awareness on the impact the disease has on people, families and communities,” said Shari Renton, HIV Surveillance Coordinator for the NDDoH. “When people know how to keep themselves from becoming infected with HIV, it can reduce the spread of the disease in our communities and protect the people we love. The only way to know if you have HIV is to get tested.”

Today, there are more tools available than ever before to prevent HIV. Individuals can use strategies such as abstinence (not having sex), limiting the number of sexual partners, never sharing needles, and using condoms the right way, every time. An HIV prevention medicine referred to as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is also available. PrEP is a medication people at very high risk for HIV take daily to lower the chance of getting infected by up to 90 percent.

For additional information about HIV testing and other HIV/AIDS services, call the NDDoH HIV/AIDS Program at 800.472.2180 or visit the program’s website at www.ndhealth.gov/hiv.

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